1. What fields must be completed for the Emergency Relative or Non-Relative Placement Home Study?

ANSWER (Part 1): When the Department intervenes to remove a child from his/her parents, we assume responsibility for that child's placement in a safe and stable home. Our responsibility includes making the best placement the first time to minimize the opportunity for placement disruption or change for any child. “Best Placement, First Placement, Only Placement.” Section 39.521(2)(r), F.S., defines the minimum requirements for assessing a home for an emergency placement. These are:

- An interview with the proposed legal guardian to assess their commitment and ability to care for the child;
- Records checks through SACWIS;
- Local and statewide criminal and juvenile records checks through FDLE on all household members 12 and older;
- FDLE/FBI fingerprints check for all household members 18 and older;
- Out-of-state criminal checks for any individual who has resided outside of Florida;
- An assessment of the physical environment of the home;
- A determination of the financial security of the proposed custodians;
- Details of child care arrangements needed if the proposed legal guardian works outside of the home;
- Documentation of counseling and information provided to the proposed legal guardian regarding the dependency process and possible outcomes; and
- Documentation that information regarding available community support services has been provided.

The CPI or sheriff’s office conducting an emergency relative or non-relative home study is responsible for conducting a study including the above information at a minimum for the emergency placement.

ANSWER (Part 2): If the emergency “placement” being considered is for release to the other parent not residing in the household of the alleged abuse/neglect, the process for conducting an evaluation of that parent’s home is being developed as the “Other Parent Home Assessment” or OPHA. Prior to release of the child to the other parent, the investigator or case manager shall conduct an “Other Parent Home Assessment” by completing the following actions:

- Verify legal parental relationship by examining a birth certificate, child support order, child support payment record, or other official government documentation establishing relationship.
• Complete a modified home study of the other parent’s household to determine the household composition, gather demographics of all household members, conduct a home visit, and complete any background screening requirements;
• Assess to determine the other parent’s and any adult household members in a significant caregiver role adult functioning and protective capacities;
• Assess to determine the other parent’s willingness and ability to provide supervision and protection in alignment with the Department; and
• Ensure that the release of the child to the other parent does not represent a rebuttable presumption of detriment as defined in s.39.0139, and thus pose a threat of danger to the child.

To capture the modified “Other Parent Release” home studies in FSFN:
• Complete child abuse records checks through a thorough review and analysis of information from FSFN.
• Complete the criminal background checks through Maintain Case page and analyze information.
• Document the level of assessment and recommendations in Case Notes, under “Other Parent Release-Home Study.”

2. Who are the regional contacts available to answer questions about the new Unified Home Study process?

ANSWER: Each Region and CBC should designate who responds to questions locally. Generally, the case manager or child protective investigator contacts his/her supervisor; if the supervisor is unable to assist, they should contact operations or a regional program specialist. Regions will contact Headquarters for assistance from the Office of Child Welfare.

3. Are regions/CBCs/sheriff’s departments required to develop additional training for implementation of the new UHS?

ANSWER: No. The webinars are intended to meet the training requirements. The training/implementation plan should have addressed how all employees will receive the training - whether they will participate directly in the webinar, or whether select staff will take the webinar and then deliver the training locally. The webinar is now available online/on-demand at:

http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/FSFN/FSFNTraining.shtml

4. The CPI does an emergency HS for placement with a relative or non-relative. The case is then staffed to CBC for ongoing case management services. The child remains in the placement. Does the CBC have to take the information from emergency HS and do a relative or non-relative HS or does the emergency HS done by the CPI remain as the completed HS until some factor in the home changes?

ANSWER: The CPI or sheriff conducting an emergency relative or non-relative home study is responsible for conducting as complete and thorough a study of the prospective placement home as possible given the circumstances. At a minimum, the CPI or sheriff must complete
the requirements for an emergency/exigent home study per s. 39.0139, F.S., as listed in Question #1.

Any information not captured by the CPI or sheriff on the emergency relative or non-relative home study should be completed by the ongoing services case manager or licensing specialist after case transfer. The CBC case manager completes a revised home study on the same home when there are changes in the household composition or other critical juncture.

5. The CPI shelters a child from one parent and seeks to release the child to the other parent who is a non-household member. In FSFN it is not entered as a “shelter” or “removal” since neither the federal government nor DCF recognizes “placing” or “releasing” to the legal parent as a “placement” or “removal episode” since the parents are legally responsible for the care, safety and welfare of their children, regardless of custody arrangements. It is only when the child is placed with someone other than a legal parent that is recognized as a placement. Which UHS would the CPI do? The Emergency or the Parent Placement home study?

ANSWER: As stated in the question above, parents are not considered “placements” nor “providers,” as they are legally responsible for the care, safety and well-being of their children and we do not license parents as providers to care for their own children. There will not be a “Parental Placement UHS” type. From a system perspective, because the UHS is created from the Person/Provider inquiry and page/record in FSFN, and because a parent is never a provider, the CPI will complete the requirements listed in Question #1, ANSWER (Part 2) above to assess the other parent’s home as their first choice in the available options for a child’s care. This assessment will be documented in the Case Note titled “Other Parent Home Assessment” (OPHA) in FSFN Release 2.

6. Once the UHS is a page in FSFN and not a template as currently designed, will there be an electronic signature for worker/supervisor or is the expectation to print out the attestation and signature pages for all to sign? Also, if printing out signature page, is it required to scan into FSFN and if so where?

ANSWER: Currently, the home study has an Attestation Page attachment that the family is required to sign. This attachment is NOT to be signed as part of the UHS finalization; it is simply an attestation by the prospective caregiver(s) that the information they provided to the Department to inform our assessment of their home is true and accurate. In Release 2, the Signature Page attachment will need to be printed, signed, and scanned as an attachment into the UHS page in FSFN.

Depending on the home study purpose, the signature page requires the signatures of the CPI, CPI Supervisor, Case Manager, Case Manager Supervisor, Licensing Specialist, Licensing Supervisor, Program Director, and CBC Executive Director.
7. Will CPIs be expected to complete the template electronically to pass on to case management or will they have the option to hand-write the studies?

ANSWER: Prior to Release 2, CPIs can hand-write their assessment on the template and the paper original can be placed in the client’s/caregiver’s physical file, which is separate from the investigation file. The date associated with completing the home study still needs to be input into FSFN through the UHS page, which must be tied to the provider record. With FSFN Release 2 functionality, there is no template to complete. CPIs can have the assessment domains available to document key responses or notes to aid their memory, but the information and study must be documented in entirety on the FSFN page.

8. I am told that Case Management is currently requesting background screening within the UHS template for planned placements (not adoptions) in FSFN....will this continue once the studies are completed outside of FSFN (between 5/1 and 7/1)?

ANSWER: Yes. The background screening request will still need to be generated from the Unified Home Study page in the current FSFN design, between 5/1 and 7/1 for Emergency Relative and Non-Relative placement, Planned Relative and Non-relative placements, and Other Parent Home Assessments.

9. Has any transition of paper studies to FSFN been contemplated once the system has "caught up" to practice?

ANSWER: The interim paper home studies will not need to be input into FSFN Release 2. Transferring all home studies to the new FSFN electronic functionality will be “caught up” on a case-by-case basis as the need for a new/different home study arises. For example: A relative was assessed using the “interim” UHS paper process, and the child was placed in the home. After FSFN Release 2, that relative chooses to become licensed. The new home study for licensing is conducted within the FSFN system.

10. Is there a way to access webinar information outside of a link...the links provided related to this topic have not been working for us?

ANSWER: The webinar is now available on the Florida’s Center for Child Welfare website online/on-demand at: [http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/FSFN/FSFNTraining.shtml](http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/FSFN/FSFNTraining.shtml)
All associated documents will be posted this week.

11. When would a CM use the emergency relative or non-relative home study or is this not a home study they would ever use?

ANSWER: CPIs and sheriff's offices will use the Emergency Home Study regardless of Relative or Non-Relative status. Case Managers should use the Relative or Non-Relative Home Study
types for planned placements. It is rare that a Case Manager would have a need to complete an “emergency” relative or non-relative home study.

12. Please verify we should continue to use the FSFN Reunification Home Study for children being reunified.

ANSWER: Yes. Prior to Release 2 functionality, for reunification purposes, everyone should continue using the Parent Reunification Readiness Assessment located in FSFN. Post Release 2, as Regions begin implementation, the reunification process is part of the Family Functioning Assessment-Ongoing and Progress Evaluation, and will be documented using the new process and functionality.

13. File Cabinet: Paper copy of the Unified Home Study, there are currently four options in the file cabinet. Which value should be used for which UHS? There is not a place for emergency or parental placement? File Cabinet: where would a ‘signature’ page be stored?

ANSWER: Although ‘scanning’ functionality exists within FSFN, the new home study should not be scanned into FSFN, as currently functionality does not exist to attach a home study to the provider for whom it was conducted and on which home was assessed. The home study template should be stored in the hardcopy paper file.

14. Is there a template available that folks can type into? The PDF version that is posted, will not allow us to type into it.

ANSWER: Yes, once finalized, and prior to the May 1 start date, the UHS will be posted as a Word document with fillable text fields.

15. Do you see a problem with our CPIs and Case Managers scanning their paper version home studies into the FSFN filing cabinet? We know this is not an option for our licensure staff.

ANSWER: Although ‘scanning’ functionality exists within FSFN, the new home study should not be scanned into FSFN as currently functionality does not exist to attach a home study to the provider for whom it was conducted and on which home was assessed. The home study template should be stored in the hardcopy paper file.

Please make sure to enter a provider note on the provider record related to completion of the UHS and where it can be located.