

Kin and Fictive Kin Caregiver Evaluation Guide

Area of Assessment	Safe Examples of placement situations determined to be safe. The Department can be in support of conditional custody in these circumstances. Caregiver is deemed appropriate.	Further Assessment Needed Examples of placement situations where a concern or risk has been identified that requires us to PAUSE and conduct a deeper assessment of the potential caregiver, household members, or circumstances before recommendations are made. This may entail gathering additional information, having further conversation with the individual/household members, and using the information to make a recommendation.	Unsafe/Dangerous* Examples of placement situations determined to be unsafe or dangerous. Unlicensed placements shall not occur. The person should not be used as a temporary caregiver through an out-of-home safety plan without supervisory approval. *If there are possible safety concerns related to criminal or child abuse history or a mandatory prohibition is identified, staff with your supervisor, licensing, and a service area SWA prior to making a temporary placement through an out-of-home safety plan. See bottom section for more information on Mandatory Prohibitions.
---------------------------	---	---	---

Items listed in the **Further Assessment Needed** category point to a time in a person's life when their behavior or circumstances may have affected their ability to manage daily responsibilities. These items do not automatically prevent someone from being a caregiver. Instead, they signal that more information is needed.

For this assessment, the following questions should be considered for potential caregivers and adult household members before making a placement or recommendation:

- What was happening in the person's life at the time? What led to the concern or outcome?
- Is this behavior or situation still happening today?
- Does this situation create a current safety risk? Is it relevant to this child's needs and vulnerabilities?
- What has the person done since that time to address the concern? What strengths or supports are in place now?

Area of Assessment	Safe	Further Assessment Needed	Unsafe/Dangerous*
Criminal History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No criminal history ▪ Only civil convictions ▪ Civil OWI convictions older than 10 years with no additional infractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civil OWI convictions within the past 10 years ▪ Misdemeanor criminal convictions ▪ Non-violent felony convictions ▪ Drug-related offense within the past 5 years ▪ Current/pending charges of crimes listed above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Felony convictions of child abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, a crime against children (including child pornography), or a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault, or homicide ▪ Felony convictions such as assault and battery, related offense within the past 5 years ▪ Current/pending charges of crimes listed above ▪ Forcible Felony – Or a crime in another state that would be a forcible felony if committed in Iowa. ▪ Domestic Abuse ▪ A crime against a child, including but not limited to sexual exploitation of a minor ▪ Child endangerment or neglect or abandonment of a dependent person.

Area of Assessment	Safe	Further Assessment Needed	Unsafe/Dangerous*
Department of Corrections (DOC) or Parole Board Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No current/active DOC or parole board supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participating successfully in DOC or parole board supervision for crimes other than those listed in the UNSAFE/DANGEROUS category 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DOC or parole board supervision for items listed in the first two bullets above in UNSAFE/DANGEROUS under Criminal History and DOC or parole board supervision not anticipated to successfully finish in the next 6 months ▪ Active DOC or parole board supervision with violations of probation or parole
No Contact Order (NCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No NCOs ▪ An NCO not granted by the court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All other active NCOs (both defendants and plaintiffs of NCOs) ▪ Expired NCOs (both defendants and plaintiffs of NCOs) ▪ Multiple non-granted NCOs (both defendants and plaintiffs of NCOs) ▪ Any current or previous NCO would potentially present a barrier to caregiver participation in family interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NCO in place to protect the child subject from the proposed caregiver
Confirmed or Founded Child Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No Confirmed or Founded reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Findings of child abuse (review Confirmed and Founded reports) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serious physical injury Confirmed or Founded, regardless of expungement ▪ Adult-to-child sexual abuse Confirmed or Founded, regardless of expungement ▪ Emotional maltreatment Confirmed or Founded, regardless of expungement

Area of Assessment	Safe	Further Assessment Needed	Unsafe/Dangerous*
CPS/JCS Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No open CPS case ▪ No open JCS case ▪ No prior adjudication in a CINA proceeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prior CPS, JCS, or CINA involvement ▪ Foster home licensing history, including a previous foster home that was closed and flagged, revoked licenses, or denied applications (will need to request review with foster care licensing staff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open JCS involvement ▪ Open CPS child safety intervention (CPA), CPS custody, or Child Welfare service case ▪ Situations where the individual being considered as a caregiver is unwilling to work with CPS because of their past experiences
Residency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have stable housing ▪ Situations where relatives or others reside together with adequate living space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Situations where relatives or others reside together temporarily without adequate living space ▪ Imminent plans to move into stable housing ▪ Residing in a hotel or motel on a short-term basis due to a significant event (i.e., house fire, damage from a natural disaster, moving to Iowa and looking for housing, landlord selling residence) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No identified housing; lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence ▪ Living in a place not meant for human habitation ▪ Residing in an institution, assisted living facility, correctional facility, or treatment facility ▪ Residing in a hotel or motel paid by charitable organizations ▪ Residing in emergency shelters ▪ Imminent risk of homelessness ▪ Current eviction notice or home foreclosure ▪ Relatives living in another state without ICPC approval

Area of Assessment	Safe	Further Assessment Needed	Unsafe/Dangerous*
Home Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No obvious danger or apparent risks (including water hazards, unsecured firearms, or general sanitation concerns) present in the home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presence of apparent risks (including water hazards, fire hazards, unsecured firearms, or general sanitation concerns) in the home that can be mitigated or resolved promptly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Obvious and significant danger (including water hazards, fire hazards, unsecured firearms, or dangerous sanitation concerns) present in the household that cannot be mitigated or resolved and would likely result in a child abuse intake
Substance Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No historic substance use disorder concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustained sobriety and commitment to recovery ▪ Any past substance use concerns ▪ Arrest or citation related to substance use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing substance use disorder and reliable knowledge of recent substance misuse or observation of behavioral indicators of substance use
Physical & Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No significant physical or mental health concerns that impact the ability to care for a child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical or intellectual limitations associated with meeting the age and developmental needs of the child ▪ Major mental health diagnosis that requires verification of treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mental, intellectual, or physical condition that significantly limits person's ability to care for a child
Relationship to Child(ren) or Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The child/youth agrees to or is in support of residing temporarily with the potential caregiver ▪ The child/youth has a strong relationship or bond to the individual ▪ The child/youth expresses no opinion about the potential caregiver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The child or youth has expressed they would prefer to live with a different relative or person whom CPS knows is appropriate and available ▪ The child or youth is unwilling or refuses to live with the person being considered as a caregiver ▪ The child or youth has a founded fear of the person being considered as a caregiver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The child's therapeutic needs indicate placement with this individual is not in their best interest

Area of Assessment	Safe	Further Assessment Needed	Unsafe/Dangerous*
Collaboration (willingness and ability to work with parents, CPS, and/or the court)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The individual being considered as a caregiver has demonstrated or indicates they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will work with the parents, CPS, and court partners • Will follow court orders, including coordinating and monitoring family time ▪ Will provide transportation to school, extracurricular activities, medical appointments, therapy, family time, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The individual being considered has refused to work with CPS in the past ▪ The individual being considered might require additional support to provide necessary transportation ▪ Relationship dynamics where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual's opinions or behaviors toward or about the parents may impact reunification efforts or the safety of the child(ren); or • The parent's opinions or behaviors toward or about the individual being considered as a caregiver may impact reunification efforts or the safety of the child(ren) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The individual being considered as a caregiver openly refuses to work with the parents, CPS, or court partners

Considerations:

Mandatory Prohibitions

Certain criminal convictions **automatically prevent approval** for:

- Foster care licensure
- Kinship foster care approval
- Adoption approval

These prohibitions apply when identified through required record checks and are outlined in:

- **Foster Care:** Iowa Code chapter **237**
- **Adoption:** Iowa Code chapter **600**
- **Forcible Felonies:** Iowa Code **702.11**

An individual **cannot be approved**, and further evaluation **must not be completed**, if they have been convicted of any of the following felony offenses:

- A **drug-related felony** within five (5) years prior to the application date
- **Child endangerment, neglect, or abandonment of a dependent person**
- **Domestic abuse**
- A **crime against a child**, including but not limited to sexual exploitation of a minor
- A **forcible felony** (as defined in Iowa Code §702.11)

These prohibitions apply to:

- The applicant,
- Any individual employed by a licensee with direct responsibility for a child, and
- Any adult who will reside in the licensed home or facility.

Permanency and Financial Support

When a **mandatory prohibition** is identified for a relative or fictive kin applicant, the following **cannot be approved**:

- Foster care licensure,
- Kinship foster care approval,
- Subsidized guardianship, and
- Adoption approval

As a result, any **financial support tied to these approvals is not available** when mandatory prohibitions are present.