



India has a well developed and strong family system. In many areas the traditional joint family system is still very strong where a child grows in the company of his/her own siblings, cousin and grandparents. The term “joint family” is used more commonly than “extended family” in the country. In situations where parents are unable to take care of children due to illness or any other reason, children are taken care of by the joint family i.e by the kins/relatives.

The present Guidelines are not aimed at institutionalising such informal family systems embedded in our socio cultural milieu and therefore do not cover such arrangements. In case, the extended family requires financial support in care of the child, the same may be provided through sponsorship of the child as provided for in Integrated Child protection Scheme(ICPS)itself or the family may be referred to other Schemes and Programmes of the Government that strengthen families. The Guidelines for Foster care aim to protect the well-being of children who are deprived of family care or who are at risk of being so.

The Guidelines derive strength from Section 42 of the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act 2000, the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). These Guidelines do not include pre adoptive foster care as Guidelines Governing Adoption of Children, 2015 will apply.

Chapter I: Preliminary

1.1 Short Title

These Guidelines may be called the ***MODEL GUIDELINES FOR FOSTER CARE, 2015***.

1.2 Definitions

A. In these Guidelines, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (i). "Abandoned Child" means a child deserted by his biological or adoptive parents or guardians, who has been declared as abandoned by the Committee after due inquiry;
- (ii). "Act" means the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000
- (iii). "Adoption" means the process through which the adopted child is permanently separated from his biological parents and becomes the lawful child of his adoptive parents with all the rights privileges and responsibilities that are attached to the biological child;
- (iv). "Aftercare" means provision of support, financial or otherwise, to persons, who have completed the age of eighteen years but have not completed the age of twenty-one years, to sustain themselves during the transition from institutional to independent life.
- (v). "Best Interest of child" means the basis for any decision taken regarding the child, to ensure fulfillment of his basic rights and needs, identity, social well-being and physical, emotional and intellectual development ;
- (vi). "Child Care Institution" means Children's Home, Open Shelter, Observation Home, Special Home, Specialised Adoption Agency and a Fit facility recognised under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 for providing care and protection of children, who are in need of such services;
- (vii). "Child" means a person who has not completed eighteen years of age;
- (viii). "Committee" means the Child Welfare Committee constituted under section 29 of the Act;
- (ix). "Convention on the Rights of the Child" means the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child;

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- (x). “District Child Protection Unit” means a Child Protection Unit for a District, established by the State Government under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme, which is the focal point to ensure implementation of the Act and other child protection measures in the district;
- (xi). “Foster Care” means placement of a child, by the Child Welfare Committee for the purpose of alternate care in the domestic environment of a family, other than the child’s biological family, that has been selected, qualified, approved and supervised for providing such care;
- (xii). Foster carers/parents means persons/parents that has been selected, qualified, approved and declared fit by the Child Welfare Committee for the placement of the child under foster care;
- (xiii). “Group Foster Care” means a family like care facility for children in need of care and protection who are without parental care with the aim to provide personalised care and fostering a sense of belonging and identity, through family like and community based solutions;
- (xiv). “Guardian”, in relation to a child, means his natural guardian or any other person, having, in the opinion of the Committee, the actual charge of the child, and recognised by the Committee as a guardian in the course of proceedings
- (xv). “Home Study Report” means a report containing details of the family of foster carer/parent, opting for individual or group foster care which includes social and economic status; family background; description of home; standard of living; current relations amongst the members of family; health status etc.
- (xvi). “Individual Care Plan ” is a development plan for a child based on age specific and gender specific needs and the case history of the child, prepared if feasible in consultation with the child, in order to restore the child’s self-esteem, dignity and self-worth and nurture him into a responsible citizen;
- (xvii). “Integrated Child Protection Scheme” means the scheme on child protection of the Central Government, being implemented through State Governments and non-governmental organisations;
- (xviii). “Kinship Care” is family-based care within the child’s extended family;
- (xix). “Orphan” means a child – who is without parents or willing and capable legal or natural guardian;
- (xx). “Pre-adoption foster care” means a stage when the custody of a child is given to prospective adoptive parents, pending adoption order from the court; as per Guidelines Governing Adoption of Children, 2015.

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- (xxi). "Protection Officer - Institutional Care" means the Protection Officer under the District Child Protection Unit;
- (xxii). "Protection Officer - Non-Institutional Care" means the Protection Officer under the District Child Protection Unit;
- (xxiii). "Specialised Adoption Agency" means the agency recognised by the State Government under sub-section 4 of section 41 of the Act for the purpose of placing children in adoption;
- (xxiv). "Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee" is the Committee constituted under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme at the district level;
- (xxv). "State Adoption Resource Agency" means the agency setup by the State Government under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme;
- (xxvi). "State Government" in relation to a Union Territory means the Administrator of that Union Territory appointed by the President under Article 239 of the Constitution;
- (xxvii). "Surrendered Child" means a child, who is relinquished by the parent or guardian to the Committee, on account of physical, emotional and social factors beyond their control, and declared as such by the Committee;

B. All words and expressions used but not defined in these Guidelines shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000.

1.3 Foster Care

The National Policy for Children adopted in 2013 recognises that all children have the right to grow in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. The family or family environment is most conducive for the all-round development of children and they should not to be separated from their parents, except where such separation is necessary in their best interest.

In India, children without families or with families who are unable to care for them are provided care by the members of the joint/extended family members. In case a relative is not available or willing to take care of the child, then the child is placed with a willing family who shares a cultural, tribal and /or community connection same to that of the child including friends of the parents, neighbours and members of the same community/clan. This arrangement is not to be formalized as such care is embedded in our social ethos. Such non formal kinship will continue as it is traditionally practiced in the country and will not be covered under these guidelines. In case such non formal Kinship care requires financial support

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it shall be considered by the Child Welfare Committee under sponsorship program as provided for under ICPS as per their assessment and recommendation of the District Child Protection Unit.

1.3.1 What is Foster Care?

Foster care is an arrangement whereby a child lives, usually on a temporary basis, with unrelated family members. A child shall be preferably placed with child's extended family or with close friends of the family who are known to child and when such options are either not available or not willing to take care of the child, the child may be placed in foster care. While placing a child in foster care, preference shall be given to those families that share similar cultural, tribal and /or community connection.

- i. Foster care can be short term or long term depending upon the needs of the child. The situations under which short term Foster care will be given and the duration will rest on the CWCs based on their assessment of the individual case presented before them. Long term foster care, on the other hand, is placement of a child by the Committee for a period exceeding one year.
- ii. Group foster care is a family like care facility for children in need of care and protection who are without parental care. The aim is to provide personalised care and fostering a sense of belonging and identity, through family like and community based solutions.
- iii. Group Foster is defined as a family setting where a group of unrelated children are placed with a set of parents may/may not be having their own biological children.
- iv. Group foster care as an intermittent arrangement is suitable for children picked up from streets before placing them in individual foster care. Children are placed in group foster care during the weaning period defined as weaning the children from street life and high risk behavior. It is also suitable prior to any other form of family based care.

1.4 Fundamental Principles of Foster Care

- i. Family or a family like environment is most conducive for a child and every child has the right to grow in such an environment;
- ii. All decisions, initiatives and approaches falling within the scope of the present Guidelines are to be made on a case-by-case basis, with a view, to ensuring child's safety and security, and must be grounded in the best interests of the child;

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- iii. All decisions, initiatives and approaches falling within the scope of the present Guidelines must respect the child's right to be consulted and to have his views duly taken into account in accordance with his evolving capacities;
- iv. Siblings and twins should preferably be placed in one family;
- v. Recognizing that every child has the right to grow in a family environment, every attempt must be made to reunite the child with his biological family by strengthening the biological family through a planned process.

1.5 Categories of Children Eligible for Foster Care

The following categories of children shall be considered for Foster Care:

- i. Children in the age group 0-6 years shall not ordinarily be considered for placement in long term Foster care as such small children should be preferably provided a permanent family through adoption; Guidelines Governing Adoption of Children, 2015 shall apply.
- ii. Children in the age group of 6-18 years who have been staying in child care institutions; shall be placed in foster care based on their individual care plan developed in the institution;
- iii. Children whose parents are terminally ill and have submitted a request to the Committee or the District Child Protection Unit for taking care of their child as they are unable to take care of their child;
- iv. Children identified by DCPU through PO(NIC)
 - whose parents are mentally ill and are unable to take care of the child;
 - whose one or both parents are in jail;
 - who are victims of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, natural disasters and domestic violence.

1.6 Rights of a Child under Foster care

- i. The Child Welfare Committee, in conjunction with district and state functionaries shall ensure that the foster child's best interest is upheld and his views are taken into consideration as far as possible in his placement.

- ii. The Child shall have access to information on the situation of his biological family

1.7 Rights and Responsibilities of Foster Carers/Parents

1.7.1 The foster carers/parents have following rights:

- i. Right to be heard and respected;
- ii. Right of non-discrimination on the basis of their social origin
- iii. Right to adopt the same child, after keeping that child in foster care for a minimum period of five years and the child has no claimant of his own, after following due procedures prescribed in the Guidelines Governing Adoption of Children, 2015

1.7.2 The foster carers/parents have following responsibilities towards the child placed in their care:

i. General Responsibilities:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter;
- Provide care, support and treatment for child's overall physical, emotional and mental health;
- Ensure education and vocational training according to the age, developmental needs and interests of the child;
- Protection from exploitation, maltreatment, harm, neglect and abuse; Respect the privacy of the child and his biological family, and acknowledge that any information provided about them is confidential and is not to be disclosed to another party without prior consent.
- Provide treatment in emergency situations and then inform PO(NIC)

ii. Responsibilities to be shared with the Protection Officer-Non Institutional Care:

- Support contact between the child and his Protection Officer-Non-Institutional care;
- Support contact between the child and his biological family in consultation with the Child Welfare Committee;
- Share and discuss information pertaining to the progress of the child and enable Protection Officer- non-institutional care to write reports and, when required, attend meetings;
- Seek approval of the Committee through PO(NIC) in advance for serious medical matters such as operative procedures and the use of anesthesia;
- Ensure that the child's whereabouts are known at all times, including reporting any changes of address, holiday plans and any episodes of running away of child;
- Report to the Protection Officer- Non-Institutional Care in case of any critical incidents such as injuries (accidental or non-accidental), instances of alleged abuse by any person and any criminal or self-harming behaviors exhibited by the child.

1.8 Criteria for Selection of Foster Carers/Parents

Following criteria shall apply for selection of individual and group foster carers/parents by the District Child Protection Unit:

- i. Both the spouses must be Indian citizens; (*It is felt that at present single parent should not be encouraged for foster care as they are likely to enter matrimony and this may result in problems*);
- ii. Both the spouses must be willing to foster the same child;
- iii. Both the spouses must be above the age of 35 years and must be in good physical, emotional and mental health; (*No upper limit is being fixed for foster carers/parents as Home Study report will consider their suitability*);
- iv. Ordinarily should have an income in which they are able to meet the needs of the child and are not dependent on the foster care maintenance payment for the child;
- v. Medical reports of all the members of the foster care family residing in the premises should be obtained including checks on

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- Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV), Tuberculosis (TB) and Hepatitis B to determine that they are medically fit;
- vi. Should have adequate space and basic facilities;
 - vii. Should be willing to follow rules laid down including regular visits to doctors, maintenance of child health and their records;
 - viii. Should be willing to attend foster care orientation programmes organized by the DCPU;
 - ix. Must be without criminal conviction or indictment;
 - x. Should have supportive community ties with friends and neighbors

1.9 Relaxation and interpretation to the Guidelines

- i. These Guidelines are issued having regard to the provisions of the existing law and for the interpretation; the relevant law is to be referred to.
- ii. In case of ambiguity or any dispute, the power to interpret these Guidelines vests with Ministry of Women and Child Development GOI.

Chapter II: Procedures Related to Placement of Children in Foster Care

District Child Protection Unit is the nodal authority for implementing the foster care programme in a district. All decisions related to placement of a child in foster care are to be taken by the Child Welfare Committee of the district.

2.1 Procedure related to Identification and placement of children living in Child Care Institutions

2.1.1 Preparation of Individual Care Plan

- i. For every child, an Individual Care Plan shall be prepared, as soon as possible, as prescribed under Form No. XXI of the Central Model Rules under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000.
- ii. The Individual Care Plan of the child shall be periodically reviewed and adjusted according to the needs and best interests of the child.

2.1.2 Preparation of Child Study Report

For every child identified for placing in foster care, a detailed child study report shall be prepared based on a template that been developed and is placed at **Annexure A.**

2.1.3 Recommendation of child for Foster Care

- i. Based on the Individual Care Plan and child study report, the Child Welfare Officer/ Social Worker from the Child Care Institution shall recommend children who may benefit from being placed in Foster Care.
- ii. The list of identified children eligible for foster care shall be forwarded to Protection Officer- Institutional Care at the District Child Protection Unit.

2.1.4 Identification of Foster Carers/Parents

- i. The District Child Protection Unit shall identify families who are willing to opt for being foster parent or for group foster carers along with their preference of the child. For this purpose, the District Child Protection Unit shall place periodically advertisement in local newspapers calling for separate applications for group foster care and individual foster care. The application format to be submitted by the Foster care/parent in response to the advertisement is placed as **Annexure – B.**

- ii. The District Child Protection Unit shall shortlist the applicants based on the criteria in para 8 of Chapter I of these Guidelines and conduct interviews with the foster carers/parents. The interview shall make an assessment of the prospective foster carers/parents based on the application format submitted by the foster carer/parent. An assessment report shall be prepared based on Form XVI of the Central Model Rules under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000.
- iii. The District Child Protection Unit will also verify two references from individuals of good standing from the community that are provided by every foster carer/parent.
- iv. The DCPU, while making an assessment of the prospective foster carers/parents shall thoroughly check their economic status to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of the child and are not dependent on the foster care maintenance payment for the child; however if it is assessed that all other criteria being satisfied and only financial support is required, the case shall be recommended to SFCAC after the final orders of CWC.
- v. District Child Protection Unit shall maintain a roster/panel of prospective individual foster carer/parent and group foster carers/parents every year which shall be forwarded to the Child Welfare Committee of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000.

2.1.5 Preparation of Home Study Report of the Prospective Foster Carers/Parents

On receipt of list of prospective foster carers/parents, the Child Welfare Committee shall ask the District Child Protection Unit to conduct the Home Study as per part B of Form XVI of the Central Model Rules under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000.

2.1.6 Matching of Child with Foster Carer/Parent

- i. Based on the Home study Report of the foster carers/parents and the Child Study Report of the child, the District Child Protection Unit shall recommend the placement of the child with prospective foster carers/parents.
- ii. Based on the recommendation of the District Child Protection Unit, the Committee shall initiate the process of giving order for placement of the child.

2.1.7 Procedures Prior to Final Foster Care Placement order by the Committee

- I. After matching a child with potential foster carers/parents, the Child Welfare Committee, shall allow through an interim order, the child and the foster carers/parents to have restricted interaction in the presence of social worker for a period of one month such as short meeting followed by an outing, followed by child's visit to the potential foster carers/parents home to meet all the other family members. This shall also apply for placing children in Group Foster care. The placement of the child shall be handled with utmost sensitivity and in a child-friendly manner by specially trained persons.
- II. After the interim order, the compatibility of the child with foster carer/parents for individual foster care and with other children and the foster carers/parents in group foster care shall be evaluated by the District Child Protection Unit and a report shall be submitted to the Child Welfare Committee including whether financial support is needed or not within 15 days.

In case the financial support is requested, the District Child Protection Unit shall submit the proposal to the Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee (SFCAC) set up in the district under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) along with necessary documents. This Committee shall review each recommendation and approve Foster Care support in all cases found deserving. After the approval, within 15 days of the reference by DCPU the case shall be referred to the Child Welfare Committee for the final order.

2. 1.8 Final Placement Order by the Child Welfare Committee

- I. After review of the compatibility report submitted by District Child Protection Unit, the Child Welfare Committee shall make a final order in prescribed format given in Form XVII of the Central Model Rules, 2007 under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 for support to the child through Foster Care, and send a copy to District Child Protection Unit for appropriate action.
- II. In cases where no financial assistance is required, the final order by the Child Welfare Committee shall be given ordinarily within 60 days of passing the interim order.
- III. In cases where financial assistance is required and matter is placed before the Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee, the Child Welfare Committee shall pass the final order ordinarily within 75 days of passing the interim order subject to decision of the Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee.

2. 1.9 Undertaking by Foster Carers/Parents

The foster carers/parent shall be required to sign an undertaking for foster-care of the child in the prescribed Form IX of the Central Model Rules, 2007 under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000.

2.2 Procedure related to placement of children living in Community

2. 2.1 Identification of Children eligible for foster care placement

The District Child Protection Unit shall create awareness on the foster care programme and identify children without parental support and maintain a list of such children for formal placement while conducting vulnerability mapping and district need assessment as provided under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme.

2.2.2 Further Procedures

Further procedures for preparation of child study report, preparation of individual care plan, identification and recommendation of child for foster care, identification of foster carers/parents, preparation of Home Study Report of prospective foster carer/parent, matching of children, foster care placement, and undertaking by foster carers/parents shall be as per para 1.1 to 1.9 of this Chapter.

2. 2.3 Suo Motu care by foster Carers/Parents

In case foster carers/parents wish to suo motu take care of a child in situations where the child is in urgent need of care, they may file an application before the Child Welfare Committee. The Child Welfare Committee after due diligence and as per prescribed procedures in this Chapter may approve the placement of the child in their care - individual or Group Foster care.

2.3 Counselling of the Child and Foster Family

Preparation of the child for the change in environment and family is of utmost importance. The impact of a new placement can be stressful for a child and requires in- depth counselling. The type of preparation will also depend upon the age of the child and the reason for placement of the child in foster care, especially in the case of older children. The interim period before the final placement of the child with the foster family is very crucial and should be handled with care by trained professionals. Special attention shall be given to those children whose biological parents are either imprisoned or undergoing prolonged hospitalisation and these children will be given every opportunity to

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maintain contact with their biological parent. This period shall include counselling and guidance for holistic adjustment of children with foster family.

Counselling is also to be provided to the Foster carers/parents so as to enable them to cope with their overall responsibilities of caring for a child along with their own children with dignity. The counselling for biological parents (in case they are alive and available) is to be provided for making them able to receive the child back.

Modules/templates developed for counselling of the child before and during placement, biological parents and counselling the child with the foster carers/parents during the process of matching are provided at **Annexure C-I to C-IV respectively.**

2.4 Role of Non Governmental Organisations

. Such organisations may support in :

- Shortlisting of foster carers/parents and eligible children;
- Preparation of Individual Care Plan, Child Study Report and Home Study Report;
- Counselling for the child, foster carers/parents and biological families, as required
- Preparation of Information, Education and Communication material
- Spreading awareness on the Foster Care Programme and Advocacy
- Periodic / regular inspections of placement of children in individual and group foster care

2.5 Information Education and Communication Material

Foster carers/parents shall be provided with Information Education and Communication (IEC) material prior to placement of the child on topics such as:

- Challenges of being foster carer/parent
- Helpful tips for foster carer/parent
- Rewards of being foster carer/parent
- Steps of being a foster carer/parent

The above mentioned documents are attached to the Guidelines at annexure G. This material can be used for making handouts, posters etc.

2.6 Commencing Foster Care

Wherever financial support is requested and duly approved, or when such support is not requested, the District Child Protection Unit shall arrange for

escorting the child to the foster family's residence. The financial support shall be directly transferred from the District Child Protection Unit's bank account to the Post Office/bank account in the name of the child to be jointly operated by the child and Foster carers/ parents, at the beginning of every quarter.

The District Child Protection Unit shall provide assistance to the foster family in enrolment of the child placed in individual or group care, in a school near his/her place of residence if so requested for.

2.7 Financial Support

Wherever financial support is requested for the care of a child, after due approval, the foster carers/parents will be given financial support of Rs. 2000 per month. The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) supports the creation of a Sponsorship and Foster Care Fund which is at the disposal of the District Child Protection Unit. An amount of Rs.10 lakhs per annum is allocated per district under the scheme. The State Governments are encouraged to give additional grants to the State Child Protection Society to initiate proactive placement of children in need of protection. The same financial norms will apply for children placed in group foster care.

2.8 Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee (SFCAC)

A Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee (SFCAC) shall be created in each district to review and sanction sponsorship and foster care fund. The SFCAC shall meet every month. The total time taken to dispose of a case shall not exceed three months from the date of the receipt of the application. The constitution of the Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee shall be as follows:

- Chairperson – District Child Protection Officer
- Member – Protection Officer (Non-Institutional Care)
- Member – Chairperson/Member of Child Welfare Committee
- Member – Representative of Specialized Adoption Agency
- Member – Representative of a local Voluntary Organisation working in the area of Child Protection

2.9 Safeguards

- I. Not more than two children shall be placed with an individual foster family except in the case of group foster care. The only exception will be in case of siblings who shall be preferably placed together in a single family;

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- II. Where relevant and necessary, biological parents' consent is important in foster placement;
- III. While giving a child in foster care it should be ensured that the foster carers/parents preferably had biological children of the same sex as the foster child;
- IV. If there is a biological special need child in the foster family then no special need child is to be placed as foster child in that family;
- V. The foster family, Child Care Institution, the District Child Protection Unit and the Committee shall make efforts for a smooth transition of the child from the institution to foster care or to any other alternate care;
- VI. As far as possible, the children will be placed in individual or group foster care with foster families having same socio-cultural milieu and ethnic groups.
- VII. Priority shall be given to placing children in individual care, however, if individual foster parents are not available, the CWC can place them in group foster care with selected, qualified and approved foster carers/parents

Chapter III: Monitoring and Review

3.1 Monitoring of Placement

The Child Welfare Committee and the Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee shall conduct either by itself or through District Child Protection Unit, a periodic review of the placement in the best interest of the child and take appropriate action including extension or termination of the foster care placement.

The monitoring tools for the foster care placements; monitoring of foster care program in the districts and tool for monitoring the investigation and interventions done for the complaints by children of maltreatment, exploitation and abuse are placed at **Annexure D – I to D– III respectively.**

The form for making a complaint is placed at **Annexure E - I.** The investigation form is placed at **Annexure E - II.**

3.2 Tracking Progress of the Child

As prescribed under ICPS the Outreach Worker will visit each family at least once a week for the first month followed by monthly visits of which records are to be maintained;

The Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care shall be required to:

- Undertake monthly visits to the foster carers/parents home (individual or group care) in the first quarter and thereafter quarterly visits for a period of one year followed by six monthly visits till the completion of foster care placement;
- Create and maintain Individual Case Files for each child in foster care;
- Make monthly visits to the school in the first quarter and thereafter quarterly visits for a period of one year followed by six monthly visits till the completion of foster care placement;
- Obtain and maintain attendance certificates as part of child's records;
- Note the general well-being of the child, including his health, and the general family environment;
- Recommend extension or termination of the foster care agreement based on the progress of the child.

3.3 Records to be maintained by District Child Protection Unit

The Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care, District Child Protection Unit shall maintain:

- (i). A master register of children in the foster care program which shall provide a complete, disaggregated picture of the process including:
 - a. Details of the child placed in foster care
 - Photograph of the child, foster carer/parent, biological parents, if available. These photographs may be refreshed every year.
 - Age at the time of placement
 - Gender
 - Parental status
 - b. Details of the placement - individual or group
 - Date of placement
 - Period of placement according to the Child Welfare Committee Order
 - Date and reasons for extension or termination of placement, as applicable
 - c. Details of disbursement of Foster Care Grant for the Minutes of Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee meetings
- (ii). Individual Case File of every child placed in foster care which shall include:
 - Source of referral
 - Home Study Report of the biological family, where applicable with photograph
 - Home Study report of the foster family- individual or group care, with photograph
 - Child Study Report
 - Individual Care Plan
 - Placement order of the Child Welfare Committee
 - Record (number and significant details) of each visit with the child, foster family, Biological family, if available and child's school

- Record of all reviews of the placement including observations, extent and quality of compliance with Care Plan, child's developmental milestones, child's academic progress, and any changes in family environment
- In the case of extension or termination of the placement, record of date and reason for termination
- The formats for maintaining record of case visit to the child's foster family is placed at **Annexure F**.

3.4 Submission of Quarterly reports to Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee (SFCAC)

The Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care of the District Child Protection Unit / NGO identified by District Child Protection Unit shall present Quarterly Reports of each child before the Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee (SFCAC) for review and recommendation to the Child Welfare Committee.

3.5 Termination of Foster Care

- (i). The Child Welfare Committee, after consideration of the recommendations of the Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee and the report of District Child Protection Unit, has the right to terminate a foster care placement.
- (ii). The Child Welfare Committee shall consider the views of the foster carers/parents before termination of the foster care placement;
- (iii). Once the review has been conducted and the foster parents have been given proper notice, the Child Welfare Committee shall record the date and reasons for terminating the placement in the order issued along with an order to place the child in another suitable foster family. In the interim the child may be placed in a child care institution.
- (iv). Termination of a foster care placement may occur in the following cases:
 - When the child attains the age of 18, foster care is deemed to have concluded and the child has the option to avail services of aftercare programme

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- When a child is placed in foster care due to non-availability of biological parent (e.g. due to imprisonment or institutionalisation for treatment of mental illness), the foster care placement may be terminated when the biological parent is released and requests the Committee for the custody of the child. The Child Welfare Committee shall issue a specific order if deemed fit for the reunification of the child with biological parent.
- When a child is referred for adoption by the Specialised Adoption Agency to a suitable adoptive family and the child's consent is obtained, the foster care placement may be terminated by the Child Welfare Committee.
- When a complaint is made by either the child, relatives, or member(s) of the community, and after due inquiry by the District Child Protection Unit or when the Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care observes the following during a home visit to individual or group care setting
 - The child has stopped going to school or the attendance of the child in school is below 75% (special circumstances such as disability or illness of the child shall be considered as an exception).
 - The child has been/ is being subjected to physical abuse, emotional abuse and/or neglect in the foster home.
 - The child has been/ is engaged in labour in violation of labour laws
 - Misappropriation of the foster care financial support for the child in individual or group foster care setting by the foster carers/parent
- When a complaint or request is made by either the child, foster carers/ parents, or relatives, or when the Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care observes the following during a home visit to the individual or group care setting:
 - Foster parents are no longer 'fit' to adequately meet the child's social, emotional and developmental needs.
 - Foster parents and/ or the child are unable to adjust in the placement in spite of counselling.

Chapter IV: Role of Authorities and Agencies

4.1 Role of District Child Protection Unit (DCPU)

The District Child Protection Unit is specifically responsible for the following activities:

- Carrying out all activities related to child protection, including the administration of the Foster Care Program;
- Shall identify suitable NGOs/Voluntary Organisations to work with the District Child Protection Unit on Foster Care program;
- Maintaining all information pertaining to the Foster Care Program and being the contact point for all the Child Care Institutions and Specialized Adoption Agencies in the district;
- Advocacy, training and capacity building of stakeholders in the district on the Foster Care Program such as Child Welfare Committee, NGOs, etc.;
- Selecting and maintaining separate roster of prospective foster carers/parents opting for individual and group foster care
- Maintaining a database of all Foster Care placements (individual and group placements) including details of the Foster Care carers/parents and the child until the child attains the age of 18 years;
- Encouraging the Foster Care parent to register for an Aadhar number for themselves and the child as this would enable tracking of the child during the placement and after;
- Addressing complaints, investigations and interventions of complaints
- Monitoring and evaluation of the Foster Care Program as a whole on a regular basis;
- Recommending termination of Foster Care placement to the Child Welfare Committee for one or more of the reasons outlined in Section 5 of Chapter III;
- Recommending extension of Foster Care Placement provided that the progress of the child is satisfactory and other alternate options are not available including re-unification of the child with his biological parents.

4.2 Role of District Child Protection Officer (DCPO)

- The District Child Protection Officer shall function as the nodal officer for the Foster Care Program and shall receive regular reports

regarding ongoing cases from the Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care;

- The District Child Protection Officer shall **assess the** cases managed by the Protection Officer, counsellor and others working in the District Child Protection Unit from time to time to ensure time stipulations are adhered to;
- The District Child Protection Officer shall **guide the** Foster Carers/ parents opting for individual and group foster care and child on their responsibilities and support available to them under the Foster Care Program;
- The District Child Protection Officer shall **submit a Quarterly Report** to the SFCAC and an Annual Report to the state Child Protection Society.
- Maintaining a roster of prospective foster carers/parents opting for individual and group foster care.

4.3 Role of Protection Officer-Non Institutional Care (PO-NIC) and Protection Officer-Institutional Care (PO-IC)

- The Protection Officer –Non Institutional Care is responsible to take **up cases for individual and group foster care.** He will have the support of the Protection Officer-Institutional Care to identify cases of children living in the Child Care Institutions.
- The Protection Officer –Non Institutional Care and Protection Officer – Institutional Care shall **scrutinize the documents** for eligibility of children and shall work in coordination in the best interest of the child or children;
- The Protection Officer-Institutional Care shall **collect and compile** data on different dimensions of the child protection problems in terms of number of children requiring support, number of children in institutions and the kind of services they need;
- The Protection Officer-Institutional Care shall ensure setting up and management of the **child tracking system of all** institutional care program
- Protection Officer –Non Institutional Care is responsible for preparing **Home Study Report of the Foster families and matching the** Foster Care family with the needs of the child once the needs have been assessed;

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- In case of the child whose parents are in jail, the Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care will approach them for taking their consent for placement of the child in Foster Care.
- The Protection Officer –Non Institutional Care will facilitate the applications given by the parents of the terminally ill children with the Child Welfare Committees requesting to place their children in foster care.
- A combined list for children recommended for Foster Care within institutions and those who are not in institutional care will be prepared by Protection Officer –Non Institutional Care. Only cases where financial support is requested by the foster carers/parents for placement of the child and those non formal kinship arrangements requiring sponsorship will be placed before the Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee for consideration and approval, every month.
- Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care will ensure that counselling and guidance is provided to the child and the Foster Care family before and during the period of foster-care as prescribed in para 3 of Chapter-II of these guidelines;
- Protection Officer –Non Institutional Care supervise the care arrangement till the child is 18 years of age, with the help of the counsellor, social worker, outreach worker and community volunteers working in the District Child Protection Unit;
- In case biological parents are alive, the Protection Officer –Non Institutional Care will ensure that they keep in contact with the child through scheduled visits;
- Protection Officer –Non Institutional Care will monitor the Foster Care programmes through regular visits to the Foster Care family and community as prescribed in these guidelines and maintain records of the same.

4.4 Role of Child Welfare Committee

- In case a family directly approaches the Child Welfare Committee for fostering the child eg requests of terminally ill parents or in suo motto cases, the Committee, if agrees with the urgency of the situation, shall ask District Child Protection Unit to conduct a child study and a home study;
- Examine HSR of the prospective Foster Care family opting for individual and group foster care and after being satisfied declare them as 'fit persons';

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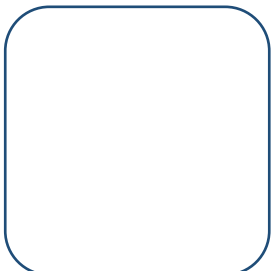
- The Child Welfare Committee will examine the Individual Care Plan of the child, consent of parents wherever required and approvals of SFCAC in cases requesting financial support submitted by the DCPU and satisfy itself regarding the suitability for placement in Foster Care;
- In case of a child who is able to understand, the Child Welfare Committee may also interview the child to take his/her consent;
- The Child Welfare Committee shall make an order in prescribed format given in Form XVII Rule 34(1) of the JJ Act, for support to the child through Foster Care, and send a copy to District Child Protection Unit for appropriate action;
- The Child Welfare Committee shall periodically review each child's case to ensure that the child is being properly cared for;
- After reviewing the standard of care given to the child the CWC shall pass orders for extension of foster care placement or orders of termination in case of unsatisfactory care and shall decide on alternative rehabilitation measure for the child.

4.5 Role of Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee (SFCAC)

- Every district will have a Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee (SFCAC) to implement and monitor the programme as provided under Integrated Child Protection Scheme;
- The Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee will review each recommendation and approve /Foster Care support in all cases found deserving by it. They will then refer to Child Welfare Committee for the final order for foster care.

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Annexure- A

<u>CHILD STUDY REPORT</u>		
SI No:	Item	Response
1	Date of Assessment	
2	Source of Referral	
3	Photograph of the Child to be refreshed periodically	
<i>Profile of the Child</i>		
4	Name of the Child	
5	Date of Birth	
6	Place of Birth	
7	Age	
8	Nationality	
9	Religion	
10	Education	
11	Mother Tongue	
12	Present Address	
13	Aadhaar Card Number	
14	Contact Details a) Landline b) Mobile	

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15	<p>Placement History if the child is from institution</p> <p>a) Date of Placement</p> <p>b) Name and Permanent details of the child</p> <p>c) Reason for leaving the family</p>	
16	<p>Reason for Placement if the child is from community</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Mother or both parents in prison</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Parents are suffering from long term illness</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dysfunctional family(eg substance abuse, domestic violence etc)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Parents in process of separation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Parents in process of legal custody dispute</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Natural disaster</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Others</p>

17. Details of Family of Origin		
--	--	--

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SI No:	Name	Relationship with the Child	Age	Education	Marital status	Occupation And income

18. Educational History of the Child

i)	Name of the School	
ii)	Class	
iii)	If the Child is a dropout then name of the school and class last attended	
iv)	Reason for leaving school	
v)	Any vocational training acquired (If an adolescent)	
vi)	Learning difficulties(If any)	
vii)	Co-curricular activities participated at School	
viii)	Details of any assistance received from teachers, school or others(Sponsorship, Scholarship, special assistance in learning)	
ix)	What is the view of the school towards the child and his educational progress	
x)	What is the view of the child towards his school	

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19. Medical History of the Child		
i)	Present Health Status	
ii)	Any addictions(Smoking/Drinking/others)	
iii)	Disability/Special Needs that child requires	
iv)	Any other treatment that the child is undergoing	
v)	Any record of Illness	
vi)	Status on Developmental milestones / immunization etc. (in case information available)	
20. Social History		
i)	The child spent most of his/her time with whom?	<input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Siblings <input type="checkbox"/> Relatives <input type="checkbox"/> others
ii)	Any history of having been in conflict with law	
21. Emotional Development		
i)	Details of any traumatic incidents in the Child's life (including violence and sexual abuse)	
22 Interaction with the Child (child's consent)		
i)	Do you know about Foster Care? (If the answer is No explain to the child.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
ii)	Was the child's opinion sought when the decision taken to place him/her in foster care?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
iii)	Is the child comfortable with the decision to be placed in foster care? If NO, elicit the	

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	reasons.	
23. Interaction with family members/Institution members (If possible)		
i)	Date of First Contact with the care and protection agencies	
ii)	What are the behavior traits that are of concern?	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of co-operation <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Adjustment <input type="checkbox"/> Introvert <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive <input type="checkbox"/> Not Communicative <input type="checkbox"/> Others.Specify.
iii)	Nature of vulnerability/risk faced by the child in his/her family and environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Neglect <input type="checkbox"/> Substance abuse(both parents and child under the influence) <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence <input type="checkbox"/> Physical and Sexual Abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Differently Abled <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of access to medical care <input type="checkbox"/> Others.Specify.
iv)	Does the child require any special care? Specify	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
24	Remarks of the social worker/ Protection Officer (CPO)	

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	Name	
	Signature	

APPLICATION FORM

**To be submitted by foster carer/parents in response to the advertisement given by
or an Agency permitted by DCPU**

(Photograph
of both the Applicant)

Agency /DCPU Details :

Name of the Agency/DCPU

Address

Telephone

Fax

E-mail

Date (Form Submitted)

B. Details of the Applicant

	Foster carer/parent -1	Foster carer/parent -2
Name		
Date of Birth		
Age		
Educational status		
Marital status		
Nationality		
Religion		
Adhar card no.		
Occupation		

- **Address and contact details**
- **Number of biological children**
- **Annual income**

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- **Mother Tongue**
- **Other language known**

- C. Preference of child to be taken in Foster Care
- a) Age Group
i) 6-9 years ii) 10-12 years iii) 13-18
- b) Any other preferences :
(Gender, Religion, Disability.)
- c) Type of placement
- i) Short term
- ii) Long term

- D. Reasons to be wanting to foster care :

E . We have the consent of all family members including children for fostering a child.

Yes No

E We agree to participate in all training programmes organized by the Government/ agency?

Yes No

F. We agree to facilitate the monitoring visit of the CPO/Social Worker to our home and make all our family members available for the meetings?

Yes No

26. Details of Two references:

Declaration

We _____ hereby declare that the particulars furnished by us in this application form are true to the best of our knowledge and belief. In case any information is found to be incorrect, our application shall liable to be rejected.

Date:

Name &

Place:

Signatures of both the Spouses

COUNSELING THE POTENTIAL FOSTER CHILD BEFORE PLACEMENT

Fill up this form during every counseling session with the child.

1. Preliminary details:

- i. Case Name
- ii. Case Number:
- iii. Date:

2. Details of the case worker/counsellor

- i. Name:
- ii. ID no.
- iii. Other identifying information:

3. Counsellor the child or the sibling group. Fill in the following;

Name: _____ Age _____

Name: _____ Age _____

Name: _____ Age _____

4. Visit to Location: address where the child was counselled:

5. Name of Adults who participated in visit: (relative, foster parent, staff)

6. Other Children in family/Home:

(List only gender, age, and relationship to child (birth, foster, adoptive, other)

7. Issues to be discussed in the counselling session: *(Educating prospective foster children about what they can expect from being a foster child)*

1. Does the child understand the concept of foster care?

Yes No

(If not, explain foster care fully including the concept, the legal aspects and the key stakeholders in the process including the roll of the DCPU, PO-NIC, DCPO, CWC, SFCAC, etc).

**COUNSELING TEMPLATE FOR FOSTER CHILD / CARERS/PARENTS
(IN-PLACEMENT)**

Fill up this form during every counseling session with the child.

1. Preliminary details:

- i. Case Name
- ii. Case Number:
- iii. Date:

2. Details of the case worker/counsellor

- i. Name:
- ii. ID no.
- iii. Other identifying information

3. Counsellor counseled the child or the sibling group. Fill in the following;

Name: _____ Age _____
Name: _____ Age _____
Name: _____ Age _____

4. Visit of Location: address where the child was counselled:

5. Name of Adults who participated in visit: (relative, foster parent, staff)

6. Placement Type:

7. Other Children in family/Home:

(List only gender, age, and relationship to child (birth, foster, adoptive, other))

8. Issues to be counselled

- i. Are there any Cultural and ethnic considerations identified and are to be addressed
- ii. Is the child being accepted into the foster parent's community? If not, why?

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- iii. Mental Health/Treatment Plan: Is the child in good health
- iv. Have foster parents noticed any recent changes in the child's mood or behavior?
- v. Does the foster parent have questions about the quality or frequency of mental health services?
- vi. Attachment: Does child have concerns related to birth family or siblings or visits with them?
- vii. Has the child noticed any recent changes in the mood or behaviour of foster parents?
- viii. How do foster parents respond to these concerns?
- ix. What are the placement providers doing to maintain the connection between the child and the birth family? What has worked or not worked? What help do they need? (How frequently the child visits to his/her biological parents or when did the child last met with his/her biological parents ,How did the child feel after meeting biological parents and siblings ,For how long he stayed with them, Who accompany the child to biological parents)
- x. Education: How is the child doing in school? Consider social as well as academic issues. What does the child or family need to increase success? If applicable, ask about after school program or child care attendance hours.
- xi. What is the child's future planning from the child's own thinking?
- xii. Safety and Supervision in the foster: Does the child feel safe in the home?
- xiii. Is safe and appropriate discipline being used?
- xiv. Is there an appropriate level of supervision for children in the home?
- xv. Child behavior and parenting skills: What's going well for this child behaviorally? Is any child displaying challenging/worrisome behaviors?
- xvi. How capable & successful do foster parents feel managing child's behaviors? What's working/not working?

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- xvii. Who does the foster parent turn to for help and advice-friends, extended family, coworkers, church, school?
- xviii. Does the child have social/emotional support and connections outside the home?

Summary of the issues identified:

Needs/Questions identified by child (include safety issues):

(1)

(2)

(3)

Needs/Questions identified by foster parents:

(1)

(2)

(3)

General Observations by Social Worker or person filling out the form.

Signature

Copy to : Chairperson/ Member, Child Welfare Committee

COUNSELING TEMPLATE FOR BIOLOGICAL FAMILIES OF FOSTER CHILDREN

Fill up this form during every visit with biological family.

- i. Name of the child;
- ii. Name of the biological parents
- iii. Address

Please answer the following questions:

- i. Does the biological parent/ family member wish to have more/ less contact with the child?
- ii. Has the biological parent/ family member's situation changed?
- iii. Do they wish to care for the child? (If yes, please make recommendation to CWC through case worker and PO-NIC).
- iv. How does the child react to the biological parent/ family member? Do they wish for a connection?
- v. What is the physical and mental condition of the biological parent/ family member?
- vi. Has the biological parent/ family member participated in the Individual Care Planning? If not, why and are they interested in participating?

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- vii. Other notes and observations:
- viii. Next Steps/ When is the next visit scheduled?:

Signature

Copy to Chairperson/member, CWC

MATCHING PROCESS OF FOSTER PARENT AND FOSTER CHILD

**To be filled out continuously during the matching process and submitted with a written covering letter for the match submitted to the CWC.

1. Preliminary details

i. Case Name/Number:

ii. Form Fill Date:

iii. Child or Sibling Group Being Matched

Name: _____ Age _____

Name: _____ Age _____

Name: _____ Age _____

2. Potential match information:

i. Name:

ii. Fit person declared? Yes | No (If no, why is match occurring?)

iii. How was this matching foster parent identified?

3. Why do the social work/ person filling out the matching format think that this is an appropriate match?

4. Have the biological family and extended relatives been ruled out, if so for what reasons?

5. Have all safe and appropriate adults connected to the child been ruled out, if so for what reasons?

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6. If no, to both above, which other carers were considered? Why have they not been matched with the child?

7. What is the child's reaction to the foster parents during the above meetings?

8. According to the above visits, what are social worker's views about the identified risks regarding this?

9. What are social worker's plans for managing these risks?

10. Are there any additional services required to ensure that the needs of the placed child are met?

11. Where no placement is identified, what is the future plan for the child?

12. What is the final decision of the case worker?

Signature (PO-NIC)

Copy to - Chairperson/ Member, Child Welfare Committee

ANNEXURE- D - I

**MONITORING TOOL
(FOR FOSTERCARE PLACEMENT)
Filled by PO(NIC) for every case**

Date of Visit:

(Affix Recent
Photo)

- a) Name :
- b) Date of Birth & Age :
- c) Gender
- d) Date of Placement

1. Details of Foster Parents

- a) Name of Foster Parents
- b) Address
- c) Contact details
 - i) Landline/ Mobile:
- d) Aadhaar Card Number
- e) Photograph of Parents

(Affix recent photo)

(Affix recent photo)

3. Interaction with the Foster Child

a) Child's experience being part of the family (with reference to whether the child is properly cared for – physical, emotional and health) describe	
i) Health Indicators	

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	<p>a) Present Health Status</p> <p>b) Any record of Illness</p> <p>c) Any other treatment that the child is undergoing</p> <p>ii) Emotional</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Happy and well-adjusted</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In process of adjusting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> maladjusted</p>
b)	<p>How is the child faring in his/her studies? (i) check in relation with the grades/marks the child achieved in previous examinations,</p> <p>(ii) Foster parents have regular conversations with the child regarding his/her studies, extra curricular activities</p> <p>(iii) Do they attend PTA meetings?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/></p>
c)	<p>i) The amount of time parents (foster) spend with the child either alone or together with their own children.</p> <p>ii) How do they spend time together as a family and for what ?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Having conversations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dining</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Playing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Watching TV</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Going to school</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Doing homework together</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Others (specify)</p>

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	iii) Does the foster child share with the foster parent's problems he /she is facing either at home, school in the neighbourhood or emotionally feeling not happy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Does the child get support from foster parents' children? (do they mutually help each other)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Has there been any incident that made the foster child feel discriminated against?	
f)	Has there been any incident/incidents that made you uncomfortable? i) The way a foster parent/older sibling/any other member touched you. ii)The conversations foster parents/older siblings/any other member had with you iii) Any materials- visuals, printed you were made to watch or read iv) Were you at any time sexually assaulted or abused?* *if the answers are "yes" immediate steps should be taken to remove the child and send to a place of safety and support the child with medical and psycho-social therapy. ** Actions to be taken against the foster carers or parents according to the procedures laid down.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

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	*** Is similar treatment being meted out to their biological child also? Then the biological child should also be treated as a child in need of care and protection and appropriate action may be taken.	
g)	Whether the child keeps in contact with his/her family of origin (by telephone, letters, visits). Specify	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
h)	Have you been beaten by the foster parent at any time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
i)	Have you been spoken to in a manner that you felt humiliated?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
j)	Are you made to do household chores?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
k)	Do the biological children of the foster parents made to do the same household chores?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

5. Interaction with Foster Parents

a)	Parent's impressions about the behavior (emotional well-being) of the child in the family	<input type="checkbox"/> Happy and well-adjusted <input type="checkbox"/> In process of adjusting <input type="checkbox"/> Maladjusted
b)	Perception about his/her adjustment with the household and with other members in the family	<input type="checkbox"/> Happy and well-adjusted <input type="checkbox"/> In process of

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		<p style="text-align: center;">adjusting</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Maladjusted
c)	How do you discipline the child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Reason with the child <input type="checkbox"/> Scolding , Chastise <input type="checkbox"/> Beat the child <input type="checkbox"/> Other Methods (Specify)
d)	What are the behavior traits that are of concern and how do you as parents deal with them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of co-operation <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Adjustment <input type="checkbox"/> Introvert <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive <input type="checkbox"/> Not Communicative <input type="checkbox"/> Any Other
e)	Do you spend time together with the foster child and biological children? Describe.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
f)	Views on the progress of Child's education and other talents i) Child is faring well in school ii) If the child is not faring well in school do you seek to find out the reasons a) from the child b) the school teacher iii) Do you attend PTA meetings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
g)	Do the foster parents consult the child while taking decisions on behalf of him/her?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
h)	How does the child show his approval/disapproval to the foster parent's decisions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept the decision with happiness <input type="checkbox"/> Accept the decisions but unhappy <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse to accept

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		the decision and shows aggressive behavior)
i)	Are the foster parents aware of the social networks of the child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
j)	Views on child's social relationship with the neighbors, school friends and teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Good and regular interaction <input type="checkbox"/> Periodic Interactions
k)	What is their plan for the child?(To be noted down)	
l)	Does the foster child maintain the contact with his/her family of origin? (by telephone, letters, visits). Specify	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
m)	Who maintains the bank account of the foster child as a parent?	

6. Interaction with biological children of the Foster Parents:

a)	The things they do together with the foster child	<input type="checkbox"/> Dining <input type="checkbox"/> Playing <input type="checkbox"/> Watching TV <input type="checkbox"/> Going to school <input type="checkbox"/> Doing homework together
b)	Do they have quarrels or fights between themselves and the foster child? If yes, how often, on what issues, and how do they resolve it. Please note down.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes

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c)	How do you feel when your parents show love, affection and care to the foster child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Happy <input type="checkbox"/> Unhappy <input type="checkbox"/> Angry <input type="checkbox"/> Jealous
----	--	--

7. Interaction with the School Teachers:

a)	Information about the academic performance of the child in the school (<i>verify with progress cards to see if the child has shown any progress</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
b)	Teacher's observation: if the child has adjusted to his/her foster parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Happy and well-adjusted <input type="checkbox"/> In process of adjusting <input type="checkbox"/> Maladjusted
c)	Do the foster parents attend parent-teacher meetings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
d)	Do they seem interested in the child's studies?(<i>by enquiring of his academic achievements, his relationship with teachers and classmates</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent
e)	Observation on child's behavior in the school (<i>his relationship with teachers, classmates</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Happy and well-adjusted <input type="checkbox"/> In process of adjusting <input type="checkbox"/> Maladjusted
f)	Any concerns of the child in the school. If yes, give details	

8. Interaction with Parents of Origin

a)	Have the parents of origin maintained contact with their child (by telephone calls, letters, and	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
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	visits? How frequently?	
b)	Was the child happy to meet them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Upset while meeting them
c)	Did the child raise any issues with regard to his or her foster carers/parents/family with them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
d)	Do they have any interaction with the foster family regarding the wellbeing of the child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
e)	The family's status to receive back the child	<input type="checkbox"/> Family is interested and in a position to receive back the child. <input type="checkbox"/> Family is interested but not in a position to receive back the child. <input type="checkbox"/> Family is not interested to receive back the child.
f)	Received any support from the government or any other agency in helping them to receive back the child from the foster carers (If yes, give details)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

9. Interaction with Neighbours

a)	Knowledge about the neighbor fostering a child.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
b)	Information about the attitude and behavior of the foster family towards the child	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive and Happy <input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent Attitude <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Attitude Misbehavior towards foster

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		<input type="checkbox"/> children
c)	Observed any quarrel or issues between the family members and foster child or between neighborhood and the foster child (if yes, give detail)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

10. Remarks on the progress made

11. Other Observations by Protection Officer/Social Worker :

Signature

MONITORING TOOL
(For Foster Care Programme in the District)
Monthly Report to be submitted to CWC with copy to SCPS

1	<p>What are the activities conducted by the District Child Protection Unit with respect to Foster Care Program in the District?</p> <p align="center">Specify the type and number of cases</p>	
2	<p>Number of Voluntary Organizations identified and authorized working with the District Child Protection Unit on Foster Care program?</p> <p align="center">Identified</p> <p align="center">Authorized</p>	
3	<p>What are the information's you maintain pertaining to the Foster Care Program in the district?</p> <p align="center">Specify the types of information</p>	
4	<p>Have you conducted any advocacy activities for stakeholders in the district on Foster Care Program?</p> <p align="center">If yes, specify the nature and types of advocacy?</p>	1. Yes 2. No
5	<p>Have you organized any training programmes?</p> <p align="center">If yes, specify the nature and types of training programmes?</p>	1. Yes 2. No

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6	<p>Have you organized any capacity building programs?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If yes, specify the nature and types of capacity building programs?</p>	1. Yes 2. No
7	<p>How many advertisements have been issued for foster carers/parents to apply for foster care in the month? Is there a roster prepared for the same?</p>	
8	<p>Do you maintain data on prospective foster carers/parents?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If yes, give details</p>	1. Yes 2. No
9	<p>How many Foster Care parents and children have been helped to link and register for an Aadhar number?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Specify the number</p>	
	<p>How do you monitor and evaluate the Foster Care Program in the district?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Specify also the frequency at which you monitor.</p>	
10	<p>Have you recommended to terminate any Foster Care placement to the Child Welfare Committee for one or more of the reasons?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If yes, number of cases?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reasons</p>	1. Yes 2. No
11	<p>Have you recommended any cases for</p>	1. Yes 2. No

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	extension of Foster Care Placement If yes, specify the number of cases Reasons	
--	--	--

14. Any Other Comments

15. Observations by the Child Protection Officer

Signature of the DCPO

Name

MONITORING TOOL
(Investigations and Interventions for Complaints by children of Maltreatment, Exploitation and Abuse)

A		Interaction with DCPO	
1.	Do you maintain a logbook on complaints received regarding foster care issues?	1. Yes 2. No	
2.	No of complaints registered (specify the number according to complainants)		
3.	No of complaints registered (specify the number according to the persons who registered the complaints)	<u>Complainant</u> Foster child - Foster parents- DCPU - DCPO - SFCAC - CWC - SAA - Childline - Advocate - Teacher - Others Specify) -	<u>Number</u>
4.	Nature of complaints received (specify the nature and number)	a. Allegation of abuse b. Criminal offence c. Social worker not visiting foster homes d. Complaint regarding CPO e. Poor facilities (eg lack of food etc)	
5.	Number of complaints on which action has been taken by the protection officer (non-institutional care)		
In the case of a complaint against Child			

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protection officer (non-institutional) who takes the responsibility for taking action?	
Nature of the actions taken in various cluster of cases	
Status of the complaints registered	
Number of complaints Resolved	
Number of complaints pending	
Number of complaints in process	
Number of cases requiring follow up	
Number of complaints pending for action	

6. Any other comments
7. Other observations by the Evaluator

Signature

Name

COMPLAINT FORM

Date:

i. Name of the person filing Complaint:

ii. Address:

iii. *Details of the child? If known*

- a) Name:
- b) Gender:
- c) Age:
- d) Caste:
- e) Religion

iv. Who are the Child's Foster Parent(s): (if you know these answers, fill in as much information as ipossible):

- a) Name:
- b) Address:
- c) State:
- d) Pin code:
- e) Phone no:
- f) E-mail address

v. Details of the nature of Complaint: (i.e. foster child being abused, social worker not visiting the foster home, etc.)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

vi. Request (action/ response/ outcome).

.....
.....
.....

Yours sincerely

(Signature)

Complaint can be made to any of the following:

**Chairperson/ Member, Child Welfare Committee
District Child Protection Officer
Department Concerned of District Administration**

INVESTIGATION FORM

The Foster Care Complaint Template should be attached to this document

- 1) Complaint Received (date):
- 2) Name of the person who received the complaint:
- 3) Complaint was received at the office of:
- 4) Complaint number given:
- 5) Name& designation of the person given charge of the investigations:
- 6) Action Taken:
- 7) Result of Action:
- 8) Follow up action:
- 9) Who is responsible for follow up:
- 10)Date of follow up:
- 11)Date(s) of subsequent follow ups:

For immediate needs and suspected child abuse or neglect call Childline at 1098 right away or the police

Signature

In charge of the investigations:

CASE VISIT TEMPLATE

1. Preliminary details:
 - i. Case Number:
 - ii. Child name:
 - iii. Visit Date: ____/____/____
 - iv. Name of Foster Parent(s):
 - v. Names of Other Adults Living in Home and with whom the Outreach worker or PO (NIC) interacted:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
2. Observations:
 - i. Changes in the household:
Comments:-----

 - ii. Relationships in the foster family:
Comments:-----

 - iii. Cultural and ethnic considerations :
 - iv. Comments: -----

 - v. Social support and respite:
Comments: -----

 - vi. Services and training
Comments: -----

 - vii. Safety and supervision in the foster home:

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Comments: -----

viii. Child behaviors and parenting skills:

Comments: -----

ix. Schooling/education of child:

Comments: -----

x. Physical and mental health status/needs of child and foster family:

Comments: -----

xi. Visits, interactions with birth family, and shared parenting:

Comments: -----

3 Did you spend time speaking privately with the child? Yes No

4. If no, give reason

Prepared by:(outreach worker/PO(NIC)
...../...../.... (date)

IEC MATERIAL

1. The challenges of being a foster carer/ parent

Separation from family is one of the most upsetting events that can be experienced by a child, therefore becoming a foster carer/parent has many challenges and requires a high level of commitment. Children who have suffered abuse and neglect can display a range of challenging behaviours and require a high level of physical, emotional and social support.

Other challenges may include

- Issues with DCPU
- Inadequate support during emergencies
- Experiencing stress when dealing with children's complex needs
- Lack of information and/or training to address problematic behaviours or health issues
- Inadequate financial resources for children with special needs
- Difficulties dealing with birth parents or issues between the child and the birth parent
- Saying good bye when a child or young person is reunified or moved to another foster placement

2. Helpful tips for foster carers/parents

Below are some helpful tips that may help the foster carers/parents in dealing with the challenges of foster caring:

- Get to know the child in your care
- Identify their strengths and areas of need
- Be aware of any special requirements of the child
- May set boundaries and daily routines (eg meal times and bedtimes). However, these may need to be introduced slowly to allow time for the child to settle in and familiarise with the new family.
- Be patient when a child tests you to find out if you are genuine or patient enough
- As much as the situation permits, you need to be very understanding and show the child that they can trust you.
- If you have children of your own at home, the foster child would need to be adequately looked after and assured that they are welcome in the family.
- When deciding on becoming a foster parent, it is important to consider how your family would feel about it and when possible, involve them in the decision-making.
- When accepting a placement, it is important that you discuss with your case worker the potential issues that may occur, so

you can have realistic expectations of the foster child. It is also important to maintain ongoing contact with your case worker.

- It may help to join a foster parent support group ,if available so you can access local services as well as information resources. If there is no local group available, your case worker might be able to refer you to an online support network.

3. Rewards of being a foster parent

Being a foster parent can be very demanding and exhausting.

However, there are also rewards such as:

- Being instrumental in keeping children safe and helping them to reach their full potential
- Being a highly valued and contributing member of a caring team
- Expanding your social and personal contacts
- Enhancing your own parenting skills and knowledge while helping other parents to develop new ways of relating to children

4. STEPS TO BECOMING A FOSTER CARER

Step 1	Study the information /Advertisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It wil contains basic information about being a foster carer. • After you have read the material and you want to find out more, you should attend an information session. • If you are unsure if you would be suitable or eligible as a foster carer, call the office of the DCPU
Step 2	Attend an information session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the information session you will meet an experienced staff from the DCPU. You will have the chance to ask questions and find out about different types of fostering
Step 3	Expression of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once you and your family have decided to take the next step, complete an application form and return it to DCPU
Step 4	Home visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person from the DCPU team will call you to make a time to meet you and your family at home. This is a chance for us to learn more about you and have a look at your home. For you, it is an opportunity to hear more about fostering. If you still want to go ahead, the worker will leave you an application form.
Step 5	Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application form send to the office of DCPU. The form asks for background details of you and your family. • Part of your application includes giving DCPU permission to carry out police and Department checks, contact referees, and get a health report from your doctor.
Step 6	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment starts after DCPU have received some of the screening information. Some one from DCPU will visit you and your family several times at your home. • You will decide, with the DCPU, what type of foster care you wish to do, and what age and sex of child would fit best with your lifestyle. • DCPU will assess your readiness to become a foster carer and your ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ work as part of a team; ○ respond to a foster child’s emotional, educational, psychological and physical needs;

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ provide a safe home, free of abuse; and○ take the responsibility to learn and develop as a carer.
Step 7	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You will need to attend preparation training sessions.• At these sessions you will learn about why children enter care and the issues that they experience, as well as your and the roles and responsibilities of other partners.
Step 8	Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The DCPU staff will submit a report to the CWCs and SFCAC, who, in turn, will make a recommendation about whether or not you should be a foster carer.• If you are approved, you will get a letter and be asked to sign an undertaking with the CWCs.• This whole process can take about three months. It might seem a long time, and a bit intrusive, but we need all this information to make sure that you are suitable, safe and able to look after other people's children.• If you are not approved, there are still ways you can help. You may be able to assist as volunteer in other ways

EXPLANATORY NOTES ON COUNSELING OF POTENTIAL FOSTER CHILD

1. Counselling should be conducted as per the child's understanding level and he/she should be informed of a foster placement which might happen in their lives. The person involved in the foster care process should be introduced and that the children should be encouraged to share their feelings surrounding this process. **The child's safety and best interest should be the most important consideration in this process.**

2. Objectives of counselling session:

- To begin educating prospective foster children about what they can expect from being a foster child
- To minimize traumatic effects on a child as a result of being removed from their previous familiar environment
- To assure safety and quality of care that a child will receive as his/her right

3. Guiding notes:

1. Does the child understand the concept of foster care?

Yes No

(If not, explain foster care fully including the concept, the legal aspects and the key stakeholders in the process including the roll of the DCPU, PO-NIC, DCPO, CWC, SFCAC, etc.)

2. If the child wants to be connected to anyone in society, make sure they are part of this process if safe and appropriate for the child. The identified people are the first potential foster parents. However, they shall follow the said procedure of being a foster carer/parent. Please list all connections the child mentions. Sometimes drawing pictures about their "circle" of people can be very helpful. Ask them to draw a house or their community and ask who is in the circle and who is not. Who have they listed?

EXPLANATORY NOTES ON COUNSELING BIOLOGICAL FAMILIES OF FOSTER CHILDREN

Meetings with biological families of foster children should be done by the foster parents with support from the case worker as per need. **The child's safety and best interest should be the most important consideration in this process.**

A foster parent should remember that for a child, contact with birth family is their connection to identity. Evidence based research shows that when children feel a connection to their roots, regardless of the safety and conditions of their biological family, they feel a connection to life. This is an important connection to maintain when safe and appropriate.

Biological families should not be made aware of where a foster family or foster child lives. They should meet at the CWC, DCPU or case manger's agency under supervised visits to prevent negative impact on foster family. (*eg may extort money from foster family*)

EXPLANATORY NOTES ON CONDUCTING CASE VISIT

Prior to the visit, review records and list below items identified for follow-up at last home visit. Use this list as a prompt during discussion with the foster family.

During this visit be sure to follow up on these top priorities from the last visit: Below each topic area are guiding questions you may wish to use. These questions are merely suggestions, not a script. Please use a piece of paper to fill out comments as per each of the below categories but also use your own questions as per the family situation.

Discuss the topic areas below in a way that is natural and conversational. It is mandatory to cover each topic and make comments in the comments section.

1. Foster carer/parent home

- i. **Changes in the household:** Is anyone new living in the house, staying temporarily, or spending most of his/her time here? New job or financial status?
- ii. **Relationships in the foster family:** How are the children getting along? What about relationships between adults and children? Between adults? What's the greatest source of conflict in the family? How are issues resolved?
- iii. **Cultural and ethnic considerations :** (What are foster parents doing to learn about, honor, and maintain connection to the original culture(s) of the children placed in their home? Do they have any questions or need information about the child?
- iv. **Social support and respite:** Who does foster family turn to for help and advice—friends, extended family, coworkers, community, religion, school? Does the child have social/emotional support and connections outside the home?
- v. **Services and training:** What resources/referrals are needed for child or other members of foster family—i.e child care, substance abuse, etc.? What skill would the foster parent or child in foster care benefit from learning/enhancing right now?
- vi. **Safety and supervision in the foster home:** For example, does the child feel safe in the home? Is safe and appropriate discipline being used? Is there an appropriate level of supervision for children in the home? Does the community accept the child living in the home; are there any dangers therein?
- vii. **Child behaviors and parenting skills:** Is any child displaying challenging behavior? How capable & successful do foster parents feel in managing child's behavior? What's working/not working?

- viii. **Schooling/education of child:** How is the child doing in school? Consider social as well as academic issues. What does the child or family need to increase success? Are they taking tuitions?
- ix. **Physical and mental health status/needs of child and foster family:** Is the child in good health? Does the child have unmet or ongoing medical needs? Have foster parents noticed any recent changes in the child's mood or behavior? Does the child or foster parent have questions about the quality or frequency of mental health services? Is anyone else in the home having medical or mental health problems?
- x. **Visits, interactions with birth family, and shared parenting:** Does child have concerns or needs related to birth family or visits with them? How do foster parents respond? What are foster parents doing to maintain the connection between the child and the birth family? What has worked or not worked? What help do they need?

If they have done fostering earlier too, how well the child had integrated into the family. What is he/she doing now? Interaction with that child will reveal many facets of the foster carer/parent's personality.

EXPLANATORY NOTES ON CONDUCTING HOME STUDY

1. Description of a preferred child

The type of child, the foster-carer would consider (To be filled after a full discussion with the Foster-carer)

2. Give details of:

- personalities:
- family life,
- experiences
- specific qualities of the family that can match with a child's needs.

Note: (The details should facilitate initial identification of a potential match of a family with a specific child.)

3. A Home Study Report of the foster carer(s) being a crucial document being prepared by the social worker of the Specialized Adoption Agency/ CCI/DCPU based on the information collected and should broadly include the following information:

- Social status and family background
- Description of the home
- Standard of living as it appears in the home
- Current relations amongst the members in the home
- Status of development of the children already in the home
- Employment and economic status • Health details
- Details of facilities of education, medical, vocational trainings available in the neighborhood
- Reasons for wanting a child in foster care
- Attitudes of the grandparents and other relatives
- Anticipated plans for the foster child
- Legal status of the foster carer(s)
- Willingness to undergo training.

4. DETAILS OF APPLICANT(S)

Background:

- Family structure with details of parents and siblings.
- Significant details of other family members, childhood experiences

Relationships:

- Length of married life

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- what qualities does each applicant bring to the partnership,
- what makes the relationship positive for each other?
- Within the relationship how do applicants cope with problems/stress/anger?
- How do applicants support each other?
- What is each applicant's assessment of how the foster placement will affect his or her relationships
(*This can be understood after several such visits and interactions*)

Decision making:

- How is decision – making exercised in this relationship and how does each of the applicants view this?
- Is there wider extended family involvement in the couple's decision-making process?
- If so, how will this affect the child to be placed?
- What are the strengths and vulnerabilities of this partnership?
 - (a) Children
 - (b) Children and their parents' relationships
 - (c) Children's attitude and readiness for a foster placement sibling.
 - (d) Describe each child and their temperament, any special talent and need, how children have been involved in preparation.

Applicants support networks:

Give a general picture of support systems currently used by the applicants including extended

- Family
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Religious activities
- Community groups
- Include details of the location etc.

Other significant members of the family:

- Living in the house or not.
- Their relationship to the applicants,
- How much time they spent within the home,
- Their attitude to the proposed placement?
- How important is their acceptance of placement to the applicant.

Description of the family life style:

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- Outline what family considers important e.g. how important are religious & cultural practices.
- How is affection show in the family?
- How do the members spend their time?
- What expectations family members have with regard to personal space?
- What value is placed on education/hobbies and leisure activities that the whole family undertakes?

Parenting capacities:

- Experience of the applicants of caring and working with children.
- Describe their adjustment to parenthood.
- What is their understanding of how children develop?
- Using their own childhood experiences what patterns of parenting would they repeat and what would they change?
- What is their understanding of their own parenting strengths/potentials and about their parenting skills to meet the needs of individual child.
- To what extent they would expect other family members to be involved in parenting of their children/placed children.
- How will they ensure that a child will be safe from physical sexual abuse in their family and within wider support networks?

Managing Unacceptable Behaviour:

- What are rules in the household?
- How do the applicants show approval/disapproval?
- What are discipline measures they use?
- Their attitude towards punishment?
- What do they anticipate would be the issues and difficulties for the child?
- Which changes do they anticipate would be needed in their lifestyle?

Social workers assessment:

It should provide an analysis of all the information collected through the format and its significance with regard to the capacity of the applicant to carryout fostering task:

What skills do the applicants have in relating to and working with children? How well will the applicant work with the agency, with biological parents? What are the strengths and resources of the applicants and which are the areas where they may experience difficulty? Also the point of disagreement between the social worker and the applicants should be recorded here

EXPLANATORY NOTE ON COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Who can make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by anyone, including the foster child, Foster parents, DCPU, DCPO, PO-IC, PO-NIC, SFCAC, CWC, SAA, Childline, Advocate, JJB, SAA appointed Social Worker, teacher, family member, Foster Parent(s), member of the public, or member of NGO/agency.

How is the investigation conducted?

Complaints are registered through the **Foster Care Complaint Template** that can be filled out by anyone. This Template is submitted to the DCPU, CWC, SAA and SFCAC by stamped post of the foster child's current district of jurisdiction. The Child Welfare Committee and the Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee shall conduct either by itself or through District Child Protection Unit, a periodic review of the placement in the best interest of the child and take appropriate action including extension or termination of the foster care placement.). The Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care is responsible for any complaint and the processing thereof unless the complaint is about the Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care. If so, the complaint should be addressed directly to the CWC. Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care or the CWC must forward the initial **Foster Care Complaint Template** and **Foster Care Complaint Covering Letter** to their reporting officer within 24 hours and a report within two week of receipt of complaint to their reporting officer as per the **Foster Care Complaint Investigation Template**.

If the complaint does not warrant an investigation as determined by the Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care or CWC, follow up to the complaint will be done by: 1. informal interview with the Foster Carers (and others) in their home with notes taken by the interviewer or by a more formal interview at the home with a written record of the discussion.

In the case of an allegation of abuse is determined the Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care or CWC will interview the carer(s), the foster child and the complainant (if it is someone different). Others who may have relevant information may also be interviewed.

If the complaint is regarding a criminal offence, a police officer will undertake the interviews.

A decision may be reached at any stage of the investigation that the child should be removed from the foster placement if they are considered to be at risk of significant harm. Such a decision should only be made after very careful consideration by the Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care or CWC, and should reflect the paramount concern to protect and promote the best interest

of the child. The removal of a child from a home can be only be done with CWC approval.

What happens when the investigation is completed?

The Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care or CWC is responsible for ensuring that their reporting officer and the foster carer(s) are informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation. The CWC will be responsible for informing the child and his/her biological parents of the outcome of the investigation.

A record of the complaint and the investigation outcome shall be maintained in the foster carers' file.

If the foster carers who have been investigated regarding a complaint are dissatisfied about the way that the investigation was handled, they will be offered the chance to make a complaint through the same procedure:

Steps of investigation visit

In the case of a complaint a visit from the Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care or CWC:

- The first step of the investigation should include an assessment of the foster home environment, neighbourhood and the foster child's daily activities
- Educational, psychological and behavioural information of the child should be obtained from the school attended by foster child (if educational complaint)
- A thorough medical examination of the foster child should be carried out (if medical complaint or abuse complaint)
- The person who has made the complaint should also be interviewed
- If the investigation reveals that the foster child is unable to adjust in the placement, he/she should be given special counselling and should be kept under observation for maximum six months through continuous follow-ups before a final decision
- If the situation is not resolved, the CWC shall issue the order for the relocation of the child from the placement
- If the a complaint of abuse of the foster child by the foster parents is deemed to be true, the child should immediately be taken into protection
- The child should be presented before the CWC and an appropriate order for relocation should be issued
- Foster parents who have been found guilty of abuse shall be subjected to legal action and shall be blacklisted for future placements
- In the case that a foster family is intentionally deemed fit person under false or dishonest pretences, then the personnel responsible (the person conducting home study or the CWC) be subjected to legal action.

In the case of death of foster child or foster parents:

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- In the case that the foster child is suffering from any serious illness, the Protection Officer – Non Institutional Care shall provide this information to the biological parents/ guardian(s)/ CWC/ SJPU.
- In the case of the death of a foster child, all efforts shall be made to generate the death certificate and post mortem report within 24 hours.
- Upon receiving the death certificate, the DCPU shall immediately inform the competent authority and CWC.
- In the case of the death of foster parents, the child should be relocated to a recognised children's home or returned home to his/her biological family.

Considerations:

The best interest of the child should always be considered paramount. The aim of the investigation should always be to resolve the case as soon as possible and protocol should incorporate timelines. For example, if the nature of the complaint is deemed serious then the child should be removed from the placement within a certain number of hours and an emergency care should be prepared within 24 hours.

It is crucial that every person connected with the foster care program understands child abuse, as well as his/her role and responsibilities in protecting children in the program. All stakeholders responsible for implementing the Child Protection Policy should undergo a rigorous training and have a certification followed by periodic refresher program.

Child abuse to be categorized as severe, moderate and mild depending on the intensity and seriousness of the case and reporting formats developed for this. All cases of abuse (mild, moderate and severe) should be reported to the CWC and course of action should be determined by CWC.

In all cases of suspected or proven child abuse or neglect, the focus is placed on safeguarding and protecting the child. At the same time, healing measures are provided and the protection of all persons involved is guaranteed. The affected persons receive the necessary counselling and support.

A quarterly report on all abuse cases to be submitted by the implementing partner to DCPU.

Children's participation should be given importance and they should be empowered to speak up against all forms of abuse, acting as agents of self-protection and the protection of their peers.

For immediate needs and suspected child abuse or neglect call Childline at 1098 right away or the police at _____.