

The Adoption Home Study: what you can expect

When your homestudy begins

Your homestudy will start on the date our agency receives your completed application. The homestudy includes:

- Documentation from your physician, employer and personal references
- Inspection of your home by a certified fire inspector.
- Verification of your family's income and expenses. This will include a review of tax returns. Your income and expenses must be sufficient enough to provide for a child without assistance or subsidy from the agency.
- Successful completion of criminal background checks for all adult family members
- Family interview.



Application packets are distributed at the fifth pre-service class. An assessor will be there to discuss the packet materials with you.

You **ARE NOT REQUIRED** to have all forms completed before submitting your application. The paperwork is provided in your application packet to give you the opportunity to review what will be needed and to gather the additional documentation necessary to complete your homestudy.

NOTE: Completing the forms right away WILL NOT speed up the homestudy process, but it will assist the assessor when he/she interviews you and your family.

This is not a short process, so we appreciate your patience and understanding. Remember – foster care certification and adoption approval is a process that is different for each family.

After your application is received

Once your application has been received, a clearing specialist will review the application to verify all areas are completed.

- An application cannot be accepted until all areas are completed. Any incomplete applications will be returned for additional information.
- After your application has been successfully completed, you will be assigned an adoption assessor who will be working with you throughout the homestudy process. Your assessor will be contacting you after the case has been assigned, typically within one week after your application is accepted. You will be contacted to schedule an appointment.
- Before your first visit, your assessor will review your paperwork.
- You will be included in our daily criminal checks and any criminal record will be reviewed.
- A credit check will be conducted before your initial homestudy to explore any possible issues that may affect your financial stability.

The first visit to your home

Your first meeting with your assessor usually takes place at your home, but it can also be done at a time and place most convenient for you. At least three visits must be completed in your home in order to observe your interactions with any children currently living in your home, do a safety audit and see the room you will be using for a foster or adoptive child. The room designated for the foster child must be ready to accept a child into your home before you are approved.

Your assessor may give you the following forms:

- Fire inspection form
- Medical forms
- Alternate caregiver forms (Hamilton County Sheriff's office release of information card, Emergency/Alternate Caregiver Conviction statement and discipline agreement)
- Foster care procedure manual and/or adoption handbook
- Release of information for employer and/or school reference

Each assessor has different working styles, so this visit and subsequent contacts will vary. In order for a thorough assessment of your family, your assessor may need to gather additional information that is unique to your family. If you are asked for additional documentation, completion dates can be affected if that documentation is not completed when requested.

Review of Agency Policies

Once all individual interviews are completed, your assessor will review specific agency policies with you regarding foster care and adoption. These policies will help you understand the general things you can expect from us and we can expect from you, particularly in the placement process. It will be a brief summary of the Ohio Administrative Codes and the manuals you received at the beginning of the homestudy process. It is not a review of all the rules and policies.

During this visit, your assessor will discuss any documentation that has not been received. If any documents need to be submitted after this visit, arrangements will be made to gather documentation as it is completed.

Next Steps

We will use all of the information we gather in meetings with you to write the homestudy and prepare it for approval.

Since the assessor is preparing your homestudy summary, additional information or clarification of topics discussed in your interview may be needed.

Once your homestudy is ready for submission to the assessor's supervisor for review, we will need to schedule a visit to complete a final audit of your home and to verify your preparedness for child placement.

You will be notified when your homestudy has been approved and when you are assigned to a support worker. A final visit to introduce your new support worker will mark the end of your homestudy process. At this point, you will be added to our vacancy list and available for placement.

Questions?

Contact Chris Landon at (513) 946-2157 with any questions about the adoption homes study process.