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Purpose

To outline the requirements for working with families where there is a conditional custody order (CCO) with:

- the original custodial parent(s);
- the non-custodial parent; or
- kin/relatives, friends of the family, or other non-parents.


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Definitions

Conditional Custody Order (CCO): An order issued by the court in a juvenile proceeding conferring legal custody of a child to a parent, guardian, relative, or a person with a significant relationship with the child subject to such conditions and limitations as the court may deem necessary to provide for the safety and welfare of the child. Any conditions and limitations shall apply only to the individual to whom custody is granted. (33 V.S.A. § 5102(A)(5))

Family Team Meeting: A meeting of family members, natural supports, and providers. The purpose of the meeting may include: creating a safety plan focused on the harm and risks posed to the child, assessing the child’s safety and well-being in the home, developing a plan for responding to concerns, understanding the family’s needs,

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making decisions about who can provide support to the family, and/or determining the best living situation for the child.

Family Time: Face-to-face parent-child, kin, sibling, and/or contact with others who are important in the life of the child or youth.

Protective Supervision: The authority granted by the court to the Department for Children and Families (DCF) in a juvenile case to take reasonable steps to monitor compliance with the court’s conditional custody order, including unannounced visits to the home in which the child currently resides. (33 V.S.A. § 5102(24))

Safety Network: Family, friends, and community members who care about the child and are willing to take action to support the family in keeping the child safe. They are willing to engage child protection staff and understand the concerns. A safety network may also include professionals.

Related Policies

- Family Services [Policy 82](#): Juvenile Court Proceedings – CHINS
- Family Services [Policy 91](#): Kinship Care & Collaboration with Relatives
- Family Services [Policy 98](#): Reunification of Abused or Neglected Children and Youth
- Family Services [Policy 124](#): Family Time
- Family Services [Policy 125](#): Permanency Planning for Children and Youth in DCF Custody

Policy


The division is obligated to provide services to families and children in conditional custody to the extent it has the resources to do so (33 V.S.A. § 5308 (c)(3)).

Identification of Kin as Potential Placement Resources Prior to a Change in Custody Status

The division has information brochures for custodial parents, non-custodial parents, and relatives:

- [Information for Custodial Parents](#)
- [Information for Non-Custodial Parents](#)
- [Information for Relatives & Friends](#)

The information brochures contain relevant information about the temporary care hearing and options to become involved in caring for the child(ren). For non-custodial parents and relatives, the brochure also provides an authorization form for background checks for all household members age 16 and older. Family services workers and/or

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resource coordinators will provide a brochure to parents and known relatives or persons with a significant relationship with the child before the temporary care hearing.

Assessment of Suitability to Care for a Child/Youth


33 V.S.A. § 5307(e)(5) requires the division to provide to the court the identity and location of a noncustodial parent, a relative, or a person with a significant relationship with the child who may be appropriate, capable, willing, and available to assume temporary legal custody of the child. The division is required to assess the suitability of the person to care for the child. The assessment must include:

- Consideration of the person's ability to care for the child's needs;
- A criminal history record check; and
- A check of allegations of prior child abuse or neglect by the person or by other adults in the person's home.

The *Assessment of Suitability to Care for a Child* is the form used to present suitability assessment information to the court at the temporary care hearing or at other stages of the case where suitability assessment is needed. Within the first 72 hours, it is not necessary for the division to assess every person who might potentially care for the child in the future. This form is completed for individuals interested in caring for the child who are known to the division prior to the hearing. Both the interested caretakers and all household members are included in the assessment. If additional relatives attend a hearing or are identified at a hearing, division staff may refrain from making a recommendation until an updated suitability assessment is completed. Per 33 V.S.A. § 5307(e)(5)(B), the court may continue the hearing, if necessary, to permit the department to complete the assessment.

Division staff will use Appendix I of this policy to guide the assessment of suitability of temporary caregivers and the division’s recommendation to the court. If behaviors or circumstances described in the unsafe/dangerous category of Appendix I are present, the division will recommend against temporary conditional custody to the individual/household.

If behaviors or circumstances indicate further assessment is needed per Appendix I, the division will gather the necessary information, have a discussion with the individual/household members, and determine the current relevancy as it pertains to their suitability to care for the child(ren) based on their needs and vulnerabilities. The timeframe required to complete this work will vary and, in some instances, the division may request that the court continue the hearing to allow for deeper assessment of the identified concerns. If the court requests supplementary information on areas of concern, additional time will be needed and may require a future hearing.

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If relatives express a preference between conditional custody and serving as a placement for the child(ren) while they are in DCF custody, the relative’s preference should be considered in the division’s recommendation. [Vermont Kin As Parents](#) (VKAP) is available to support relatives in discussing and understanding the differences between conditional custody and foster care to determine the best option for their families.

District directors or their designees must approve the division’s recommendation and sign the *Assessment of Suitability to Care for a Child* form.

At the temporary care hearing, recommendations may include:


- Temporary conditional custody to a custodial or noncustodial parent; or
- Temporary conditional custody to a relative or person known to the child; or
- Against temporary conditional custody to an individual if the person, their circumstances, or other household members are deemed to be unsafe or dangerous; or
- Temporary custody to DCF; or
- Time for further assessment if any risks or concerns are identified.

The division shall request protective supervision for all CCOs. Protective supervision allows the division to make appropriate service referrals for children and families, and to take reasonable steps to monitor compliance with the CCO.

If protective supervision is not granted to the department, family services workers will discuss with their supervisor whether all relevant or newly learned information regarding danger and risk has been put forth to the court. If additional information is identified, workers will prepare and submit a supplemental report to the court. Family services workers in consultation with their supervisor, district director, Assistant Attorney General (AAG), and the State’s Attorney may request a motion for reconsideration regarding protective supervision. If all relevant or newly learned information has been shared and protective supervision is still not granted to the department, staff will make efforts to develop a safety and/or case plan to monitor the CCO to the extent possible given the existing order.

During the period of a CCO, the division shall maintain an open case with a case plan and provide appropriate service referrals to the parent(s) and custodian. A CS case will be opened for all CCOs, even if protective supervision is not granted.

In instances of cross-district CCO cases where parents or CCO custodians reside in different districts, the case will be opened in the district where the parent who is the subject of the CHINS petition resides. If conditional custody is granted to a person who resides in a different district than the parent, the home district should notify the district

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the custodian resides in. Cross-district collaboration and teaming may be necessary to support these cases. See Family Services [Policy 211](#) for information on transferring cases between district offices.

Considerations for CCO Conditions

Conditions outlined in the CCO apply to the person with conditional custody of the child or youth. Conditions should address the safe care of the child(ren) and any case-specific safety or well-being concerns. Conditions should be individually considered and proportionate to the risk. At a minimum, the division should consider the following when recommending conditions:

- Conditions specifically related to the reasons the CHINS petition was filed (if appropriate);
- Expectations of the conditional custodian to be the primary caregiver for the child;
- The need for signed releases of information while the CCO is in effect;
- Family time arrangements between the child, both parents, and siblings;
- Announced or unannounced home visits;
- The needs of the child, including: adequate food and nutrition, age and developmentally appropriate supervision, safe housing and sleep areas, regular medical and dental care (including taking medication as prescribed), regular mental health care, adequate financial support for clothing and other needs, attending school daily, participation in extra-curricular activities, and support of the child’s interests, talents and hobbies;
- Collaboration with the worker and participation in team meetings; and
- Engagement with service referrals recommended by the division.

Duration of CCOs and Case Planning Requirements

CCOs are meant to be time-limited. Division staff will make efforts to ensure a timely ending to CCOs and safe closure of these cases.

CCOs with Custodial Parents	The presumptive duration of the order is no longer than six months from the date of the disposition order or conditional custody order, <u>whichever occurs later</u> , unless otherwise extended by the court. If the department, or any party, recommends that the order remain in effect for a longer period, they must file a petition at least 14 days before the presumptive expiration date . A change in circumstances must be demonstrated in order for judges to extend the CCO to the parent (33 V.S.A. § 5113(b)). Following a hearing, the court may extend the
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	order for a period not to exceed six months. When the final order expires, the court will issue an order vacating the conditions, and transferring full custody to the parent without conditions.
CCOs with Noncustodial Parents and Non-Parents	<p>These orders will be reviewed at a hearing to be held six months from the date of the disposition order or conditional custody order, <u>whichever occurs later</u>. At the hearing, the court shall determine whether it is in the child’s best interest to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer either full or conditional custody to a parent; • Establish a permanent guardianship; • Move towards termination of parental rights and adoption; OR • If the court determines that reasonable progress has been made towards reunification, and that reunification is in the best interest of the child, the court may extend the CCO for a period not to exceed six months, and set the matter for further hearing.


Family services workers will convene a family team meeting with providers, the child’s Guardian ad Litem (GAL), and informal supports that make up the safety network to develop the case plan. A family safety planning (FSP) meeting may be appropriate for discussing and clarifying the plan. The case plan will specify:

- Activities that support the parent(s) progress in addressing dangers and risks that initiated a conditional custody order – including the monitoring of participation in required services;
- Any medical, mental health, educational, or other issues the child has which require close coordination and attention;
- The plan for family time;
- The frequency of visits from the worker;
- The frequency of visits from the safety network;
- A plan for services for the child and parent(s);
- Supports needed for the caregiver(s) with conditional custody of the child; and
- The method of monitoring the child’s safety and well-being.

Family Time and Face-to-Face Contact

The likelihood of successful reunification or the removal of court oversight increases by having frequent and quality family time in place.

Family services workers shall observe family time at least monthly for CCO cases. By

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doing so, the division achieves monthly face-to-face contact with children, parents, and CCO custodians. Additionally, workers are able to observe the quality of family time based on the degree to which parents are demonstrating their parental capacity, responding to the child’s verbal and non-verbal signals, showing empathy towards the child, demonstrating knowledge of the child’s development, and putting the child’s needs ahead of their own. This information will inform the updates and recommendations the division shares with the court.

In CCOs where the child remains in the home with the custodial parent, monthly face-to-face contact shall occur in the home. Family services workers should assess the same parent-child interactions described above and use this information to make recommendations to the court. If the CCO has been established with a case plan goal of reunification, refer to Family Services [Policy 98](#) for additional information and case planning requirements.


Reviewing or Modifying the CCO

The division should routinely:

- Assess the child’s safety and well-being in the home they are residing;
- Determine if any newly identified dangers or risks have emerged;
- Monitor the caregiver with conditional custody’s adherence to the conditions of the CCO;
- Maintain contact with the safety network and providers who are supporting the family;
- Offer support through contracted services subject to district resource availability;
- Monitor whether the services put in place are adequately addressing the caregiver’s, parent’s, and child’s needs;
- Discuss how the plan is working with the family and safety network;
- Assess the need for any additional releases of information to appropriately monitor the case plan; and
- Recommend modifications to the case plan when appropriate.

If progress towards the case plan goal does not occur within five months from the date of the disposition order or conditional custody order, whichever occurs later, workers should discuss alternative approaches to the case with their supervisor and AAG.

CCOs with custodial parents will automatically expire at the end of six months; therefore, it is critical to evaluate by the end of the 5th month whether DCF should seek an extension of that order. If it should be extended, the division must file a petition at least 14 days before the presumptive expiration date. A change in circumstances must be demonstrated in order for judges to extend the CCO to the parent (33 V.S.A. § 5113(b)).

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If there are newly identified dangers or risks, the division shall notify the court and either request a hearing to discuss a substantial change in the circumstances of the existing CCO or seek custody of the child.

Special Considerations for CCOs with Relatives and Other Non-Parents

Relatives Living Out-of-State


Out-of-state placement requests for children in CCOs must be made through the [Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children](#) (ICPC) process. Prior to submitting an ICPC request, the relatives should be asked to review the ICPC cover letter and confirm the minimum requirements are met. Expedited ICPC requests should only be submitted when the relative is a parent, stepparent, grandparent, adult uncle or aunt, adult brother or sister, or the child's guardian and there is a plan for immediate placement. If there is some flexibility in the timeframe of requesting an out-of-state placement with a relative, a standard ICPC request (as opposed to an expedited ICPC request) should be made because the home study is often more thorough.

The amount of time it takes another state to conduct a home study and fully evaluate a placement request varies. On average, there is wait time of several months between the time of submitting the ICPC request and receiving the approval or denial. ICPC home study approvals are valid for six months.

For out-of-state relatives being considered as conditional custodians, division staff should inform the court that:

- The division does not have the authority to conduct an assessment or background checks in another state;
- The division does not have the authority to cross state lines to practice child protection work or conduct home visits;
- The division does not have the ability to enforce CCO conditions in another state, and the other state has no obligation to oversee conditions unless they have prior ICPC approval; and
- The child cannot visit the relative’s home in another state during the ICPC home study process without prior approval from Vermont’s ICPC deputy compact administrator and the other state. During this time, visits may occur in Vermont to support contact between the child and the relative(s).

Division staff shall immediately notify the ICPC deputy compact administrator if an out-of-state CCO (with relatives or parents) is ordered outside of the [Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children](#) (ICPC) process. If the court orders it, the family services worker will initiate an ICPC request for relatives residing outside of Vermont. It is an

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ICPC violation for a judge to give custody to an out-of-state relative without ICPC home study and approval. For an out-of-state placement and custody transfer to occur, a home study must be conducted, receive a positive recommendation, and then the judge must approve the plan for the child to live with that relative.

Parents Living Out-of-State

A CCO to a parent residing in another state cannot occur without ICPC approval. When planning for reunification with a parent residing out-of-state, there must be an approved ICPC home study before the child or youth can be placed in the home.

Collaboration with the Child Benefits Unit and Required Documentation

If the child is placed out of their parent’s custody in the care of a relative or other non-parent, the worker will complete a Title IV-E application (FS-201) to document the family’s financial circumstances at the time of the child’s removal. This application should remain in the family’s file and not be submitted for processing. This documentation is vital in cases where reunification is determined to not be in the child’s best interest and other permanency options are explored, and IV-E subsidy needs to be determined.

Applying for Benefits & Other Support


Family services workers may need to refer caregivers who have conditional custody to apply for Reach Up, medical insurance, or other supports. If families need assistance with these processes or completing the required forms, the worker should refer caregivers to [Vermont Kin As Parents](#).

Training Requirements

Caregivers pursuing adoption or permanent guardianship are required to fulfill the training requirements described in Family Services [Policy 93](#).

Post-Disposition Division Involvement to Achieve Permanency

If permanency is not achieved for children or youth during the duration of a CCO, the division should remain involved with the family to ensure the child is living in a nurturing family setting which offers legal commitment and continuity of relationships. Division staff will collaborate with the permanency planning manager and Project Family staff through permanency meetings and consultations regarding permanency options for children and youth subject to CCOs.

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Reunification of Children and Youth After a CCO

See Family Services [Policy 98](#) for information on reunifying children and youth. Policy 98 is applicable to all children and youth who have been physically returned to the parent from whom they were removed due to abuse or neglect (either through DCF custody or a CCO to others).

Adoption of Children and Youth After a CCO

See Family Services [Policy 125](#) for information about permanency planning and permanency goals. In cases where adoption may be an appropriate goal, workers shall consult with their supervisor and AAG to discuss the individual needs and circumstances of the child and the caregiver with conditional custody. The AAG for the division or the child’s attorney may file a petition for a termination of parental rights so that an adoption can occur.

If the caregiver who has conditional custody does not meet foster care licensing/home study criteria, they will not be able to adopt the child. In this case, TPR is not in the child’s best interest. The worker should inform the court of this reality as soon as possible.


If the prospective adoptive parent resides out-of-state, an ICPC adoption home study must be requested. The other state must give Vermont concurrence through the ICPC offices.

If the child was not IV-E eligible at the time of removal (documented by the division at time of removal from parents), the eligibility for and type of subsidy that the child/youth and family may receive will be different.

Permanent Guardianship of Youth After a CCO

See Family Services [Policy 125](#) for information about permanency planning and permanency goals. For some children and youth, the case plan goal may be permanent guardianship. Permanent guardianship provides legal permanency without requiring the termination of parental rights.

Permanent guardianship is not the preferred or highest level of permanency for young children. It is the division’s position that permanent guardianship as a permanency plan is not in the best interests of children under the age of 12 years old. All instances of permanent guardianship for children younger than 12 years old must be approved by the permanency planning manager. The permanency planning manager may grant a waiver in instances where:

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- The proposed permanent guardian is a relative and the TPR process could be traumatic for the child;
- The proposed permanent guardian is already serving as a permanent guardian for the child’s older siblings; or
- Another rationale based on the child’s best interests.

14 V.S.A. § 2664 outlines the circumstances under which a permanent guardianship can be established for a child/youth who has been the subject of juvenile court proceedings:

- (1) Neither parent able to assume or resume parental duties within a reasonable time.
- (2) The child has resided with the permanent guardian for at least six months.
- (3) A permanent guardianship is in the best interests of the child.
- (4) The proposed permanent guardian:
 - (A)(i) is emotionally, mentally, and physically suitable to become the permanent guardian; and (ii) is financially suitable, with kinship guardianship assistance provided for in 33 V.S.A. § 4903 if applicable, to become the permanent guardian;
 - (B) has expressly committed to remain the permanent guardian for the duration of the child's minority; and
 - (C) has expressly demonstrated a clear understanding of the financial implications of becoming a permanent guardian including an understanding of any resulting loss of state or federal benefits or other assistance.

If the prospective permanent guardian resides out-of-state, the other state must give Vermont concurrence through the ICPC offices.

Vermont law allows for the creation of subsidized permanent guardianships. Children and youth in the custody of a caregiver with conditional custody do **NOT** qualify for this program. Subsidized permanent guardianships are only an option when the child has been in DCF custody for at least six months.

Appendix I: Guidance for Assessing Suitability for Conditional Custodians and District-Approved Unlicensed Placements

<p>AREA OF ASSESSMENT</p>	<p>SAFE – Examples of placement situations determined to be safe. The division can be in support of conditional custody in these circumstances. District-approved unlicensed placements can occur.</p>	<p>FURTHER ASSESSMENT NEEDED – Examples of placement situations where a concern or risk has been identified that requires us to PAUSE and conduct a deeper assessment of the potential caregiver, household members, or circumstances before recommendations are made. This may entail gathering additional information, having further conversation with the individual/household members, and using the information to make a recommendation.</p>	<p>UNSAFE/DANGEROUS – Examples of placement situations determined to be unsafe or dangerous. The individual cannot be licensed as a foster home. District-approved unlicensed placements shall not occur. The division will oppose conditional custody in these circumstances. The person should not be used as a temporary caregiver through an out-of-home safety plan.</p>
<p><i>Activities or events described in the FURTHER ASSESSMENT NEEDED category are indicators of a point within someone’s life where their behavior or circumstances may have interfered with their day-to-day functioning and responsibilities. For the purposes of this assessment, the following questions need to be explored for potential caregivers and household members 16 years of age and older prior to making a recommendation or placement:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What is the historical context relevant to the concerns? What was going on in the person’s life at the time that caused them to experience consequences?</i> ➤ <i>Is the behavior or circumstance that requires further assessment still active and present in the person’s life?</i> ➤ <i>Does the situation present risk? Is the situation relevant as it pertains to caring for this child (and their specific needs and vulnerabilities)?</i> ➤ <i>What has the person done since that incident or difficult time in their lives to mitigate those circumstances or behaviors? Are there protective factors?</i> 			
<p>Criminal History</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No criminal history • Only civil convictions • Civil DUI convictions older than 10 years with no additional infractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil DUI convictions within the past 10 years • Misdemeanor criminal convictions • Non-violent felony convictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felony convictions of child abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, a crime against children (including child pornography), or a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault, or homicide • Felony convictions of assault, battery, or a drug-related offense within the past 5 years • Current/pending charges of the crimes listed in the two bullets above • The parties or victims of a charge/conviction are related to the CHINS case (i.e., the child’s parents)
<p>Department of Corrections (DOC) or Parole Board Supervision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No current/active DOC or parole board supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOC or parole board supervision anticipated to successfully finish in the next 6 months for crimes other than those listed in the UNSAFE/DANGEROUS category 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOC or parole board supervision for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Felony convictions of child abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, a crime against children (including child pornography), or a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault, or homicide ○ Felony convictions of assault, battery, or a drug-related offense within the past 5 years • Active DOC or parole board supervision with violations of probation or parole (VOPs) • DOC or parole board supervision not anticipated to successfully finish in the next 6 months

<p>Relief from Abuse (RFA) Orders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No RFAs An RFA not granted by the court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All other active RFAs (both defendants and plaintiffs of RFAs) Expired RFAs (both defendants and plaintiffs of RFAs) Multiple non-granted RFAs (both defendants and plaintiffs of RFAs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defendant of an RFA order in place to protect a child or parent in the home Defendant of an RFA order in place due to active/current domestic violence
<p>Substantiations of Child Abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No substantiations No pre-1992 findings of child abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-1992 findings of child abuse (<i>will need to request the paper record and review</i>) Substantiations eligible for expungement where the individual is expected to promptly pursue the expungement review process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious physical injury substantiation (regardless of eligibility for expungement) Adult-to-child sexual abuse substantiation (regardless of eligibility for expungement) Emotional maltreatment substantiation (regardless of eligibility for expungement)
<p>DCF-FSD Involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No open DCF-FSD case No prior adjudication in a CHINS proceeding (no CHINS findings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open DCF-FSD (DP or UY) Recent DCF-FSD involvement Significant past DCF-FSD involvement Prior adjudication in a CHINS proceeding (CHINS findings) Foster home licensing history, including a previous foster home that was closed and flagged, revoked licenses, or denied applications (<i>will need to request review by RLSI staff</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open DCF-FSD child safety intervention (CSI), DCF custody, or CF case Situations where the individual being considered as a caregiver is unwilling to work with DCF-FSD because of their past experiences
<p>Residency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have stable housing (home ownership or current lease for rental properties) Situations where relatives or others reside together with adequate living space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Situations where relatives or others reside together temporarily without adequate living space Imminent plans to move into stable housing Residing in a hotel or motel on a short-term basis due to a significant event (i.e., house fire, damage from a natural disaster, moving to Vermont and looking for housing, landlord selling residence) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No identified housing; lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence Living in a place not meant for human habitation Residing in an institution, assisted living facility, correctional facility, or treatment facility Residing in a hotel or motel paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs Residing in emergency shelters Imminent risk of homelessness Current eviction notice or home foreclosure Relatives residing in another state without ICPC approval (<i>must consult and receive approval from ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator</i>)
<p>Home Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No obvious safety hazards (including water hazards, fire hazards, unsecured firearms, or general sanitation concerns) present in the home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of apparent safety hazards (including water hazards, fire hazards, unsecured firearms, or general sanitation concerns) in the home that can be mitigated or resolved promptly (prior to placement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obvious and significant safety hazards (including water hazards, fire hazards, unsecured firearms, or general sanitation concerns) present in the household that cannot be mitigated or resolved

Substance Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No historic substance use disorder concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained sobriety and commitment to recovery Any past substance use concerns Sanctioning event related to substance use in the past 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active substance use disorder and reliable knowledge of recent substance misuse or observation of behavioral indicators of substance use Less than one year of abstinence
Physical & Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant health concerns that impact the ability to care for a child No significant mental health concerns that impact the ability to care for a child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical limitations associated with meeting the age and developmental needs of the child Mental health diagnosis of a mood disorder, psychotic disorder, or dissociative disorder (i.e., major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, dissociative identity disorder) requires third-party verification of treatment and ability to meet child's needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diagnosed disability with an evaluation that has determined the individual is unable to care for children
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual being considered has sufficient income to support the child(ren) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual being considered does not have sufficient income to support the child(ren) without additional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual being considered is experiencing significant financial instability (as indicated by inability to make payments towards rent/housing expenses, utilities, transportation, or inability to make payments against debt) Current bankruptcy
Relationship to Child(ren) or Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child/youth agrees to or is in support of residing temporarily with the potential caregiver The child/youth has a strong relationship or bond to the individual The child/youth expresses no opinion about the potential caregiver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child or youth has expressed they would prefer to live with a different relative or person whom the division knows is appropriate and available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child or youth is unwilling or refuses to live with the person being considered as a caregiver The child or youth is fearful of the person being considered as a caregiver The child or youth's therapeutic needs indicate placement with this individual is not in their best interests
Collaboration <i>(willingness & ability to work with parents, DCF-FSD, and/or the court)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual being considered as a caregiver has demonstrated or indicates that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will work with parents, DCF-FSD, and court partners; Will follow court orders, including coordinating and monitoring family time; & Will provide transportation to school, extracurricular activities, medical appointments, therapy, family time, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual being considered has refused to work with DCF-FSD in the past The ability to provide transportation may be a limitation or barrier Relationship dynamics where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual's opinions or behaviors towards or about the parents may impact reunification efforts or the safety of the child(ren); or The parent's opinions or behaviors towards or about the individual being considered as a caregiver may impact reunification efforts or the safety of the child(ren) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual being considered as a caregiver openly refuses or is unable to work with the parents, DCF-FSD, or court partners