

Figure: 26 TAC §749.2447 [40 TAC §749.2447]

Required Information	Description of Discussion, Assessment and Documentation Requirements
<p>(1) The age of the prospective foster parents. Ages of all other members of the household.</p>	<p>All prospective foster parents must be at least 21 years old. You must document the ages of all household members [and include documentation verifying the ages of the foster parents].</p>
<p>(2) The educational level of the prospective foster parents.</p>	<p>You must ensure and document that each foster parent is able to comprehend and benefit from training and provide appropriate care and supervision to meet the needs of children in care, in areas such as health, education, and discipline/behavior management, by doing either or both of the following:</p> <p>(A) Require that foster parents have a high school diploma or a G.E.D. high school equivalency. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) or another public education entity outside of Texas must recognize the high school program or high school equivalent program; or</p> <p>(B) <u>Screen each foster parent without a high school diploma or G.E.D. to ensure that each foster parent</u> [Have a screening program that]:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(i) <u>Is</u> [Ensures that each foster parent is]able to be an appropriate role model for children in placement;</p>

	<p>(ii) <u>Is</u> [Ensures that each foster parent is] able to communicate with the child in the child's own language, or has other means to communicate with the child in the child's own language; and</p> <p>(iii) <u>Meets the</u> [Addresses adequately] basic competencies that would otherwise be met by a high school diploma or G.E.D., including basic reading, writing, and math.</p>
<p>(3) Personal characteristics.</p>	<p>You must document information from foster parents that demonstrate <u>your assessment of</u>:</p> <p>(A) Emotional stability, good character, good health, and adult responsibility; and</p> <p>(B) The ability to provide nurturing care, appropriate supervision, reasonable discipline, and a home-like atmosphere for children.</p>
<p>(4) History of current and previous interpersonal relationships, including marriages, common-law marriages, and other relationships between people who share or have shared a domestic life without being married.</p>	<p>You must document information <u>about</u> [regarding] the marital status of the foster parents, including the present marital status, as well as a history of previous marriages or significant interpersonal relationships. You must include a description of the marriage or relationship, including reasons why any previous marriages or significant interpersonal relationships were ended.</p>
<p>(5) A history of the prospective foster parents' residence and their citizenship status.</p>	<p>You must document the:</p> <p>(A) Length of time spent at each residence for the past 10 years (street address, city, state); and</p>

	<p>(B) Citizenship of the prospective foster parents.</p>
<p>(6) The financial status of the prospective foster family.</p>	<p>(A) You must discuss with the prospective foster parents the current reimbursement process, if applicable, and <u>assess</u> the foster parents' understanding of that process.</p> <p>(B) You must verify and document that the prospective foster parents have sufficient up-front income or other readily available assets to support their household and all children in care prior to receiving the foster care reimbursement for services provided. For each prospective foster parent you must obtain, document and assess the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Proof of income for the past 60 days or two complete calendar months. Disability, social security, and/or other sources of income such as family support, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) must be included, as applicable;(ii) A copy of two consecutive itemized bank statements and/or the previous year's tax return. The bank statements must be related to the previous two calendar months prior to the date of application. If a foster family does not have two consecutive itemized bank statements or a previous year's tax return, then you must copy and document the evidence used to verify the financial status of the prospective foster family, including documenting the information used to verify the itemized monthly household expenses; and

	<p>(iii) A monthly household expense report itemizing the following expenses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (I) Mortgage/Rent; (II) Utilities; (III) Transportation; (IV) Food; (V) Medical; (VI) Clothing; (VII) Insurance; (VIII) Credit cards and loans; (IX) Legal (i.e. attorney fees, alimony and/or child support); (X) Pet; and (XI) Entertainment/miscellaneous.
<p>(7) The results of criminal history and central registry background checks conducted on the prospective foster parents and any non-client person 14 years of age or older who regularly or frequently stays or is present in the home.</p>	<p>(A) Persons applying to foster children and any person, excluding clients, 14 years of age or older who will regularly or frequently be staying or present at the home, must obtain a criminal history and central registry background check. See Chapter 745, Subchapter F of this title (relating to Background Checks). The specific results of those checks must be documented and assessed in the foster home screening and the foster home record. Any assessments of other parts of a home screening must include and assess relevant background check result information. For example, the paragraphs (3) and (6) <u>about</u> [regarding] a foster family's personal characteristics and financial status should consider and assess</p>

	<p>a misdemeanor theft by check, even though this crime is not a bar to becoming a foster parent.</p> <p>(B) With respect to law enforcement service call information, you must do the following:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(i) Obtain service call information from the appropriate law enforcement agency for each of the prospective foster parents' addresses over the past two years. Discuss with the prospective foster parents any service call information that you obtain from a law enforcement agency and the facts surrounding the incident.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(ii) Whether results were found or not, ask the prospective foster parents whether any law enforcement agency has responded to any of their residences in the past two years. If you obtain additional information from the prospective foster parents, request background information from each law enforcement agency that responded. Discuss the incident and any additional background information that you obtain with the prospective foster parents.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(iii) Assess and document information obtained from law enforcement and any discussion with the prospective foster parents in the foster home screening.</p>
<p>(8) The prospective foster parents' motivation to provide foster care.</p>	<p>Assess and document the prospective foster parents' motivation and willingness to provide foster care.</p>
<p>(9) Health status of all persons living in the home.</p>	<p><u>Discuss, assess, and document</u> [Document] information about the physical and mental health status (including substance abuse</p>

	<p>history) of all persons living in the home in relation to the family's ability to provide foster care. You must discuss whether any health-related issues noted may affect the prospective foster parent's ability to care for a child in care. You must also observe these persons for any indication of problems and follow up, where indicated, with a professional evaluation. Document the information obtained through your observations and, if applicable, professional evaluations.</p>
<p>(10) The quality of the current interpersonal relationship, including marriage, common-law marriage, or a relationship between people who share a domestic life without being married, and family relationships.</p>	<p>Discuss, assess, and document the quality of the current and previous interpersonal and family relationships in relation to the family's ability to provide foster care. You must discuss and assess the stability of a couple's current and previous relationships, the strengths and problems of the relationship, and how those issues will affect the current environment and the prospective foster parents' ability to care for any foster children placed in the home. You must discuss and assess the quality of the relationships between prospective foster parents and their children, living in or out of the home, strengths and problems of those relationships, and how those issues will relate to foster children placed in the home.</p>
<p>(11) The prospective foster parents' feelings about their childhoods and parents.</p>	<p>Discuss, assess, and document the prospective foster parents' feelings about their childhoods and parents, including any history of abuse or neglect and their resolution of those experiences.</p>

<p>(12) The prospective foster parents' attitudes about a foster child's or his biological family's religion.</p>	<p><u>Discuss, assess, [Evaluate]</u> and document <u>the</u> prospective foster parents on:</p> <p>(A) Their willingness to respect and encourage a child's religious affiliation, if any;</p> <p>(B) Their willingness to provide a child the opportunity for religious and spiritual development, if desired; and</p> <p>(C) The health protection they plan to give a child if a foster parent's religious beliefs prohibit certain medical treatment.</p>
<p>(13) The prospective foster parents' values, feelings, and practices in regard to child care and discipline.</p>	<p>Discuss, assess, and document the applicants' knowledge of child development and their child-care experience. Discuss and assess the ways the applicants were disciplined as children and their reactions to the discipline they received. Discuss and assess the prospective foster parents' discipline styles, techniques, and their ability to recognize and respect differences in children and use discipline methods that suit the individual child. Discuss your approved disciplinary methods, which must comply with Subchapter K, Division 6 of this chapter (relating to Discipline and Punishment). If the prospective foster parents' current discipline methods are different than those that you approve, discuss and assess how they would change their child-care practices to conform to your approved methods.</p>
<p>(14) The prospective foster parents' sensitivity to and feelings about children who</p>	<p>Discuss, assess, and document the prospective foster parents' understanding of the dynamics of child abuse and neglect.</p>

<p>may have been subjected to abuse or neglect.</p>	<p>Discuss and assess their understanding of how these issues and experiences will affect them, their families, and foster children in their care. Discuss and assess the prospective foster parent's ability to help children who have been abused or neglected. If a prospective foster parent experienced abuse or neglect as a child, assess his handling of those experiences and the impact of those experiences on the applicant's ability to help children deal with their own experiences. Assess the availability of family and community resources to meet the needs of the children in the family's care.</p>
<p>(15) The prospective foster parents' sensitivity to and feelings about children's experiences of separation from or loss of their biological families.</p>	<p>Discuss, assess, and document the prospective foster parents' understanding of the dynamics of separation and loss and the effects of these experiences on children. Discuss and assess their personal experiences with separation and loss and their processing of those experiences. Assess the potential foster parents' acceptance of the process of grief and loss for children and assess their ability to help a child through the grieving process.</p>
<p>(16) The prospective foster parents' sensitivity to, and feelings about, a child's biological family.</p>	<p>Discuss, assess, and document the prospective foster parents' feelings about the child's parents, including the issue of abuse or neglect of the child by the child's parents or other family members. Discuss and assess their sensitivity and reactions to the child's parents. Discuss and assess their sensitivity to and acceptance of a child's feelings about the child's parents and assess their ability to help the child deal with those</p>

	<p>feelings. Discuss and assess the prospective foster parents' sensitivity to and acceptance of the child's relationships with the child's siblings. Discuss and assess their willingness to support the child's relationships with parents, siblings, and extended family, including their support for contacts between the child and the child's family.</p>
<p>(17) The attitude of other household members about the prospective foster parents' plan to provide foster care.</p>	<p>Discuss, assess, and document the attitudes of other household members toward the plan to provide foster care. Discuss and assess their involvement in the care of foster children, their attitudes toward foster children, and their acceptance of the verification as a foster family.</p>
<p>(18) The attitude of the prospective foster parents' extended family <u>about</u> [regarding] foster care.</p>	<p>Discuss, assess, and document the extended family's attitude toward foster care and foster children and the involvement the extended family will have with foster children. Discuss and assess the impact the extended family's attitudes will have on the family's ability to provide foster care and whether the extended family will serve as a support system for the foster family and for foster children</p>
<p>(19) Support systems available to prospective foster parents.</p>	<p>Discuss, assess, and document the support systems available to each foster parent and the support the family may receive from these resources. You must ask each prospective foster parent for information about any person who may provide support as a caregiver during an unexpected event or crisis situation, such as an illness or disability of a foster parent, loss of transportation, or the death of an</p>

	<p>immediate family member. Verify and document identifying information and availability of each person that will provide support as a caregiver. Any of these persons will need a fingerprint-based criminal history check before acting as a caregiver. Unless the person will be a caregiver immediately after you verify the home, the background check on the person does not have to be completed before you verify the home.</p>
<p>(20) The prospective foster parents' expectations of and plans for foster children.</p>	<p>Discuss, assess, and document the prospective foster parents' expectations of the child and the flexibility of their expectations in relation to the child's actual needs and abilities. Discuss and assess their capacities to recognize and emphasize the strengths and achievements of the child and their capacities to adjust their expectations according to the abilities of the child.</p>
<p>(21) The language(s) spoken by the prospective foster parents.</p>	<p>Document the language(s) spoken by each prospective foster parent.</p>
<p>(22) Prospective foster parent's ability to work with specific kinds of behaviors and backgrounds.</p>	<p>(A) Discuss, assess, and document each prospective foster parent's willingness and ability to work with specific and challenging behaviors of foster children, including such things as backgrounds, special needs and/or disabilities.</p> <p>(B) Discuss, assess, and document the prospective foster parents' understanding of the concepts of trauma informed care and how they would use those concepts in the</p>

	<p>care, treatment, and management of children placed in their home.</p> <p>(C) Discuss, assess and document the prospective foster parents' willingness and ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Care for and work with children of a specific gender;(ii) Care for and work with children of a specific age range;(iii) Care for a specific number of children, including whether or not the children are part of the same sibling group;(iv) Provide respite care services to any additional number of children of a specific gender, within a specific age range, and with special needs that the family will not be providing care for full time; and(v) Provide any additional services Licensing regulates according to §749.61 of this title (relating to What types of Services does Licensing regulate?).
<p>(23) Background information from other child-placing agencies.</p>	<p>(A) Request, [and] assess, and <u>maintain</u> the [following] background information <u>that a child-placing agency must provide you, as described in §749.2475 of this subchapter (relating to To whom must I release information regarding a family on which I previously conducted a foster home screening, pre-adoptive home screening, or post placement adoptive report?).</u> [(if provided) from any and all child-placing agencies that previously conducted a foster home screening, pre-adoptive home</p>

screening, or post placement adoptive report:

(i) The screening, report, and related documentation;

(ii) Documentation of supervisory visits and evaluations;

(iii) Any record of deficiencies and their resolutions; and

(iv) The most current fire and health inspections.]

(B) You must address and document the closure or any identified risk indicators, as applicable, with the prospective foster parents before approval and verification of the home if the background information indicates that:

(i) The foster home was previously closed by a child-placing agency; or

(ii) There was one or more potential risk indicators that the child placing agency did not adequately address with the foster parents.