

Foster Care Assessment



Foster Carer - CARE Assessment

Using this Tool

This record is designed as a resource for assessing potential foster carers. It contains a range of material to assist applicants and assessors to make an informed decision about an applicant's suitability to undertake the task of foster care.

The **Assessment Record** is a tool for analysing and recording evidence that an applicant has the competencies necessary to undertake the task of fostering. The evidence will include;

- ❖ Responses by applicants to interview questions.
- ❖ Legal and other background checks
- ❖ Other external reports.

The **Assessment Record** is based on six **Care Principles** developed by Cornell University in 2005 that originally formed the foundation for creating change for children in residential care. It has since been demonstrated that these principles can be incorporated into many target groups, program settings and have been identified as essential in the provision of effective foster care. These are;

- ❖ **Ecologically oriented** - Demonstrated personal readiness to become a foster carer and ability to provide a continuous stable and safe environment that is free of abuse
- ❖ **Family involved** - Demonstrated understanding of the importance of a foster child's biological family and cultural identity/heritage
- ❖ **Relationship based** - Demonstrated attitudes and connections consistent with being a good foster carer and personal resilience
- ❖ **Developmentally focused** - Demonstrated ability to provide child focused care and a capacity for reflective parenting
- ❖ **Trauma informed** - Demonstrated understanding of the impact of abuse, neglect, grief and loss and associated trauma on childhood development
- ❖ **Competence centred** - Demonstrated ability to work effectively as part of a foster care team in an ethical/legal context

Cover Page

Applicants:

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Applicants contact details:

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Date 'Initial Enquiry' received:

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'Potential Carers Information Pack' sent:

'Information' returned:

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Name of Assessor/s

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Assessment started:

Assessment completed:

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Foster CARE Training completed:

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Additional Training completed:

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Assessment Checklist

Health checks:

Health questionnaire completed by applicant:

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Health questionnaire completed By G.P:

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Additional medical reports required:

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Working with Children Check:

Completed:

Returned:

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Home Safety Check:

Completed:

Requirements or adjustments:

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Personal References:

Returned:

Referee 1:
Referee 2:

CARE Principle 1 – Ecologically oriented

‘When you plant lettuce and it doesn’t grow well, you don’t blame the lettuce’ - Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Buddhist Monk.

- We learn through interacting with our environment.
- The environment is influenced by the interactions between people in that milieu.
- Environmental factors that protect people are; caring relationships, high expectation messages and opportunities for contribution & participation.

Assessment of CARE Principle 1 - Demonstrated ability to provide a continuous stable and safe environment that is free of abuse.

Household composition

(please include any people who regularly stay overnight)

Name	Date of Birth	Ethnicity	Relationship to you	Police check

Home Environment

Indicators of a safe home environment conducive to the promotion of health, education and social development:

- Applicants can provide adequate space and a safe environment for a foster child.
- Applicants can access and utilise facilities in their locality for a foster child.

Evidence:

Describe the applicant’s home environment?

<p>PROMPTS</p> <p>Statutory checks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the applicants aware of any notifications made about them in regard to their care or interactions with children? • Have the applicants ever had any personal involvement with Care and Protection Services? • Do the applicants have a criminal record? Have there been any interactions with police or the justice system? Will anything come up on the police check? If so, how was any offending behaviour addressed? How does the applicant reflect on the behaviour? • Is there anyone else within the family home (e.g. grown up children) who have a criminal record. What will their involvement in fostering be? <p>Home Safety Check</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any safety concerns in the home? • Does the house allow for adequate supervision? • Is the house set up to care for children? • What needs to happen to make the house safe? • Are their appropriate areas for play/toys? <p>Referee Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long has the referee known the applicants and in what capacity? • Are there any concerns about the applicants? • What are the strengths and weaknesses of the applicants?

Establish appropriate house guidelines

Indicators of safe environment conducive to the promotion of health, education and social development:

- Applicant understands the importance of establishing house guidelines so that children feel safe from sexual or physical abuse.
- Applicant identifies guidelines they will use within their home to help a foster child feel safe.

Evidence:

What do the applicants understand about how house guidelines can help children feel safe and protected from abuse?

How do the applicants respond if these guidelines are not followed by the child?

What are the house guidelines the applicants will put in place when a foster child is placed in their care?

Any other information about the applicant's ability to establish appropriate house guidelines:

Health and Lifestyle

Indicators of Health and Lifestyle conducive to the promotion of health, education and social development:

- Applicants do not have any physical, psychological or mental health conditions that may impact on their capacity to care for a foster child.
- Applicants are able to provide a safe physical environment for a foster child.
- Applicant's lifestyle is conducive to promoting the health and development of a foster child.

Evidence:

Describe the applicant's health and lifestyle?

<p>PROMPTS</p> <p>Physical Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have the applicants been seeing their GP? Does the medical report indicate any health conditions? Are there any chronic conditions that would impede on the applicants care or capacity to care (i.e. muscle/skeletal issues, auto immune diseases, diabetes or heart conditions)? • Is there a need for further health reports from other doctors, specialists or therapists that the applicants may be currently seeing or have seen in the recent past? • What is the applicant's family health history? Is there a need for medical history from previous health professionals? <p>Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any current mental illness issues? If so how do the applicants manage their condition and do they take any medications/what is the medication. Are they under the treatment of a health care professional (i.e. psychiatrist or psychologist)? • Is there any history of mental illness issues? What was the impact of the last episode? What was the response to any treatment received? Is there any indication that the illness may occur again? What is the long term outlook? • How healthy do the applicants see themselves as/ Are there areas they would like to improve? <p>Lifestyle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do the applicants do outside work? • Do they play sport or belong to a group? • Are the applicants volunteering for a particular organisation or group? • Are the applicants involved with school committees or school events? • How much time does this take? • Do the applicants have specific groups or friends that attend child friendly events, particularly for applicants who do not have biological children? • How often do the applicants go on holidays and are they in a financial position to pay for extra children when going on
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holidays?

- What spiritual or cultural interests does the family identify with? What does this look like or involve?
- How will the family incorporate the foster child into their way of life?

Work commitments

- What is your current work?
- How many hours a week do the applicants work? How flexible is their work?
- Are the applicants entitled to parental or other type of leave or not work when caring for children under the age of two years?
- What is your current level of job satisfaction?
- Do you intend to change your employment in the near future?
- Does their work involve interstate or overseas travel?
- How much time do they spend away from home?

Alcohol, drugs and gambling

- What are the applicants' attitudes towards alcohol?
- How often and how much do the applicants drink/under what circumstances do the applicants drink?
- Do the applicants smoke? If so, how much, where?(Assessors to discuss smoking policies - no child under two years old)
- What are the applicants' attitudes towards drugs?
- Do the applicants use drugs? If so, explain and discuss?
- Have the applicants had prior history of drug use (including illicit drugs and misuse of prescription medication)?
- What are the applicant's attitudes towards gambling?
- Do the applicants gamble? If so, discuss method, frequency, etc.
- How does stress affect or change the consumption of drugs, alcohol, smoking or gambling?
- Have the applicants experienced drugs or alcohol usage or gambling in their family while growing up?
- How will the applicants deal with a child or young person in their care using drugs or alcohol?
- How will the applicants understand families who have drug, alcohol or gambling issues?

Financial Stability/Capacity (*Awareness of the financial obligations/impact*)

- Do the applicants understand that the foster care subsidy does not cover the costs of the child?
- Is there capacity to financially provide for a child placed in their care?
- Are the family flexible to financially incorporate another child in their lifestyle if necessary?

CARE Principle 2 – Relationship based

'Every child needs at least one person who is really crazy about him (or her)' - Urie Bronfenbrenner.

- Nurturing relationships and basic attachments are central to healthy growth and development.
- The relationships formed in our work with clients and each other are central to helping clients and staff to build competencies.
- We all respond to people we trust, and feel safer to overcome obstacles and solve problems.

Assessment of CARE Principle 2 - Demonstrated personal readiness to become a foster carer, attitudes and connections consistent with being a good foster carer.

Motivation to be a Foster Carer

Indicators of personal readiness to become a foster carer:

- Applicant's motivation is consistent with meeting the child's needs.
- Applicant's meeting their own needs is not the dominant motivation.

Evidence:

What is the applicant's motivation to provide foster care?

PROMPTS

- When did the applicants begin to think about fostering?
- What knowledge do the applicants already have about foster caring? Do the applicants know anybody who fosters?
- Who in the couple/family brought it up as an option? What was the reaction of the other partner/ others in the home?
- What things do their family anticipate that fostering will give to them? What do they believe that they will get out of it?
- How would the applicants cope or what would it mean to them if they were unable to become foster carers?

What type of foster care are the applicants considering?

PROMPTS

- Are the applicants aware of the different types of care (respite, crisis (short-term), concurrency and long-term)?
- Do the applicants know what each care type entails?

(A more in depth discussion of the type of care outlining all responsibilities and characteristics needs to be given to the applicant(s) by the assessor)

- What type of care is the family considering? Why? Do all family members agree?
- What is the age range for the foster child that the applicants are considering?
- What is the gender for the foster child that the applicants are considering?
- Would the applicants consider caring for siblings? How many?
- Would the applicants consider providing care for a child with specific needs?
- What foster care situations would definitely not fit into the applicant's family?

Any other information about the applicant's motivation to provide foster care:

Infertility

Indicators of personal readiness to become a foster carer:

- Applicants can identify the impact of not being able to have children on their life.
- Applicant's life is not dominated by the wish to have their own child.
- Applicants can recognise that being a foster carer is not the same as having a child of their own.

Evidence:

What is the applicant's history of infertility how long have they been aware of fertility issues, what fertility programs have they undertaken?

PROMPTS

- Has fertility been an issue in the applicants' family?
- What assistance did the applicants seek and receive? Have the applicants accessed Assisted Reproductive Techniques (ART)?
- When did this occur? How long? When did this stop? Are the applicants having any on-going counselling? Are they thinking of looking at ART techniques in the future?
- What would happen to the applicants foster care application if the circumstances changed (e.g. becoming pregnant)?

What are the applicant's emotional responses to their experience of infertility?

PROMPTS

- What impact has this had on their relationship? (Include the degree to which the applicants, both individually and as a couple, have acknowledged and faced the loss of their "dream child" and the grief associated with their loss of fertility or childlessness)
- What interventions have there been to work through their loss? (For example, counselling, applicants' views/intentions re future fertility treatment)

What do the applicants understand about the difference between having a foster child and having a child of their own?

PROMPT

- How do you believe parenting a non-biological child may be different to parenting a biological child (for example, exploring challenges and rewards to include initial feelings towards the child and feelings of expected reciprocity from the child, including possible conflicts, previous parenting strategies that worked may no longer work and may need to be more flexible, seeing a child grow and feel good about themselves, etc.)?

Have the applicants explored adoption/permanent care?

Any other information about the applicant's response to infertility:

Relationship with partner

Indicators of personal readiness to become a foster carer:

- Applicants describe their partnership in positive terms.
- Applicants are provided with emotional support by their partner when they are dealing with challenging situations.
- Applicants identify constructive process of decision making within partnership.
- Applicants identify appropriate patterns of dealing with conflict with their partner.
- Applicants' history of their relationship is congruent.

Evidence:

What is the applicant's current partnership how do they relate and work as a couple?

PROMPTS

- What is the history of your relationship with your partner/Why were you attracted to each other?
- Have you or your partner had any previous marital or de facto relationships? Have there been any significant relationship issues? How have these been managed? Has there been any history of domestic violence?
- What qualities do the applicants like or dislike in each other (i.e. compatibility, flexibility, and roles, pattern of communication, etc.)?
- How do you know your partner cares/ what does this look like?
- How do the applicants see how the child will affect the applicants' relationship (i.e. due to altered roles)? What do the applicants see will be the likely impact on their lifestyle, needs and future goals?
- If the applicants are not parents how do the applicants see that will parenting impact on the relationship?

Assessors (If the age difference between spouses is greater than 10 years; or there is a significant gap in the applicants education levels; or the applicants are from different racial or cultural backgrounds; or there is a significant discrepancy in the applicants values or attitudes; describe how each applicant views the differences and any effects on the relationship).

For single applicants

- A history of past, present and/or probable future significant relationships;
- The availability of an extended support network, including the availability of opposite sex role models;
- Ask applicants about their single status – how do they experience this.
- Contingency plans in the event of ill health, death or income loss.

How have the applicants been emotionally supported by their partner when facing a challenging situation?

What are the applicant's decision making processes in their partnership?

How have the applicants experienced conflict in their partnership?

Any other information you have about the applicant's relationship with their partner:

The impact of foster care on the applicant's own children

Indicators of personal readiness to become a foster carer:

- Applicants can recognise the potential impact of providing foster care on their own children.
- Applicants can identify strategies to address impact on own children.
- Applicant's children are aware of and support the application.

Evidence:

What is the potential impact of caring for a foster child on the applicant's own children?

PROMPTS

- Have the applicants discussed with their children their application to become foster carers?

- What have their reactions been?
- Have the applicants discussed with their children the reasons that children and young people enter foster care?
- Have the applicants discussed with their children about unusual behaviour that a child or young person in care may display?
- Have the applicants discussed with their children about privacy and confidentiality and how they can ensure this occurs? What plans are in place?
- How will the applicants support and look after their own children during stressful times?

How would the applicants address any impact of providing foster care on their own children?

Any other information about how the applicants will address the impact of providing foster care on their own children:

What are the opinions, views and attitudes of the applicant's own children?

Assessor (Talk to the applicant's children)

Network of Support

Indicators of appropriate attitudes and connections:

- Applicants can identify a network of people who can provide practical and emotional support when they have a foster child in their care.
- Applicants can describe a time when they appropriately sought and received emotional support.
- Applicants can describe a time when they appropriately sought and received practical assistance.
- Applicants can identify a realistic understanding of the potential impact of being a foster carer on their current activities and connections.

Evidence:

What network of support will be available to the applicant's if they provide foster care?

PROMPTS

- Do the family have supports from different areas in their life (e.g. family, friends and social groups)?
- Who is in the applicants current support network in their everyday life? How often do they see them/talk to them?
- Who would they identify as their support person in their fostering role?
- Why do they feel this person would be a good support in their fostering role?
- Have the applicants accessed professional supports within their lives?
- Who do the applicants support and how? What family commitments do the applicants have (i.e. family members who need to be cared for elderly parents or biological children with specific needs)? Does this involve frequent interstate travel?
- Who have the applicants told about their foster care application? What were their thoughts?
- Do the people in the applicants support network understand the needs and demands of children in foster care?
- What will the applicants do in order to assist their family to adjust to their fostering role?
- What would happen if the applicants' major supports were no longer there?
- What support will the applicants need from us in difficult times?

When have the applicants sought emotional support from someone in their network?

When have the applicants sought practical assistance from someone in their network?

What would be the changes to the applicant's activities and connections when they foster a child?

PROMPTS

Flexibility with uncertainty and capacity to change

- Are the applicants aware that uncertainty is a key feature of foster caring? What do they understand about this?
- Can the applicants give examples of when they have dealt with uncertainty?
- How did they cope with this and how did they feel? What helped them through this time?

- Can the applicants give examples of their ability to be flexible and open to change? When and how they have coped with
- Can the applicants give examples of

Any other information about the applicant's network of support

Cultural Awareness and Worldviews

Indicators of attitudes and connections:

- Applicant's awareness that their culture influences their beliefs and behaviours.
- Applicants can appreciate and respects difference.

Evidence:

What are the applicant's worldviews, beliefs and values?

PROMPTS

- What is the applicant's family cultural identity and heritage where do these thoughts/attitudes/feelings come from?

What do the applicants understand and appreciate about the differences between their world view and the world views of others?

PROMPTS

- What engagement and involvement do the applicants have with people from different cultures, ethnicity, backgrounds, environments and heritages? Is there any particular lifestyle/culture that the applicants find personally challenging?

What is the applicant's understanding of issues specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders?

Any other information about the applicant's cultural awareness:

CARE Principle 3 – Family Involved

'There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One is roots, the other, wings'
- Hodding Carter.

- Children need permanent ties to caring and nurturing adults.
- Family involvement and community ties are integral to successful work with children and families.
- Our ethnic and cultural identity is tied to the family.
- Connection to family helps us to understand who we are and where we come from.

Assessment of CARE Principle 3 - Demonstrated understanding of the importance of a foster child's biological family heritage and cultural identity.

Attachment

Indicators of positive and enduring relationships:

- Applicants demonstrate a capacity for empathy.
- Applicants have experienced a number of positive and enduring relationships in their life.
- Applicants can provide context or reason for any absence of long-term family relationships in their life.
- Applicants understand the impact of a child's early experience of care on that child's long-term development.

Evidence:

How has the applicant understood and met the needs of a child?

What is the applicant's experience of positive long term relationships in their lives?

PROMPTS

- What were your attachment experiences (i.e. was there an adult attachment figure)?
- Did you see much of your grandparents when you were little?
- Did you have brothers and sisters living with you or anybody besides your parents? Are they living nearby now or do they live elsewhere?
- Describe your relationship with your parents as a young child, starting as far back as you can remember.
- How was warmth and love expressed?
- How were you cared for when you were hurt and distressed?
- What parenting styles did your parents lean towards?
- How were you managed when there was conflict?
- Why do you think your parents behaved as they did during your childhood?
- Do you feel this experience affects you now as an adult?
- Does it influence your approach to your own child?

How have any long periods that the applicants have spent away from their families or significant relationships impacted on their resiliency?

PROMPTS

- What is the first time you remember being separated from your parents?
- How did you respond? Do you remember how your parents responded?
- Are there any other separations that stand out in your mind?

How do the applicants demonstrate their understanding of how a child's early experiences can affect their long term development?

Any other information about the applicant's experience or understanding of attachment

Life story work**Indicators of family heritage and cultural identity:**

- Applicants understand the role of a foster carer in helping a foster child keep a record of their life experiences.
- Applicants identify strategies to safely store memorabilia for a foster child.

Evidence:

What do the applicants understand is the role of the foster carer in life story work with a foster child?

How would the applicants collect and store memorabilia for a child in foster care?

Any other information about the applicants and life story work:

Promoting the positive identity of a child

Indicators of family heritage and cultural identity:

- Applicant recognises the importance of identity to a foster child.
- Applicant can identify ways of encouraging a foster child to take pride in their own cultural and personal identity.

Evidence:

What do the applicants understand about the importance of identity to children in foster care?

PROMPTS

- How do the applicants record their own family's life story?
- What is the applicant's understanding of how identity is formed?
- What is the applicants understanding of some of the issues surrounding identity for a child in foster care (i.e. loss of information about birth family, contact with birth family, absent birth family)?

How would the applicants encourage a foster child to take pride in their identity?

Any other information about the applicant's ability to promote the positive identity of a foster child:

Working with birth families

Indicators of birth family connections:

- Applicant understands that birth family members can be very significant to a foster child.
- Applicant can identify strategies that could assist in making the foster child's contact with their birth family a positive experience.

Evidence:

What is the applicant's attitude to birth families of a child in foster care?

PROMPTS

- Would the applicants consider providing transport to/from contact with birth family? How often?
- Would the applicants consider helping the foster child write letters or make phone calls to birth family?
- Would the applicants consider meeting with birth family at contact drop off/pick up times?
- Would the applicants consider supervising/participating in contact with the birth family?

What strategies might the applicants use to assist in developing positive relationships between a foster child and their birth family?

PROMPTS

- How will the applicants as carers build rapport with and develop and maintain a relationship with a birth parent?
- Why do the applicants think that parents abuse or neglect their children? How do the applicants feel about this? How will the applicants manage working with these parents?

What do the applicants understand to be some of the difficulties that birth families might experience in maintaining their connection and links with their children? How might they be feeling?

PROMPTS

- What might be some of the particular challenges related to managing birth family contact?
- How might you manage this for the child? How might you manage this for yourself?
- **What might be some of the difficulties that birth families are experiencing in maintaining their connection and links with their children? How might they be feeling?**

Any other information about the applicant's response to working with birth families:

CARE Principle 4 – Trauma informed

‘We need to shift our thinking from what is wrong with you to what happened to you’ - Sandra Bloom.

- Trauma has a debilitating effect on children’s growth and development.
- Maintaining a non-coercive and safe environment is essential for children and young people and adults, to learn new responses to stressful situations.
- Challenging behaviour is often pain-based behaviour.

Assessment of CARE Principle 4 – Demonstrated understanding of the impact of abuse, neglect grief and loss and associated trauma on childhood development.

Trauma, grief and loss

Indicators personal resilience:

- Applicants can identify the impact of trauma, grief and loss in their own life.
- Applicant’s life history is not dominated by unresolved trauma, grief and loss.
- Applicants have the capacity to reflect, learn and grow from adversity.
- Applicants recognise that trauma, grief and loss are experienced by children in foster care.

Evidence:

What have been the applicant’s experiences of trauma?

PROMPTS

- Has anyone in your family experienced family violence? What are the applicant’s attitudes towards violence within the family?
- Were your parents ever threatening with you in any way – maybe for discipline or even jokingly?
- Do you feel this experience affects you now as an adult?
- Does it influence your approach to your own child?
- Have your childhood experiences with your parents have impacted your adult personality? Are there any other aspects of your early experiences that you think might have held your development back, or had a negative effect on the way you turned out?
- Some people have memories of threats or of some kind of behaviour that was abusive. Did anything like this ever happen to you, or in your family? Other than any difficult experiences you’ve already described, have you had any other experiences which you should regard as potentially traumatic?

What have been the applicant’s experiences of loss and grief?

PROMPTS

- What are the loss and grief issues that the applicants and their families have experienced?
- Did you experience the loss of a parent or other close loved one while you were a young child, for example, a sibling or a close family member?
- Did you lose any other important person during your childhood?
- Have you lost any other close people, in adult years?

How have the applicants overcome adversity?

What do the applicants understand about how trauma may be experienced by children in foster care?

PROMPTS

- What do the applicants feel will be the ongoing issues for children who have experienced trauma through abuse and neglect?
- How would the applicants parent these children differently? What strategies would be used?

What do the applicants understand about how loss and grief may be experienced by children in foster care?

PROMPT

- What loss and grief issues would be applicable for the child/young person’s family? How can the applicants support the child or young person? How may this affect contact or applicant’s interactions with the birth family and how they can support this)
- What are the applicants understanding of the experience of loss and grief for the child/young person regarding their birth family?
- What issues do the applicants see impacting on a child/young person coming into care?

- How would you support a child/young person managing the transition into care?

How would the applicants support children to manage the transition into foster care?

PROMPTS

- What do the applicants understand about how the child will be feeling when they enter a foster carer's home? What do the applicants understand about what a child who has been abused or neglected need from a foster carer to feel safe?
- What issues do the applicants see impacting on a child/young person coming into care?
- How would you support a child/young person managing the transition into care?

How might the child view a new adult or parental figure in their life and how would you respond to this? What strategies and support systems are there in place?

PROMPT

- What do the applicants see would be the impact on a child where the person that they trust the most and who they rely on, abuses or neglects them (i.e. behaviourally, emotionally, socially, physically, etc.)?

Any other information about the applicant's response to trauma, loss and grief:

Impact of abuse, including sexual abuse

Indicators of personal resilience:

(Only for applicants who have experienced abuse)

- Applicants identify the impact of abuse on their own life.

(All applicants)

- Applicants understand the links between abuse and neglect, and development of trust and empathy.
- Applicants discuss abuse, including sexual abuse, appropriately without being overwhelmed by grief, anger, embarrassment or other strong emotion.
- Applicants identify sources of assistance to care for a child who has experienced abuse.

Evidence:

What the applicants said was the impact of abuse on their life (If applicable):

What do the applicants understand about the link between abuse and neglect with trust and empathy?

What was the emotional response (including conversational tone, body language etc.) of the applicant when discussing abuse?

What do the applicants see would be their emotional/feelings/behavioural triggers? What strategies would be useful so that their emotions/feelings/behaviours would not be triggered?

What is the applicants understanding of sources of assistance to care for a child who has experienced abuse?

What is the applicants understanding of abuse in our community?

Any other information about the applicant's understanding or response to abuse:

Dealing with stress

Indicators of personal resilience:

- Applicants can identify their personal response to stress.
- Applicants are not currently experiencing stress that dominates their life.
- Applicants have used appropriate strategies to deal with stress that may arise from being a foster carer.
- Applicants use humour appropriately to diffuse situations.

Evidence:

What are the applicant's experiences of stress?

How do the applicants know they are stressed?

How do the applicants know when their partner is stressed and what signs are there?

What strategies have the applicants used to deal with stress?

Any other information you have about the applicant's response to stress relevant to coping with the change and stress of being a foster carer:

Responding to very challenging behaviour

Indicators child personal resilience:

- Applicants recognise their personal response to difficult and challenging behaviour.
- Applicants recognise that physical punishment is not an acceptable response to challenging behaviour of foster children.
- Applicants identify appropriate strategies to manage their personal response to difficult behaviour.
- Applicants understands the responsibility of agencies to investigation any allegations of abuse in foster care:

Evidence:

What would be the applicant's personal response to difficult and challenging behaviour?

PROMPTS

- What values do you believe are important in raising a child?
- As relatives or friends to other children, what have you observed about what helps or hinders children's behaviour?
- How do you respond now, in terms of feelings, when you separate from your child/children/ or a child you are fond of?
- Have your ideas about parenting changed or remained the same over time?
- If you had three wishes for your foster child twenty years from now, what would they be? What kind of future would you like to see your foster child have?
- What would you hope your foster child might have learned from his/her experiences of being parented by you?

- How do you think you will parent as a team?
- How will you handle challenging behaviours and how will you maintain a positive relationship with a child or young person when things are not going well for them? What is applicant's reflective capacity for understanding what behaviours are telling them and responding appropriately, proactive parenting behaviours and attitudes etc.?

How would the applicants manage their response to difficult behaviour, including their impulse to physically punish or retaliate?

PROMPTS

- What do you think would challenge you as a parent? What pushes your buttons about children's behaviour?
- What do you do well emotionally around children?
- Understanding the impact of 'self' on parenting children and young people
- Do you currently incorporate self-care into your routine? Why or why not? If so, what and when?

What is the applicants understanding of the purpose of agency investigation into allegations of abuse in foster care?

Any other information about the applicant's response to challenging behaviour:

Manage behaviour

Indicators of personal resilience:

- Applicant recognises that the behaviour of foster children can reflect trauma, grief and loss issues.
- Applicant identifies appropriate strategies to encourage positive changes in behaviour.

Evidence:

What is the applicant's understanding that a child's behaviour might reflect a foster child's past experience of trauma, grief or loss?

PROMPT

- What do the applicants see as the types of behaviours that might come from a child who has experienced abuse and trauma?

How would the applicants encourage changes in a child's behaviours?

Any other information about the applicant's ability to manage behaviour:

CARE Principle 5 - Competence centred

'If I have the belief I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning' - Mahatma Gandhi.

- Problem solving skills, flexibility, critical thinking and insight are necessary life skills.
- Focusing on strengths and positive attributes builds a positive identity.
- A person's personal strengths and resources are the biggest factor in making positive change.

Assessment of CARE Principle 5 – Demonstrated ability to work effectively as part of a foster care team in an ethical/legal context.

Working within a case plan framework

Indicators of working effectively as part of a team:

- Applicants recognise that they are one part of a team in caring for the child.
- Applicants understand the place of a case plan in guiding decisions about the child.

Evidence:

What do the applicants consider to be the value of working in a team with children in foster care?

PROMPTS

- What is the applicants' understanding of and experience of managing private and confidential information?
- How do the applicants manage their role as someone who needs to 'care', 'advocate' and at times comply with directions particularly those that they may not agree with?
- What experience do the applicants have in dealing with agencies or government and how have they managed this?
- What teams have each applicant been involved with? What role do they 'play' in a team?
- What does conflict mean to the applicants?
- How has conflict been dealt with in the past and how is it dealt with now?
- How do the applicants manage conflict in a team situation?
- What do they do well or could improve on in relation to conflict resolution?
- What conflicts are likely to be avoided by each applicant? Why?

What do the applicants understand about how a case plan guides a foster carer in making decisions about a child in foster care?

PROMPTS

- Do the applicants understand the roles and responsibilities that foster carers have?
- Do the applicants have knowledge about the Children and Young Person legislation?
- Do the applicants understand the roles of the different players in the care team (for example, the agency, department etc.)?
- Do the applicants understand the importance of communication and collaboration?

Any other information about the applicant's experience or understanding of working within a case plan framework:

Advocacy skills

Indicators of working effectively as part of a team:

- Applicants can communicate clearly, and clarify information when necessary.
- Applicants use skills of assertive communication appropriately.
- Applicants identify their personal response to conflict.
- Applicants describe appropriate strategies they have used to resolve conflict and misunderstandings

Evidence:

When have the applicants used communication to clarify information?

When have the applicants used assertive communication?

What is the applicant's personal response to conflict?

What strategies have the applicants used to resolve a conflict or misunderstanding?

PROMPTS

- What does conflict mean to the applicants?
- How has conflict been dealt with in the past and how is it dealt with now?
- How do the applicants manage conflict in a team situation?
- What do they do well or could improve on in relation to conflict resolution.

- What conflicts are likely to be avoided by each applicant? Why?

Any other information about the applicant's competence in advocacy:

Confidentiality

Indicators of working effectively as part of a team:

- Applicants understand that children in foster care have a right to confidentiality.
- Applicants demonstrate the concept of exchanging information on a "need to know" basis.

Evidence:

What is the applicant's understanding about exchanging information on a "need to know" basis?

What is the applicant's understanding about the right of children in foster care to have information about them treated confidentially?

Any other information about the applicant's ability to apply confidentiality appropriately:

Commitment to on-going learning

Indicators of working effectively as part of a team:

- Applicants identify challenges that may arise for them in being a foster carer.
- Applicants identify strategies to develop further skills in providing foster care.

Evidence:

What challenges do the applicants anticipate they will face in taking on the role of a foster carer?

PROMPT

- Can you identify any areas where you may need extra learning or education in relation to parenting?

What will help the applicants to further develop their skills as foster carers?

Any other information about the applicant's commitment to on-going learning:

CARE Principle 6 – Developmentally focused

'Children do well if they can. If they can't, we need to figure out why so we can help' - Ross Greene.

- All children and young people have the same basic requirements for growth and development.
- We all need support to engage our innate capacity to grow and develop.
- We all learn best when skills are within our zone of proximal development.

Assessment of CARE Principle 6 – Demonstrated ability to provide child focused care and a capacity for reflective parenting.

Provide emotional care:

Indicators of child focused care:

- Applicants can demonstrate ability to relate and show appropriate affection to a child.
- Applicants can describe the importance of listening carefully to children, so they can express their needs and feelings.
- Applicants understand that a foster child may have a limited capacity to connect and respond to them as a foster carer.

Evidence:

How do the applicants show appropriate affection to a child?

What do the applicants understand about why it is important to listen carefully to a child?

What is the applicant's understanding of why a child in foster care may not connect with and respond to them as the foster carer with warmth?

PROMPTS

- How might a child or young person view a new adult or parental figure in their life and how would you respond to this? Strategies in place & support systems?

Any other information about the applicant's ability to provide emotional care:

Strength based and flexible response to children

Indicators of child focused care:

- Applicants understand how the needs of a child can vary with their stage of development.
- Applicants can demonstrate that they look for a child's strengths and abilities.
- Applicants can demonstrate their experience in using a range of strategies to respond to a child in a way which takes account of the child's particular personality and situation.

Evidence:

What do the applicants understand about how the needs of a child can vary with age and development?

PROMPTS

- What children do the applicants know and have experience with in personal or professional life? What understanding do the applicants have of children?
- What do the applicants understand about how a child in care expresses their needs and feelings at different ages would be feeling and behaving? (Assessor to add different ages for discussion)

How would the applicants care for a child based on that child's strengths and ability?

How do the applicants demonstrate flexibility by using different strategies to respond to children?

Any other information you have about the applicant's ability to deal with children in a strength based or flexible way:

Participation and decision-making

Indicators of child focused care:

- Applicants can identify importance of children being involved in decisions that affect them.
- Applicants identify strategies to encourage a foster child to participate in decision making.

Evidence:

What do the applicants understand about the value of involving children in decision making?

How would the applicants encourage a child to participate in decision-making?

How would the applicants encourage a foster child to participate in decision-making?

Any other information about the applicant's ability to include children in decision-making:

Understand adolescent behaviour

Indicators of child focused care:

- Applicants understand that adolescent is a time of developing identity, so a foster child who is separated from their own birth family may have particular struggles at this stage.
- Applicants understand that adolescents often engage in risk taking and challenging behaviour.

Evidence:

What is the applicant's understanding of struggles about identity for adolescents in foster care?

How would the applicants deal with risk taking and challenging behaviour in adolescence?

Any other information about the applicants understanding of adolescent behaviour:

Promote educational engagement

Indicators of child focused care:

- Applicants understand the importance of educational engagement for foster children.
- Applicants identify strategies to encourage a child to engage with schooling.

Evidence:

What is the applicant's understanding of the importance of educational achievement for a child in foster care?

How would the applicants encourage a foster child to engage with school?

Any other information about the applicant's ability in promoting educational engagement:

Summary of CARE Principles

CARE Principle 1: Ecologically orientated – A safe environment free from abuse

Element	Indicators	Assessed as Met? "Yes", "No" or "Not yet"
Provide a safe physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s' home meets the minimum standards required for an out-of-home care placement • Applicant/s can identify the importance of appropriate health and hygiene practices at home. • Applicants can provide adequate space and supervision for a foster child. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Establish appropriate house guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can understand the importance of establishing house guidelines to so children feel safe from sexual or physical abuse • Applicant/s can identify guidelines they will use within their home to help a child in foster care feel safe 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Health and lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants do not have any physical, psychological or mental health conditions that may impact on their capacity to care for a foster child in care. • Applicant's lifestyle is conducive to promoting the health and development of a foster child in care. • Applicants access and utilise facilities in their locality. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed

CARE Principle 2: Relationship based – Personal readiness.

Element	Indicators	Assessed as Met? "Yes", "No" or "Not yet"
Motivation to provide foster carer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s' motivation is consistent with meeting the needs of the foster child • Applicant/s meeting their own needs is not the dominant motivation 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Infertility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can identify the impact of not being able to have children on their life • Applicant/s' life is not dominated by the wish to have own child • Applicant/s can recognise that being a foster carer is not the same as having a child of one's own 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed

Relationship with partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s describe their partnership in positive terms • Applicant/s are provided with emotional support by their partner when they are dealing with challenging situations • Applicant/s can identify constructive process of decision making within partnership • Applicant/s can identify appropriate patterns of dealing with conflict with their partner • Applicant/s' history of their relationship is congruent 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Network of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can identify a network of people who can provide practical and emotional support when they have a foster child in their care • Applicant/s can describe a time when they appropriately sought and received emotional support • Applicant/s can describe a time when they appropriately sought and received practical assistance • Applicant/s can realistically identify the potential impact of being a foster carer on their current activities and connections 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Cultural awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can demonstrate awareness that their culture influences their beliefs and behaviours • Applicant/s can appreciate and respects difference 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed

CARE Principle 3: Family involved – Attitudes and connections

Element	Indicators	Assessed as Met? "Yes", "No" or "Not yet"
Attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can demonstrate a capacity for empathy • Applicant/s can demonstrate an experience of a number of positive and enduring relationships in their life • Applicant/s can provide context or reason for any absence of long-term family relationships in their life • Applicant/s can understand the impact of a child's early experience of care on that child's long-term development 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Life story work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can understand the role of a foster carer in helping a child in foster care to keep a record of their life experiences • Applicant/s can identify strategies to safely store memorabilia for a child in foster care 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed

Promoting the positive identity of a child in care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can recognise the importance of identity to children in foster care • Applicant/s can identify ways of encouraging a child in foster care to take pride in their own cultural and gender identity 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Working with birth families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can understand that birth family members can be very significant to a child in foster care • Applicant/s can identify strategies that could assist in making a child's contact with their birth family a positive experience 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed

CARE Principle 4 - Trauma informed – Personal resilience

Element	Indicators	Assessed as Met? "Yes", "No" or "Not yet"
Trauma, grief and loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can identify the impact of trauma, grief and loss in their own life • Applicant/s' life history is not dominated by unresolved trauma, grief and loss • Applicant/s demonstrate a capacity to reflect, learn and grow from adversity • Applicant/s can recognise that trauma, grief and loss is experienced by children in foster care 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Impact of abuse, including sexual abuse (All Carers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can identify the impact of abuse on their own life(<i>If Applicant/s previously experienced abuse</i>) • Applicant/s can understand the links between abuse and neglect, and development of trust and empathy • Applicant/s can discuss abuse, including sexual abuse, appropriately without being overwhelmed by grief, anger, embarrassment or other strong emotion • Applicant/s can identify strategies to care for a child who has experienced abuse 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Dealing with stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can identify their personal response to stress • Applicant/s can demonstrate that they are not currently experiencing stress that dominates their life • Applicant/s can demonstrate that they use appropriate strategies to deal with stress that may arise from being a foster carer • Applicant/s can demonstrate that they use humour appropriately to diffuse situations 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed

Responding to very challenging behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can recognise their personal response to difficult and challenging behaviour • Applicant/s can recognise that physical punishment is not an acceptable response to challenging behaviour of children in foster care • Applicant/s can identify appropriate strategies to manage their personal response to difficult behaviour 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Manage behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can recognise that the behaviour of children in foster care can reflect trauma, grief and loss issues • Applicant/s can identify appropriate strategies to encourage positive behaviour changes 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed

CARE Principle 5 - Competence centred – Working as a member of a team in a foster care

Element	Indicators	Assessed as Met? "Yes", "No" or "Not yet"
Work within the case plan framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can recognise that they are one part of a part of a team in caring for the foster child • Applicant/s can understand the place of a case plan in guiding decisions about the foster child • Applicant/s can understand the responsibility of agencies to investigate any allegations of abuse in foster care 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Advocacy skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can communicate clearly, and clarify information when necessary • Applicant/s can use skills of assertive communication appropriately • Applicant/s can identify their personal response to conflict • Applicant/s can describe appropriate strategies they have used to resolve conflict and misunderstandings 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can understand that children in foster care have a right to confidentiality • Applicant/s can demonstrate the concept of exchanging information on a "need to know" basis 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Commitment to on-going learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can identify challenges that may arise for them in being a foster carer • Applicant/s can identify strategies to develop further skills in providing care 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed

CARE Principle 6: Developmentally focused - Child focused care

Element	Indicators	Assessed as Met? "Yes", "No" or "Not yet"
Provide emotional care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can demonstrate an ability to relate and show appropriate affection to a child • Applicant/s can describe the importance of listening carefully to children, so they can express their needs and feelings • Applicant/s can understand that a child in foster care may have a limited capacity to connect with and respond to a carer 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Strength based and flexible response to children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can understand how the needs of a child can vary with their stage of development • Applicant/s can demonstrate that they are able to nurture a child's strengths and abilities • Applicant/s can demonstrate their experience in using a range of strategies to respond to a child in a way which takes account of the child's particular personality and situation. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Participation and decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can identify the importance of children being involved in decisions that affect them • Applicant/s can identify strategies to appropriately encourage a child in foster care to participate in decision making. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Understand adolescent behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can understand that adolescent is a time of developing identity, so a child in foster care who is separated from their own birth family may have particular struggles at this stage • Applicant/s can understand that adolescents often engage in risk taking behaviour and challenging behaviour. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed
Promote educational engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant/s can understand the importance of educational engagement for children in foster care • Applicant/s can identify strategies to encourage a child to engage with schooling 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Further support needed

Final Summary Report and Recommendations

A copy given to the applicants by assessor:

Comments on any other issues

Recommendations:

Should Marymead proceed with accepting Applicant's application to become authorised carers?

(Mark one) Yes No

If no, what steps could be undertaken to address concerns?

If yes, a letter of agreement to be written between Marymead and the Applicant/s, advising them of;

- Any special conditions or consideration impacting on the carer's authorisation
- On-going training needs have may have been identified as a priority
- Any further care availability agreed on
- Type of support provided through agency, including on-call services and training opportunities
- Other avenues of support available to carers e.g. foster carer support organizations
- Process of review of suitability

Authorisation by Applicant/s

The Applicant/s confirm that they have read the final summary report and recommendations, and have had the opportunity to make any final or dissenting comments below

Signed: Carer (1)

Carer (2)

Applicant/s comments (if applicable)

Authorisation by Assessor

Name	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>

Authorisation by Program Manager

Approval of recommendations by Program Manager:

Name	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>