

Screening and Assessment of Caregivers in Contracted Agencies Policy	
Effective Date of Policy: April 1, 2018	Amendment Date of Policy: November 1 st , 2021

Policy Statement:

Contracted agency caregivers can be approved to provide care for children in care under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) after they successfully complete the screening and assessment process.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) screens the caregiver applicant, and any other adult who will have significant and unsupervised access to a child in care (as per the definition in this policy), to determine whether they may pose a risk to a child.

The contracted agency conducts a thorough assessment to determine if the caregiver applicant is capable of caring for children. This includes determining if the caregiver applicant can uphold the rights of children in care and meet their needs.

Definitions

Caregiver applicant: means a person applying to be a contracted agency caregiver for children in care.

Child in care: means all children in care of a director designated under the CFCSA. The children are in care under the CFCSA, the *Adoption Act*, or the *Infants Act*.

Contracted agency: means an agency that has a contract with a Director under the CFCSA to provide care services to children in care.

Contracted agency caregiver: includes a sub-contracted family care home caregiver and/or staffed resource caregiver, including child-care workers or support workers who provide care or support for children in care more than 4 hours per week. (*Note: this term does not apply to those already screened and assessed to work with children under other ministry programs such as services for Children and Youth with Special Needs, licensed child care, or support service agreements*)

Significant and unsupervised access includes:

- any adult (18 years of age and over) who resides or is visiting/staying overnight for more than 30 days in the sub-contracted family care home where the child lives; and
- any adult in an intimate partner relationship with the caregiver who regularly visits/stays in the sub-contracted family care home where the child lives.

Staffed resource caregiver: means a caregiver who is employed in a staffed resource managed by a contracted agency to provide day-to-day care and control of children in care, in the resource and/or out in the community. This includes those employed by the agency on a relief basis.

Sub-contracted family care home caregiver: means a caregiver who has a contract with a contracted agency to provide day-to-day care and control of children in care in their own home or an agency provided home that is their residence. This includes those employed by the agency or employed by the sub-contracted family care home caregiver to provide relief or temporary care overnight.

Outcomes

- A child in care is safe and their rights under s.70 of the CFCSA are respected.
- A child in care is cared for by caregivers who support their developmental, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and physical needs.
- A comprehensive screening and approval process is completed on a contracted agency caregiver.
- A comprehensive screening process is completed on any adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child in care.

Standards

- 1.1 MCFD screens a caregiver applicant, and any other adult who will have significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child in care, to determine whether they may pose a risk to a child.
- 1.2 MCFD considers the following information gathered through the screening process:
 - Verification that the caregiver applicant is 19 years of age or older;
 - An Initial Record Review and Detailed Record Review (IRR/DRR) of child welfare records;
 - A verified out of jurisdiction child welfare check from each jurisdiction outside British Columbia where the caregiver applicant, or any other adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child in care, resided for six months or more since the age of 18.
 - A consolidated criminal record check (CCRC); and
 - A verified out of jurisdiction criminal record check from each jurisdiction outside of Canada where a caregiver applicant, or any other adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child in care, resided for six months or more since the age of 18.
- 1.3 The contracted agency assesses a caregiver applicant to determine if they are capable of caring for a child in care.
- 1.4 The contracted agency considers the following information gathered through the assessment process:
 - Three reference checks;
 - A thorough interview; and
 - For a caregiver applicant for a sub-contracted family care home, a home visit, and a medical opinion from a licenced physician.
- 1.5 The contracted agency obtains a *Criminal Record Review Act* (CRRA) check for the caregiver applicant.
- 1.6 To ensure valid screening of the contracted agency caregiver and any adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child in care, the contracted agency:
 - obtains and provides an updated consent form to MCFD every three years to conduct a CCRC;
 - obtains a CRRA check every five years (on caregiver only); and

- requires the contracted agency caregiver to report any criminal charges that they, or any other adult with significant and unsupervised access to the child, incur while employed.

Procedures

1. Screening Process by MCFD

- To enable MCFD to conduct the screening process, the contracted agency provides MCFD, on behalf of the caregiver applicant and any adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child in care, with:
 - a Consent for Prior Contact Check: Initial Record Review and Detailed Record Review (Form CF0623B)
 - a Consent for Disclosure of Criminal Record Information Form (CF0622B) for a consolidated criminal record check; and
 - a criminal record check from any jurisdiction outside of Canada, in which they resided for six months or more since the age of 18.
- MCFD considers the information gathered and determines if the caregiver applicant or any adult with significant and unsupervised access to a child, may pose a risk to a child.
- An out of jurisdiction child welfare check must be completed when the applicant has lived outside of British Columbia for a period of six months or more since the age of 18. If child welfare records cannot be obtained from a jurisdiction outside BC for a caregiver applicant, or if records cannot be obtained in a reasonable period of time, an exception can be made to this process. This exception must be approved by the HUB Director of Operations and documented along with the screening outcome. If the exception is needed regarding a jurisdiction outside of Canada, written verification from International Social Service Canada (ISSC) stating records cannot be obtained should be also be included.
- If the caregiver applicant cannot obtain a criminal record check from another jurisdiction, or if records cannot be obtained in a reasonable period of time, and exception can be made if the contracted agency obtains the following documentation from the caregiver applicant and provides it to MCFD:
 - A signed written statement from the caregiver applicant stating:
 - what efforts they made to obtain their criminal record check
 - why records cannot be obtained; and
 - whether the caregiver applicant was convicted of a criminal offence in that jurisdiction; and
 - Any corroborating documentation from the caregiver applicant.

- MCFD documents the exception to obtaining a criminal record check from another jurisdiction along with the screening outcome.
- MCFD documents and communicates the decision to the contracted agency by providing a “screened in” or “screened out” response in the ICM Service Provider Portal.
- The contracted agency can commence their assessment process prior to receiving a “screened in” response from MCFD. However, the contracted agency cannot approve the caregiver applicant until they have received a “screened in” response.

2. Conducting Reference Checks

- The contracted agency conducts reference checks on the caregiver applicant.
- If the contracted agency is conducting a Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) assessment, it follows the process for conducting reference checks set out in www.SAFEhomestudy.org.
- If the contracted agency is not conducting a SAFE assessment, it obtains three references that:
 - include an opinion regarding the caregiver applicant’s ability to provide care to a child;
 - may be verbal or written. If verbal, the contracted agency documents the information provided; and
 - one reference is from the caregiver applicant’s most recent employer. If the caregiver applicant cannot provide this reference, the contracted agency documents the reason why.

3. Assessing Applicants Applying to be Staffed Resource Caregivers

- The contracted agency conducts an interview with an applicant applying to be a contracted agency caregiver that covers their:
 - approach to caregiving (e.g. communication style, conflict resolution skills and appropriate discipline techniques);
 - resilience and ability to manage transitions;
 - education and employment history;
 - motivation for caregiving and availability;
 - knowledge of and attitudes towards cultural, social and spiritual diversity, especially related to Indigenous people and their distinct history; and
 - previous caregiving experience with children and youth.

4. Assessing Applicants Applying to be Sub-Contracted Family Care Home Caregivers

- If the contracted agency is licensed to use SAFE, the contracted agency uses SAFE to assess a caregiver applicant applying to be a Sub-Contracted Family Care Home caregiver, following the process set out in www.SAFEhomestudy.org.
- If the contracted agency is not licensed to use SAFE, the agency assesses if the caregiver applicant is capable of caring for a child by conducting the following:
 - a home visit, to ensure the physical environment meets the environment of care requirements in the [Standards for Foster Homes](#);
 - interview(s) with the caregiver applicant; and
 - requiring a medical opinion from a licensed physician.
- When conducting the interview of the caregiver applicant, the contracted agency covers their:
 - approach to caregiving children and youth (e.g. communication style, conflict resolution skills and appropriate discipline techniques);
 - resilience and ability to manage transitions;
 - education and employment history;
 - motivation for caregiving and availability;
 - knowledge of and attitudes towards cultural, social and spiritual diversity, especially related to Indigenous people and their distinct history;
 - previous caregiving experience;
 - family relationships and history (e.g. extended family, current and/or ex-spouse, children);
 - family dynamics (e.g. parenting styles, communication patterns, discipline, difficulties with applicant's children);
 - physical and social environment;
 - social supports and community involvement;
 - personal history (including childhood) and life changes;
 - emotional and psychological health; and
 - history of any type of violence, abuse and criminal activity;
 - health, mental health and addictions.
- When obtaining a medical opinion from a licensed physician:
 - The contracted agency provides the caregiver applicant with a form, requesting a licensed physician to provide a medical opinion on whether they are medically fit to provide care to children.

- If the physician notes any health concerns, the agency discusses the concerns with the caregiver applicant and requests further information from the physician, if necessary.

5. Decision to Hire a Caregiver Applicant as a Caregiver for a Child in Care

- After receiving a “screened in” response from MCFD, the contracted agency may finalize their assessment process and employ a caregiver applicant in order for the caregiver applicant to participate in activities such as orientation, training and job shadowing in the contracted agency.
- The caregiver applicant cannot be unsupervised (i.e. alone in a room) with children in care until the CRRA check has been cleared.
- After all components of the screening and assessment have been completed and the agency approves the caregiver applicant, the agency must submit a self-report-audit-tool (SRAT) questionnaire within 30 days of the caregiver’s first unsupervised shift caring for children and youth in care.

6. Obtaining a CRRA Check

- If the contracted agency approves the caregiver applicant, they apply for a CRRA check through the [Criminal Records Review Program Online Services](#).
- The contracted agency must ensure that the caregiver applicant is working with full supervision until the CRRA check is returned and indicates no concerns.
- MCFD will contact the contracted agency if any new information comes to light that indicates a caregiver applicant cannot maintain their employment at the contracted agency.

7. Renewing a Caregiver’s CCRC and CRRA Checks

- The contracted agency requires caregivers to report to the contracted agency if any criminal charges or convictions are laid against them or any adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child in care in their home.
- If a caregiver, or any adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child in care, reports an outstanding charge or conviction of a crime, the contracted agency will:
 - Submit to MCFD a new completed Consent for Disclosure of Criminal Record Information Form (CF0622B) for a CCRC of that caregiver and/or any adult with significant and unsupervised access to a child in care.

- If the caregiver has a charge or conviction for a relevant offence under the CRRA, submit to the Criminal Record Review Program, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the caregiver's consent for a new CRRA check.
- If a contracted agency caregiver has been charged and convicted with a crime and fails to meet the requirements of the MCFD screening process, they can no longer work as a contracted agency caregiver to a child in care.
- The contracted agency requires that all caregivers renew:
 - a CCRC every three years, by submitting a completed Consent for Disclosure of Criminal Record Information Form (CF0622B) to MCFD; and
 - a CRRA check every five years, obtained by the contracted agency.
- The agency must submit a renewal self-report-audit-tool questionnaire within 30 days of obtaining an updated CRRA check for a caregiver.