

*Tool 8*

JV#, Child first and last name

**Choose an agency**

*If Other, Specify:* **Enter agency**

**Safe Placement Settings Assessment (SPSA)**

*Completed when a child is placed with an unlicensed alternate caregiver.*

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| *The Safe Placement Settings Assessment (SPSA) is recommended when children are placed in out-of-home care. It includes all children placed in* ***unlicensed*** *homes, including relatives and fictive kin, regardless of whether the Human Service Zone maintains placement, court ordered care, and responsibility. CPS Workers/Case Managers must refer to the policy requirements for out of home placement when completing this form (including* [*607-05-35-15-01*](https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/60705/60705.htm#607_05_35_15_01.htm?Highlight=alternate%20caregiver)*,* [*607-05-35-40-01-05*](https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/60705/60705.htm#607_05_35_40_01_05.htm?Highlight=alternate%20caregiver) *,* [*607-05-70-20*](https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/60705/60705.htm#607_05_70_20.htm?Highlight=alternate%20caregiver)*, and* [*607-05-70-45-20*](https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/60705/60705.htm#607_05_70_45_20.htm?Highlight=alternate)*).*  *It is recommended the SPSA form be completed by 5 days post placement (or as soon as possible) and then every 6 months thereafter. Information collection for the completion of this form should be gathered incrementally during each monthly contact with the alternate caregiver(s).*  *If a child moves from one unlicensed home to another unlicensed home, it is recommended the SPSA be completed on the new placement setting according to the above timeframes.* | | | |
| **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION** | | | |
| **FRAME #** | Enter FRAME # | **CPS Worker/Case Manager** | First and last name |
| **Case Name** | Enter case name | **Supervisor** | First and last name |
| **Date of Placement** | Select date | **Date of Next Review** | Select date |

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| **CHILD(REN) TO BE PLACED** | | | | |
| First and last name | Age **years old** | | **DOB**: MM/DD/YY | |
| **Native American Heritage?** | **Yes** Enter Tribe | **No** | | **Unknown** |
| *When “Yes” ensure alternate placement complies with ICWA requirements per* [*607-05-35-05-10*](https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/60705/60705.htm#607_05_35_05_10.htm%3FTocPath%3DChild%2520Welfare%2520Practice%2520Model%7CSafety%2520Framework%2520Practice%2520Model%2520607-05-35%7COverview%2520607-05-35-05%7C_____4) | | | | |

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| **ALTERNATE CAREGIVER(S)**  *An alternate caregiver can be an identified relative, kin, or fictive kin (i.e. friends or neighbors) of the child(ren), or a licensed foster parent. List the adults who will care for the child(ren) in his or her home or in the child(ren)’s home.* | | | |
| First and last name | **Relationship to Child(ren)**  Relationship | **Phone #**  Enter phone # | **Address**  Enter address |

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| **SECTION I**  ***Child(ren)*** | |
| **What are the indicators of safety for the child(ren) currently living in the alternate caregiver’s home?** | |
| *This question considers the alternate caregiver’s own children AND unrelated children who have been living with the family. Judgements are based on considering all the children generally. If one child is remarkably different than the other children, an explanation should be made specifically indicating the extent to which this raises any concern for the quality of parenting or the presence of threats. Select the rating that best describes the child(ren) currently living in the alternate caregiver’s home.* | |
| **Rating** | **Child Indicators** |
| **4** | Child is openly assertive; comfortable speaking mind; self-protective; indignant at being threatened; describes environment as safe; supportive siblings; no indication of maltreatment; very low vulnerability. |
| **3** | Child is somewhat assertive; with encouragement speaks mind; generally self-protective; describes environment as generally safe; siblings may or may not be supportive of each other; no indication of maltreatment; low vulnerability. |
| **2** | Child is reserved; uncomfortable speaking mind freely; ability to protect self is questionable; limited ability to make needs known to others; uneasy about describing environment; siblings seem detached from each other; behavior may be consistent with being maltreated; somewhat vulnerable. |
| **1** | Child is withdrawn; verbally inaccessible; cannot protect self; reluctant to seek assistance or protection; avoids discussing environment; behavior is consistent with being maltreated and feeling threatened; vulnerable. |
| **0** | Child is intimidated; afraid; avoids communicating with others; avoids direct communication with anyone; not self-protective; behaves in ways suggesting presence of threatening environment: alert for danger; siblings may be antagonistic, blaming, or overly dependent; indications of maltreatment; very vulnerable. |
| **N/A** | Child is very young or significantly developmentally delayed and cannot be assessed per the above indicators; there are no children currently living in the alternate caregiver’s home. |
| **If 1 or 0 is selected, explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency.**  Explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency. | |

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| **SECTION II**  ***Alternate Caregiver(s)*** | |
| **What are the indicators of safety for the alternate caregiver(s) currently living in the home?** | |
| *This question considers parents, stepparents, grandparents or other adults in the home who take an active role in caring for and supervising the family’s children. Select the rating that best describes the alternate caregiver(s).* | |
| **Rating** | **Alternate Caregiver Indicators** |
| **4** | The alternate caregiver is very open; shows conscience and empathy; general history of concern for child’s well-being; closely bonded to own children; self-aware; highly motivated; examples of protective behavior; product of a nurturing environment; acknowledges and takes responsibility; accurate viewpoint of placed child; has personal support for caregiver role. |
| **3** | The alternate caregiver is generally open; acceptable conscience and empathy; a history of protectiveness for own children; attached to own children; generally motivated; limited self-awareness; no indications of negative history; generally acknowledges and takes responsibility; acceptable viewpoint of placed child; has some support for caregiver role. |
| **2** | The alternate caregiver is reserved; displays conscience and minimal empathy; some evidence of previous parenting difficulties; minimally attached to own children; minimally motivated; limited self-awareness; few examples of protective behavior; product of unhappy histories; varies in acknowledging and taking responsibility; detached viewpoint of placed child; no support for caregiver role. |
| **1** | The alternate caregiver is manipulative; avoiding; difficult to determine conscience, empathy or history of protectiveness; questionable attachment to own children; somewhat unmotivated; poor self-awareness; history as child uncertain; tendency toward blaming others for difficulties; no specific empathy or individualized viewpoint of placed child; some support against caregiver role. |
| **0** | The alternate caregiver is closed; indifferent/lacks empathy apparent in manner; poor parenting history; lack of concern for own children’s well-being; somewhat detached from own children; unmotivated; distorted self-awareness; no evidence of protective behavior; likely maltreated/unsafe as child; does not take responsibility; possesses an inaccurate viewpoint of placed child; considerable support against caregiver role. |
| **If 1 or 0 is selected, explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency.**  Explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency. | |

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| **SECTION III**  ***Alternate Caregiver’s Family*** | |
| **What are the indicators of safety within the alternate caregiver’s family?**  *This question considers all household residents with a bit more attention given to caregivers. Select the rating that best describes the alternate caregiver’s family.* | |
| **Rating** | **Alternate Caregiver’s Family Indicators** |
| **4** | The family members possess excellent physical, emotional, cognitive capacity; reality oriented; clear roles and positive relationships; value and practice honesty; coping and/or experiencing low stress; available protection and supervision; sufficient health and other resources; accessible: transportation/phones; can meet unusual and specific child needs; excellent living arrangements; socially integrated into community. |
| **3** | The family members possess adequate physical, emotional, cognitive capacity; generally accurate reality testing; general role clarity and acceptable relationships; honest; protective; coping adequately while stress varies; safe living arrangements; some social integration. |
| **2** | The family members’ physical, emotional, cognitive capacity in need of support; limited accuracy in reality testing; imprecise role clarity and unsatisfying relationships; generally honest; some examples and history of protectiveness; coping varies or moderate stress; generally safe living arrangements; casual social integration. |
| **1** | The family members possess limited physical, emotional, cognitive capacity; often view reality inaccurately; varied role effectiveness and tense relationships; sometimes deceptive; limited evidence of protectiveness; limited coping or experiencing moderate to high stress; questionable living arrangements; superficial or conflictual involvement with community. |
| **0** | The family members possess deficient physical, emotional, cognitive capacity; inaccurate reality testing; ineffective roles and hostile, neglectful or manipulative relationships; some history of maltreatment; poor coping or experiencing high stress; unsafe living arrangements; closed and avoids community. |
| **If 1 or 0 is selected, explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency.**  Explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency. | |

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| **SECTION IV**  ***Community*** | |
| **What are the indicators of safety within the alternative caregiver’s community?**  *This question considers formal and informal aspects of the community, other extended family, friends, neighbors, clubs, organizations, non-child welfare and child welfare agencies and providers, other professionals. Select the rating that best describes the alternate caregiver’s community.* | |
| **Rating** | **Community Indicators** |
| **4** | Alternate caregiver’s family/children have daily to weekly contact with others in community; friends, neighbors, relatives or others routinely provide support and assistance; family/children involved with professionals or agencies currently working under a planned agreement or involvement and contact is routine and frequent. |
| **3** | Alternate caregiver’s family/children have weekly to bi-weekly contact with others in community; generally family receives support from friends, neighbors, relatives and others; family/children involved with professionals or agencies currently working under a planned agreement or involvement and contact is occasional. |
| **2** | Alternate caregiver’s family/children have bi-weekly to monthly contact with others in the community; friends, neighbors, relatives or others occasionally provide support and assistance; family/children sporadically involved with professionals or agencies but are not currently working under a planned agreement or involvement. |
| **1** | Alternate caregiver’s family/children have monthly or less contact with others in the community; friends, neighbors, relatives or others do not provide support and assistance; family/children are not involved with professionals or agencies. |
| **0** | Alternate caregiver’s family/children have virtually no contact with others in the community; friends, neighbors, relatives or others are antagonistic; family/children avoid professionals or agencies. |
| **If 1 or 0 is selected, explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency.**  Explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency. | |

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| **SECTION V**  ***Acceptance*** | |
| **Do/will the alternative caregiver’s family members accept the child(ren) into the home?**  *This question considers the alternative caregiver’s children as well as other non-relatives who may reside in the home. Select the rating that best describes the circumstances and situation.* | |
| **Rating** | **Acceptance Indicators** |
| **4** | Placed child is fully embraced as part of the alternate caregiver’s household/family; positive/fulfilling interaction/relationship exists between the placed child and others in the home; placed child helped to fit in; is always included in activities and provided for the same as others; placed child is cherished; other children - placed child attachment; placed child is not held accountable for circumstances requiring placement. |
| **3** | Placed child is accepted as part of the alternate caregiver’s household/family; acceptable interaction/relationship between the placed child and others in the home; the placed child is encouraged to participate in activities and provided for the same as others; other children - placed child acceptance; the placed child is highly valued personally. |
| **2** | Placed child is accommodated as part of the alternate caregiver’s household/family; casual/courteous interaction/relationship exists between the placed child and others in the home; minimal attempts in assisting placed child to fit in; placed child sometimes not included in activities; may be provided for differently from others; the placed child is generally valued personally; other children - placed child indulgence; may be some reservations about placed child’s responsibility for need for placement. |
| **1** | Placed child is tolerated; likely not viewed as part of alternate caregiver’s household/family; strained/difficult interaction/relationship exists between the placed child and others in the home; little effort to assist placed child to fit in; placed child frequently excluded from activities; clearly provided for differently than others; other children - placed child antagonism; the placed child is valued generally as a relative; consider placed child somewhat responsible for placement. |
| **0** | Alternate caregiver’s household/family is intolerant toward placed child; do not accept placed child; conflicted interaction/relationship exists between placed child and others in home; not allowed to fit in; segregated from activities; does not receive the same provisions as others; other children - placed child hostility; the placed child is not valued; blamed for placement. |
| **If 1 or 0 is selected, explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency.**  Explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency. | |

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| **SECTION VI**  ***Alternate Placement Plan*** | |
| **Is the plan developed with the alternate caregiver(s) and family sufficient to assure the child(ren)’s safety?**  *This question considers specific plans and intentions, methods, assurances, feasibility, and commitment. Select the rating that best describes the circumstances and situation.* | |
| **Rating** | **Plan Indicators** |
| **4** | Alternate caregivers fully understand/are attentive to the placed child’s vulnerability/need for protection; a very effective general plan for caring for the placed child exists/will meet the child’s needs; an acceptable, specific protective/supervision plan exists including responsibilities, timing, activity, acceptable effective means for child management and discipline; high commitment/capability for carrying out plans. |
| **3** | Alternate caregivers generally understand/are respectful of placed child’s vulnerability/need for protection; a reasonable plan for caring for the placed child exists, likely will meet child’s needs; an acceptable protective/supervision plan exists; alternate caregivers are generally committed to and capable of carrying out plans; plans include an acceptable means for child management and discipline. |
| **2** | Alternate caregivers partially understand placed child’s vulnerability/need for protection; a vague/nonspecific plan for caring for placed child exists; a vague/nonspecific protective/supervision plan exists; caregivers are moderately committed to/somewhat capable of implementing plans; plans do not include references to child management and discipline. Plans do not take into account the demands of having several children in the home. |
| **1** | Alternate caregivers do not understand placed child’s vulnerability/need for protection; an inadequate plan for caring for placed child exists; an inadequate protective/supervision plan exists; caregivers’ commitment to and capacity for implementing plans are uncertain; plans include undesirable means for child management and discipline. There may be too many children in the home. |
| **0** | Alternate caregivers do not believe and/or care about placed child’s vulnerability/need for protection; no or an unacceptable general plan for caring for placed child exists; no (or an unacceptable) protective/supervision plan exists; alternate caregivers are not committed to and capable of creating or implementing plans. There are too many children in the home to assure safety. |
| **If 1 or 0 is selected, explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency.**  Explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency. | |

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| **SECTION VII**  ***Oversight*** | |
| **Is/are the alternate caregiver(s) and home conditions amenable to agency oversight?**  *This question considers tendencies toward inclusion, examples of cooperation with outsiders, access, and proximity. Select the rating that best describes the circumstances and situation.* | |
| **Rating** | **Oversight Indicators** |
| **4** | Alternate caregiver’s family is very open/routinely include/involved with non-family entities; eager to work actively; guarantees and seeks out agency home visits; readily makes child available at home/other locations; always accessible in person/by phone; goes out of way to be available; will seek help from the agency and other appropriate persons. |
| **3** | Alternate caregiver’s family is generally open/often include/involved with non-family entities; willing to work on case issues; agreeable to agency home visits; will make child available at home/other locations; usually accessible in person/by phone; generally available; likely to seek help from the agency and other appropriate persons. |
| **2** | Alternate caregiver’s family is somewhat cautious/sometimes include/involved with non-family entities; places limits on working on case issues; accepts agency home visits; will make child available at home; sporadically accessible in person/by phone; availability often a matter of convenience; may seek help from the agency. |
| **1** | Alternate caregiver’s family is guarded/seldom include/involved with non-family entities; hedges making commitment to work with the agency or superficial agreement; avoids agency home visits; does not always make child available at home/other locations; seldom accessible in person/by phone; generally not available; unlikely to seek help from the agency/may seek other appropriate persons as a first option. |
| **0** | Alternate caregiver’s family is closed and/or manipulative/do not include/not involved with non-family entities; wants to work independent of the agency; refuses or protests need for agency home visits; does not make child available at home/other locations; not accessible in person/by phone; not available; will not seek help from the agency/other appropriate persons. |
| **If 1 or 0 is selected, explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency.**  Explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency. | |

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| **SECTION VIII**  ***Natural Family – Alternate Caregiver Relationship*** | |
| **What is the nature of the relationship amongst these kin?**  *This question considers the extent to which relationships can contribute to or detract from the placed child(ren)’s safety and the capacity of the alternate caregiver to follow through. Select the rating that best describes the circumstances and situation.* | |
| **Rating** | **Natural Family – Alternate Caregiver Relationship Indicators** |
| **4** | Natural parents-alternate caregiver relationships are respectful/accepting/mutual affection. Natural parents accept/support alternate caregiver’s role/will not interfere/intrude/inappropriately become involved with alternate caregiver’s home/responsibilities/view alternate caregiver as best place for child; alternate caregivers share the agency’s view of the natural parents’ capacity to care for their children. Alternate caregivers strongly believe the child should be placed; can effectively/independently fend off natural parents’ attempts to countermand placement plans; alternate caregivers are fully collaborating with the agency with respect to natural parents. |
| **3** | Natural parents-alternate caregiver relationships generally respectful/accepting/mutual affection. Natural parents generally accept/support alternate caregiver’s role; natural parents unlikely to interfere/intrude/attempt to inappropriately/become involved with alternate caregiver’s home/responsibilities; accepting of alternate caregiver as best place for child. Alternate caregivers generally share agency’s view of the natural parents’ capacity to care for their children; agree with placement; can effectively gain assistance to fend off natural parents’ attempts to countermand placement plans; fully cooperating with the agency with respect to natural parents. |
| **2** | Natural parents-alternate caregiver relationships generally passive/detached/minimal involvement. Natural parents question alternate caregiver role; likely to manipulate, interfere, intrude or attempt to inappropriately become involved with the alternate caregiver’s home or responsibilities; not accepting of alternate caregiver as best place for child. Alternate caregivers not certain of agency’s view of the natural parents’ capacity to care for their children; accept the child should be placed; cannot effectively gain assistance to fend off natural parents’ attempts to countermand placement plans; minimally cooperating with the agency while being influenced by natural parents. |
| **1** | Natural parents-alternate caregiver relationships generally tense/conflicted/suspicious. Natural parents challenge alternate caregiver role; will manipulate/interfere/intrude/attempt to inappropriately become involved with the alternate caregiver’s home or responsibilities; adamantly disapprove of placement. Alternate caregivers generally do not share the agency’s view of natural parents’ capacity to care for their children; not certain of need for placement; avoiding the agency in favor of the natural parents. |
| **0** | Natural parents – alternate caregiver relationships hostile/reinforce dysfunction. Natural parents support alternate caregiver role for self-interest; connive with alternate caregiver; view alternate caregiver as place for child for own purposes. Alternate caregivers do not share the agency’s view of the natural parents’ capacity to care for their children; do not believe child should be placed; alternate caregivers and natural parents are in collusion. |
| **If 1 or 0 is selected, explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency.**  Explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency. | |

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| **SECTION IX**  ***Placed Child(ren) – Alternate Caregiver Relationship*** | |
| **What is the nature of the relationship between the placed child(ren) and the alternate caregiver family?**  *This question considers history, familiarity, attachment, level of affection, current or most recent involvement. Select the rating that best describes the circumstances and situation.* | |
| **Rating** | **Placed Child(ren) – Alternate Caregiver Relationship Indicators** |
| **4** | Warm/belonging/affectionate relationship between placed child/alternate caregiver; placed child very close to alternate caregiver’s children; alternate caregiver has life-long involvement with placed child, alternate caregiver is very familiar with placed child and his/her uniqueness/ needs; placed child experiences comfort and security with alternate caregiver. |
| **3** | Generally warm/accepting/familiar relationship between placed child/alternate caregiver; placed child gets along well with alternate caregiver’s children; alternate caregiver has months of involvement with placed child, is generally familiar with placed child and his/her uniqueness/needs; placed child generally feels relaxed with alternate caregiver. |
| **2** | Casual/cordial/not well-developed relationship between placed child/alternate caregiver; placed child and alternate caregiver’s children not familiar with each other; alternate caregiver has short-term involvement with placed child, is minimally familiar with placed child and his/her uniqueness and needs; placed child apprehensive with alternate caregiver. |
| **1** | Tense/detached/unfamiliar relationship between placed child/alternate caregiver; placed child feels intimidated by, out-of-place with or is scapegoat of alternate caregiver’s children; alternate caregiver has unpleasant or no involvement with placed child, is unfamiliar with placed child’s uniqueness/needs; placed child experiences tension and dread with alternate caregiver. |
| **0** | Distrustful/disliking/hostile/un-accepting relationship between placed child/alternate caregiver; placed child is fearful of alternate caregiver’s children; alternate caregivers have established negative involvement with placed child, are unconcerned with or non-accepting of placed child’s uniqueness and needs; placed child is fearful with alternate caregiver. |
| **If 1 or 0 is selected, explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency.**  Explain what is being done to address the specific deficiency. | |

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| **CONCLUSION**  ***Confirming A Safe Environment*** | | | |
| **Confirm whether the alternate placement setting is a safe environment for the child(ren).**  *Enter the rating values from each section above, total them, and divide by 9.* | | | |
| **SECTION I** | ***Child(ren)*** | | Enter the Rating number selected |
| **SECTION II** | ***Alternate Caregiver(s)*** | | Enter the Rating number selected |
| **SECTION III** | ***Alternate Caregiver’s Family*** | | Enter the Rating number selected |
| **SECTION IV** | ***Community*** | | Enter the Rating number selected |
| **SECTION V** | ***Acceptance*** | | Enter the Rating number selected |
| **SECTION VI** | ***Alternate Placement Plan*** | | Enter the Rating number selected |
| **SECTION VII** | ***Oversight*** | | Enter the Rating number selected |
| **SECTION VIII** | ***Natural Family – Alternate Caregiver Relationship*** | | Enter the Rating number selected |
| **SECTION IX** | ***Placed Child(ren) – Alternate Caregiver Relationship*** | | Enter the Rating number selected |
| **TOTAL** | ***Add ratings of all sections I - IX*** | | Enter the Total |
| **SCORE** | ***Divide the total of all sections by 9*** | | Enter the Total divided by 9 |
| *If the overall score is 1.4 or lower, detail the plan of action to remediate the safety concerns in the alternate placement.*  The overall score is 1.4 or lower – describe the plan of action to remediate safety concerns. | | | |
| **CPS Worker/Case Manager Signature** | | **Date** | |
| **Supervisor’s Signature** | | **Date** | |

*Print a copy and file in the agency case record.*