Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Division of Safety and Permanence

To: DCF Area Administrators Child Placing Agency Directors Child Welfare Agency Directors County Departments of Community Programs Directors County Departments of Developmental Disabilities Services Directors County Departments of Human Services Directors County Departments of Social Services Directors County Departments of Social Services Directors Group Home Providers Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors Private Child Placing Agencies Residential Care Center Providers Shelter Care Providers Tribal Chairpersons

Fredi-Ellen Bove Fredi - Ellen Bar From: Administrator

Re: SAFE Home Study Assessment Policy

PURPOSE

This memo sets forth policy requirements for the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation, commonly known as the SAFE tool, for those approving foster care licenses and adoptive homes as required under 2015 WI Act 378. This memo supersedes Numbered Memo 2016-04: Standardized Assessment for the Home Study Process in Foster Care Licensure and Adoption Approval.

BACKGROUND

Recently signed 2015 WI Act 378 requires the use of a standardized assessment, commonly referred to as a "home study", for the process of licensing a home for foster care and approval of adoption. Use of a standardized assessment is intended to improve the method by which agencies study and evaluate prospective foster and adoptive parents. The Department has approved the use of the SAFE home study assessment as the standardized assessment tool.

The SAFE home study assessment is a standardized home study developed by the Consortium for Children. The SAFE home study assists agencies in performing a thorough, structured, and uniform evaluation of families who have applied to become foster or adoptive parents. The SAFE home study assists in identifying and addressing both strengths and areas of concern that may impede functioning, as well as parenting.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE REQUIREMENTS

Use of the SAFE home study assessment is required for all foster care licensing and to evaluate the suitability of the home for a child who is the subject of an adoption effective October 1, 2016. This requirement applies to all counties, child placing agencies, and the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS).

Additionally, under this Act, the requirement for the standardized home study applies to all public and private adoptions in Wisconsin, whether the child is a U.S. or foreign citizen, but does not apply to an adoption by a stepparent for which other screening standards are required under current law.

The policy requirements for use of the SAFE home study assessment includes the process for completing the SAFE home study, as well as the mandatory training requirements for home study practitioners and supervisors who will be approving the home study report. The policy is effective upon issuance of this numbered memo.

eWiSACWIS DOCUMENTATION

Effective October 1, 2016, agencies shall document the SAFE home study report for foster care licensure and adoption approval in eWiSACWIS. Attached to this memo is the updated Documentation Requirements for Foster Care Providers in eWiSACWIS policy, which includes requirements for eWiSACWIS documentation of the SAFE home study report.

ACTION SUMMARY

All counties, child placing agencies, and the DMCPS are required to comply with all of the requirements set forth in this memo.

This requirement is effective October 1, 2016 and requires the use of the SAFE home study assessment when licensing a home for foster care and adoption approval.

REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT:	DCF Area Administrator
CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT:	Out-of-Home Care Specialist Bureau of Permanency and Out-of-Home Care (608) 422-6937

MEMO WEB SITE: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy

Attachments:

Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) Home Study Assessment Policy https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/fc/pdf/safe.pdf

Documentation Requirements for Foster Care Providers in eWiSACWIS https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/fc/pdf/fcproviders-documentation.pdf

Foster Home Information for eWiSACWIS, DCF-F-CFS2386-E <u>https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms</u>