

IS YOUR RESPONSE SYSTEM FAMILY FRIENDLY?

This tool will help you consider organizational issues related to each phase of the recruitment and retention process. Answer each of the following questions with a **Yes** or **No**:

Step 0: Recruitment Event

Y / N

0.1 Is there an event planning process?

0.2 Does the planning process include one or more prospective families?

0.3 Are experienced foster and adoptive families invited to participate in events?

Step 1: First Contact

1.1 Have experienced and/or prospective families been engaged in developing the intake process?

1.2 Is the person who responds to inquiries family-oriented?

1.3 Is the person who responds to inquiries familiar with, and trained to address, expectations and fears families typically present?

1.4 Is there a timely follow-up process for responding to families?

1.5 Is the intake process audited using a “secret shopper method to assure family responsiveness?”

1.6 Does your agency begin engaging and supporting prospective families starting with the point of first contact?

Step 2: Initial Orientation

2.1 Does someone follow-up with prospective families to encourage them to come to orientation?

2.2 Is the schedule for orientation meetings friendly to various family schedules?

2.3 Are the meeting locations easy to find and, if applicable, near public transportation?

2.4 Are hearty snacks or meals provided with a time for welcoming and conversation?

Step 2: Initial Orientation (continued)

Y / N

2.5 Is child care made available?

2.6 Are specific requirements of the home study process explained clearly upfront (i.e., background checks, fingerprinting, medical exams)?

2.7 Are special materials or expertly adapted materials provided for special linguistic groups, non-literate groups, and those who need alternate formats?

2.8 Do you provide families with specific information (i.e., current demographic information) about children needing care?

2.9 Do you educate families about specific, common special needs of children who are coming into care, or awaiting permanency?

2.10 Do you present training as a means for families to learn more about fostering and adopting before they make decisions?

Step 3: Pre-Service Training

3.1 Is training offered at times and locations friendly to various family schedules and transportation issues?

3.2 Is training offered frequently enough to keep families closely engaged in the process?

3.3 Is child care made available?

3.4 Does the training team include experienced foster and adoptive parents?

3.5 Are experienced foster and/or adoptive parents included in training activities?

3.6 Is special attention given to planning for diverse populations (i.e., foreign or sign language interpreters, reading assistants, etc.)?

3.7 Are reasonably friendly provisions made for making up missed sessions?

3.8 Is follow-up conducted with families who drop out?

3.9 Are exit interviews (satisfaction surveys) conducted, reviewed, and analyzed?

3.10 Does feedback from families drive quality improvement efforts?

Step 4: Application Process

Y / N

- 4.1 Is the paperwork simple and straight forward?
- 4.2 Is the paperwork non-duplicative and streamlined?
- 4.3 Are special materials or expertly adapted materials provided for special linguistic groups, non-literate groups, and those who need alternate formats?
- 4.4 Is fingerprinting available on site and processed in a timely way to reduce wait time?
- 4.5 Does the agency provide assistance to families if they need help filling out paperwork?

Step 5: Mutual Assessment and Home Study

- 5.1 Is the assessment a mutual process where families are encouraged to be active partners in deciding whether they want to foster or adopt and work with this particular agency?
- 5.2 Are there enforced timelines and expectations for staff related to completion of the process so it doesn't drag on unnecessarily?
- 5.3 Is help provided for prospective parents who have fixable impediments (i.e., minor home repairs, beds for children, medical exams, fees, special equipment)?
- 5.4 Is the family fully informed about: birth family involvement & sibling contact (if applicable), and the special needs of the children they are considering fostering and adopting?
- 5.5 Are experienced foster or adoptive parents involved as buddies, mentors, or in other roles during this process?

Step 6: Licensing, Certification, and Approval

- 6.1 Have common barriers to certification or approval been identified and eliminated?
- 6.2 Does your agency give parents copies of their family assessment or home studies so that they have a chance to fix any mistakes or misunderstandings?
- 6.3 Are families informed when all the paperwork is complete and licensing or approval has been achieved?
- 6.4 Is dual licensure and approval used in your area to eliminate duplication of effort and time?

Step 7: Placement

Y / N

- 7.1 Are prospective families provided information and support while they are waiting for placement?
- 7.2 Are there support groups available that waiting families can attend?
- 7.3 Does your agency treat waiting parents with respect and consideration when they call the agency while they are waiting for a placement?
- 7.4 Are parents encouraged to provide respite and/or emergency care while they are waiting?
- 7.5 Are parents involved in matching and placement decisions?
- 7.6 Does your agency provide parents full disclosure of all necessary information so that they can make a fully informed consent to a placement?

Step 8: Post-Placement

- 8.1 Are families provided clear information and guidance on who to contact at the agency if they need any support or information as they parent the child or children placed with them?
- 8.2 Are families connected with support groups, peer (parent-to-parent) support options, and other sources for ongoing support as they parent children in their home?
- 8.3 Does your agency follow up with each family after placing a child to see if the family would like any additional support, referral to services, or information?
- 8.4 Does your agency conduct assessments and analysis of the post-placement support and services you provide to foster, adoptive, and kinship families in order to ensure that you are providing the support families need in order to meet children's needs?

Check Your Score

Add up the number of questions that you answered with a **Yes**: _____

40 to 53 (75% - 100%)

.....Family friendly.....

27 to 39 (50% - 74%)

..On your way to being
family friendly

0 to 26 (below 50%)

..Needs improvement..