

# Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Placement Preparation Checklist

## Introduction

Welcoming a youth into one's home can feel overwhelming, and caregivers may be unsure where to start. This checklist is designed for service providers helping licensed foster parents (and caregivers in the licensing process) to welcome youth in the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program into their home. Providers can give caregivers this checklist to prepare for placement and orient the youth to their new home after arrival. *This is not a compliance tool and it does not replace licensing standards or agency guidance; this resource is intended to complement those requirements.*

## How to Adapt this Checklist

This resource is not meant to function as a pass/fail measure or a list of tasks that must all be completed prior to placement. Instead, it offers a comprehensive list of considerations that service providers can use to help caregivers think ahead about safety, routines, expectations, relationships, and communication. **Service providers are encouraged to revise, reorder, shorten, or expand sections** to align with state or local licensing requirements, agency policies, and the needs of a specific placement (for example, an expectant or parenting minor, a youth with medical needs, or a household with other children). Agencies may choose to highlight mandatory items, remove sections that are not relevant, or break the checklist into phases or smaller sections to use over time.

## Checklist Content

The checklist is organized into two sections—**Preparing My Home** and **Preparing Myself and My Community**—to reflect the reality that preparing for placement involves both logistical readiness and relational preparation. While some items must be addressed before a youth placement, many others are best approached as ongoing conversations and modeling after placement, once trust has begun to develop. Each item includes two columns to support this distinction:

- **Complete** reflects steps a caregiver has taken to prepare the environment or household in advance.
- **Discussed with Youth** reflects whether expectations, routines, or practices have been explained, demonstrated, or modeled for the youth after arrival.

## Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Placement Preparation Checklist

This checklist is meant to support you before and after placement. Some items will help you prepare your home in advance, while others will help you think through routines, expectations, and daily practices that you may need to explain or model to the youth over time. The **Complete** column tracks what you have prepared. The **Discussed with Youth** column helps remind you what to explain, show, or practice together after the youth's placement. This is not a test, and you are not required to complete everything at once. The goal is to thoughtfully approach placement in a proactive way that gradually builds safety, predictability, and trust.

Caregiver Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### PREPARING MY HOME

 General Home Environment and Safety	<u>Complete?</u> Yes, No, N/A	<u>Discussed with youth?</u> Yes, No, N/A	Notes
<i>The home is free from visible safety hazards (e.g., exposed wiring, broken fixtures, unsecured heavy furniture)</i>			
<i>Required home projects or modifications have been reviewed with the licensing service provider prior to placement (e.g., egress windows, walls, heating, or cooling)</i>			
<i>Smoke detectors are installed and work according to local requirements; extra batteries are stocked</i>			
<i>Carbon monoxide (CO) detectors are installed and function as required; extra batteries are stocked</i>			
<i>Fire extinguisher(s) are accessible, and household members know where they are and how to use them</i>			

<i>Windows and doors open, close, and lock properly and meet any agency requirements for alarms or egress</i>			
<i>Firearms (if present) are securely locked and stored separately from ammunition, in compliance with agency and state requirements</i>			
<i>Any dangerous materials or items (e.g., cleaning supplies, medications, scissors or other sharp objects) are stored safely and out of reach of youth</i>			
<i>A basic first aid kit (or supplies) is stocked and accessible, and all household members know where it's located</i>			
<i>Any sentimental, breakable, or high-value items in the home are stored safely to reduce stress or accidental damage after placement arrival</i>			
<i>Water temperatures are set within safe limits and meet agency or state requirements</i>			
 <b>Fire, Emergency, and Safety Planning</b>	<b><u>Complete?</u> Yes, No, N/A</b>	<b><u>Discussed with youth?</u> Yes, No, N/A</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Interpretation and translation resources, including visual aids (agency-provided or external), are identified, and all household members know procedures for accessing them in an emergency</i>			
<i>Agency safety planning resources are identified, and instructions for accessing them are clear</i>			
<i>A conversation has taken place with the licensing service provider or case manager to determine whether a safety plan is needed prior to placement, based on youth-specific considerations (e.g., substance use history, running away, medical needs)</i>			

All household members understand what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency (including knowing where emergency exits are) and natural disasters specific to the geographic area (e.g., tornadoes, floods, wildfires)			
An emergency contact list (911, Poison Control, health care providers, school, case manager, and trusted contacts) is visibly posted or easily accessible			
<b>Optional supportive practice:</b> After placement, walk through emergency scenarios together in a calm, conversational way (rather than drills), focusing on problem-solving and reassurance			
 <b>Kitchen</b>	<u>Complete?</u> Yes, No, N/A	<u>Discussed with youth?</u> Yes, No, N/A	<b>Notes</b>
Age-appropriate household appliances that can be used independently by youth (e.g., microwave, toaster, air fryer, stove, oven) are identified, and related safety rules are clearly explained (e.g., no foil or metal utensils in the microwave)			
Safe cooking, food storage, and kitchen cleanliness practices are explained and modeled (hand soap vs. dish soap, appropriate knife use, refrigerator vs. freezer storage, checking expiration dates)			
Food access and household routines are clearly explained (grocery shopping schedules, pantry access, always-available snacks, and food allergies)			
Household eating norms are clearly explained (e.g., formal family meals, expectations around where food can be eaten)			
Caregiver(s) are aware that food-related trauma is common, and they are ready to respond supportively to behaviors such as hoarding or binging			

<i>Kitchen is stocked with basic, commonly enjoyed foods for at least the first few days (mac and cheese, toaster pastries, frozen meals)</i>			
<i>At least one store or restaurant offering culturally familiar or appropriate food options has been identified, with a plan in place to visit as needed</i>			
<i>A variety of culturally familiar snacks or foods are available</i>			
<i>Stoves, especially gas stoves, have child-proof knob covers (if age-appropriate)</i>			
<b>Optional supportive practice:</b> <i>Consider labeling household items in English <b>and</b> the youth's preferred language to support shared learning</i>			
 <b>Bedrooms</b>	<b>Complete?</b> Yes, No, N/A	<b>Discussed with youth?</b> Yes, No, N/A	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Sleeping arrangements for all household members meet agency requirements and follow safe sleep and co-sleeping rules</i>			
<i>The youth has an agency-approved place to store clothing and personal belongings, with a basic record maintained to support return of items at placement exit</i>			
<i>The youth's room is intentionally simple, with flexibility to personalize over time</i>			
<i>The youth's bedroom door does not have a lock, or locking expectations have been clearly discussed with the case manager</i>			
<i>Night lights are available to help the youth safely navigate the home at night (e.g., path to the bathroom)</i>			

 <b>Bathrooms</b>	<u>Complete?</u> <b>Yes, No, N/A</b>	<u>Discussed with youth?</u> <b>Yes, No, N/A</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Basic hygiene products are stocked and accessible (including feminine products and infant products if youth is parenting or expecting)</i>			
<i>Hygiene products that align with the youth's cultural background and needs (e.g., shea butter hair and skin products, bidets) are available</i>			
<i>Medications and hazardous items (including items like electronic hair tools near water) are stored out of reach</i>			
<i>For parenting minors: infants or young children are never left unattended in the bath</i>			
<i>Bathroom expectations are clearly explained, including handwashing, toilet use and cleanliness (e.g., lid use, what cannot be flushed), towel use, privacy, and shower length</i>			
 <b>Outside</b>	<u>Complete?</u> <b>Yes, No, N/A</b>	<u>Discussed with youth?</u> <b>Yes, No, N/A</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Outdoor areas are free of hazards and reasonably safe (secured tools, covered/locked equipment)</i>			
<i>Any access to water is gated or restricted, and flotation devices are available as required by the agency and state</i>			
<i>Safe places to play or spend time outside are identified and explained, including boundaries related to traffic, neighboring property, and applicable community or Home Owners Association (HOA) rules (e.g., quiet hours, parking guidance)</i>			

 <b>Vehicles and Transportation</b>	<u>Complete?</u> Yes, No, N/A	<u>Discussed with youth?</u> Yes, No, N/A	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Vehicles used for transporting youth meet agency inspection requirements</i>			
<i>All drivers have completed required clearances</i>			
<i>Appropriate car seats or booster seats that meet state requirements are available and properly installed if caring for infants or young children</i>			
<i>Transportation plans for school and required appointments have been established with the case manager</i>			
<i>At least one cleared support person is identified to assist with transportation if needed</i>			
<b>Optional supportive practice:</b> <i>Take a short walk or drive with the youth to show and explain bike lanes, crosswalks, and safe routes to walk or bike</i>			

**PREPARING MYSELF AND MY COMMUNITY**

 <b>Household Members</b>	<u>Complete?</u> Yes, No, N/A	<u>Discussed with youth?</u> Yes, No, N/A	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Household members have been informed about the upcoming placement in an age-appropriate way</i>			
<i>Household members have engaged in learning about the youth's culture and practicing respectful curiosity about any cultural differences</i>			

Caregiver(s) have discussed with all household members that the youth may have different rules, routines, or needs (e.g., different curfews, more adult check-ins, flexibility around food or sleep)			
Children in the home are encouraged to ask questions, share worries or concerns, and know which trusted adult to go to for support			
Household norms around respect, privacy, and shared space have been discussed with household members			
Caregiver(s) have planned for one-on-one time with children already in the home			
<b>Optional supportive practice:</b> Plan a simple cross-cultural activity (e.g., cooking a meal together, watching a show or video from one another's cultures, sharing music, or celebrating a holiday) to build connection and create natural opportunities for questions and learning.			
 <b>Support Systems</b>	<u>Complete?</u> <b>Yes, No, N/A</b>	<u>Discussed with youth?</u> <b>Yes, No, N/A</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Each household member has identified one person or community in their support system who they can lean on (e.g., friend, therapist, faith community)			
Each household member has identified one enjoyable activity or hobby to maintain			
Caregiver(s) have informed the agency of any visitors to the home and have completed any appropriate clearance requirements, including adult children returning home, frequent guests, and extended family			

<i>The agency has connected caregiver(s) to a mentor foster parent or peer support, if available</i>			
<i>Plans are in place for additional supervision or shared caregiving, and required clearances are completed</i>			
 <b>Youth Support System</b>	<u>Complete?</u> <b>Yes, No, N/A</b>	<u>Discussed with youth?</u> <b>Yes, No, N/A</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>A point of contact at the youth's school has been identified</i>			
<i>Caregiver(s) are aware of agency-provided supports and how to access them</i>			
<i>Supportive services not provided through the agency (e.g., primary care provider) have been identified</i>			
<i>Agency guidance related to communication with family members in the youth's country of origin is identified, if applicable</i>			
<i>Caregiver(s) understand the youth's stipend and are ready to discuss budgeting or saving with the youth when developmentally appropriate.</i>			
 <b>Cultural and Religious Considerations</b>	<u>Complete?</u> <b>Yes, No, N/A</b>	<u>Discussed with youth?</u> <b>Yes, No, N/A</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Household members have begun learning about the youth's cultural background, including country or region of origin and cultural norms (ongoing)</i>			
<i>Caregiver(s) have discussed any language needs with the youth's caseworker, and caregiver(s) know how to access interpretation or translation support</i>			

<i>Religious or spiritual practices important to the youth are identified, all household members respect them, and the youth has access to any items or resources needed to observe their faith</i>			
<i>Caregiver(s) demonstrate readiness to acknowledge and support cultural and religious holidays (e.g., meals, time off from school or work, celebrations)</i>			
<i>Household members have discussed and considered the youth's food preferences, dietary restrictions, and practices</i>			
<i>If pets may be unfamiliar or overwhelming to the youth, a plan is in place to ensure the youth's safety and comfort</i>			
<i>A running list of questions to revisit after placement, once the youth has settled in, is maintained</i>			
<b>Optional supportive practice:</b> <i>Practice using interpretation and translation apps through role-playing everyday moments to normalize this communication method (e.g., How was school? Are you hungry?)</i>			
 <b>Household Expectations and Routines</b>	<b>Complete?</b> Yes, No, N/A	<b>Discussed with youth?</b> Yes, No, N/A	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Clear house rules are explained and modeled (e.g., where dirty dishes go, where dirty clothes go, no bed sharing)</i>			
<i>Daily routines (e.g., wake-up, meals, school, appointments) are outlined, with flexibility to adjust over time</i>			
<i>Privacy expectations are clearly explained (e.g., knocking, doors closed when changing)</i>			

<i>Expectations for maintaining cleanliness and shared spaces (e.g., making the bed, using a vacuum, trash vs. recycling) are established and communicated</i>			
<i>Expectations around using others' belongings are clearly explained</i>			
<i>Communication expectations around plans and whereabouts are clearly explained</i>			
<i>Curfews for school nights and weekends are identified, and caregiver(s) are prepared to explain them</i>			
<i>Internet and cell phone expectations are identified and align with case manager guidance, including adherence to social media policies (no posting youth faces)</i>			
<i>A working phone is readily available and charged in the home for the youth to make emergency calls if needed</i>			
<i>Caregiver(s) are aware of and follow state and agency requirements related to alcohol, nicotine, cannabis, vaping, or other legal substances, including expectations for storage, visibility, use in shared spaces, and keeping all substances out of reach of youth</i>			
<i>Discipline approaches are identified and align with agency and state policy</i>			
<i>Boundaries related to pets are clearly defined and explained (whether they can be picked up, go on furniture, be fed anything other than pet food, be outside, etc.)</i>			
<p><b>Optional supportive practice:</b> Use a whiteboard calendar and/or printed photos around the home to visually show routines and expectations, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the kitchen should look when done using it</li> <li>• What a clean bedroom looks like</li> </ul>			