

POLICY NO.: 5.3	SUBJECT: PRE-ADOPTIVE STAFFING, MATCHING, AND PLACEMENT PROCEDURES
OAC: 5101:2-48-16	EFFECTIVE DATE: 3/27/07, 3/17, 7/17
	REVISION DATE: 10/08, 4/16, 3/17, 7/17

PURPOSE: To ensure timely and consistent planning and coordinating of placement decisions for children in the permanent custody of Butler county Children Services.

POLICY:

5.3.1 All activities described in this section will be in compliance with Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-48-16

1. A pre-adoptive staffing is the process of identifying, planning and coordinating services for a child after the execution of the permanent surrender or the file stamp date of the permanent custody order.
2. BCCS will conduct a pre-adoptive staffing according to the following:
 - (a) No earlier than the date of the filing for termination of parental rights
 - (b) No later than forty-five days after the execution of the permanent surrender or the file stamp date of the permanent custody order.
3. If the order is under appeal, BCCS may hold a pre-adoptive staffing prior to the issuance of the final decision.
4. Unless the child to be adopted is an infant less than six months of age, the invitation to the pre-adoptive staffing shall be in written form, shall be documented in the case file, and shall be received by the individual at least fourteen days prior to the staffing. The individuals shall be notified if any staffing is rescheduled or canceled at least three days prior to the scheduled staffing or as soon as the information is available. The following individuals shall be invited to attend the pre-adoptive staffing.

- (a) The child's caseworker and caseworker's supervisor.
- (b) The assessor assigned to work with the child and the assessor's supervisor, if different from the caseworker and caseworker's supervisor.
- (c) Any professional who has the specific assignment of recruiting families for children who are awaiting adoption.
- (d) The homestudy specialists.
- (e) The guardian ad-litem (GAL) if one has been assigned to the case.
- (f) The court appointed special advocates (CASA) worker, if one has been assigned to the case.
- (g) Key professionals working specifically with the child.
- (h) The child's current caregiver, if deemed appropriate.
- (i) The child, if in the best interests of the child and deemed appropriate.
- (j) The birth family, if in the best interests of the child and deemed appropriate.
- (k) The Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) monitor.

4. During the pre-adoptive staffing, the convened group will identify, coordinate and provide services that consider all of the following:

- (a) The child's social, developmental and medical history.
- (b) Previous placements.
- (c) Specific recruitment efforts to find a permanent home for the child.
- (d) Current strengths and limitations and other special needs, including previous or current relationships with siblings or other birth relatives.
- (e) Current therapeutic assessments and needs to be considered in determining the child's adoptive placement.
- (f) Planning for transition of the case planning from a focus on foster care to adoption.
- (g) Planning for good-bye visits.
- (h) Assessing the child's understanding and readiness for adoption.
- (i) Status of child's Lifebook.
- (j) Any families who may be interested in adopting the child.

(k) Other preparation for adoption.

5. The JFS 1690 "Documentation of the Pre-adoptive Staffing and Updates" will be completed, within 15 days after the pre-adoptive staffing, the JFS 1690 shall be distributed to adoption assessors who complete adoption homestudies, and maintained in the child's adoption file.

MATCHING

1. A matching conference is the process of determining the most appropriate family to adopt a child based on the child's individual needs and the ability of the prospective adoptive parent to meet those needs. A matching conference shall be conducted to match a child with a family for the purpose of adoption. The matching conference shall be held prior to the placement of the child for adoption.
2. The JFS 01530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" shall be discussed if applicable.
3. BCCS will conduct an initial matching conference according to the following:
 - (a) Within ninety days of the execution of the permanent surrender or the file stamp date of the permanent custody order, unless the order is under appeal.
 - (b) If the order is under appeal, the agency may hold a matching conference prior to the issuance of the final decision. If the order is under appeal, the agency shall hold the initial matching conference no later than ninety days after the issuance of the final decision.
4. The invitation to the matching conference shall be in written form, shall be documented in the case file, and shall be received by the individual at least fourteen days prior to the matching conference. The following individuals shall be invited to the matching conferences. The individuals shall be notified if any matching conference is rescheduled or canceled at least three days prior to the scheduled matching conference or as soon as the information is available.
 - (a) For the first matching conference only, the child's previous caseworker if the individual is different than the assessor assigned to work on adoption issues and placement.
 - (b) For the first matching conference only, the child's previous caseworker's supervisor, if applicable.

- (c) The assessor assigned to work with the child on adoption issues and placement.
- (d) The assessor's supervisor.
- (e) The child's caseworker, if different from the assessor above.
- (f) Any professional who has the specific assignment of recruiting families for children who are awaiting adoption.
- (g) Any adoption caseworker who has responsibility for an approved adoptive family where the JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy)" (rev. 12/2014) and the JFS 01673-A "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" (rev. 12/2006) indicates acceptance of the special needs of the child and the family is interested in being considered for the child.
- (h) Any assessor from any agency who is responsible for an approved adoptive applicant being presented at the matching conference.
- (i) The GAL, if one has been assigned to the case.
- (j) The CASA, if one has been assigned to the case.
- (k) Any other professional who may have knowledge of the child's history and current needs that will be helpful to determine the child's placement needs.
- (l) The Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) monitor
- (m) The ODJFS MEPA monitor at matchingconference@jfs.ohio.gov

5. The following individuals shall attend the matching conference and be included in the placement decision-making process:

- (a) The adoption caseworker for the child.
- (b) The caseworker for any prospective adoptive families who will be presented at the matching conference.
- (c) A member of the administrative or supervisory staff of the PCSA or PCPA adoption program.
- (d) If the child caseworker and family caseworker are the same individual, another adoption program staff member shall participate

in the matching conference to assure that at least three individuals participate in the matching decision.

6. Participation by teleconference is acceptable for the representatives listed above.
7. BCCS shall provide relevant information that may impact the safety and well-being of the child being placed with the prospective adoptive family which shall include at a minimum:
 - (a) Past or present functioning of the prospective adoptive parent.
 - (b) Rule violation(s) involving foster and/or pre-adoptive child(ren).
 - (c) Third party investigations.
 - (d) Information relating to previous adoption applications.
 - (e) Previous disruptions from the prospective adoptive family home
8. At a minimum, the matching decision shall be based on the consideration of the placement of siblings together, information contained in the JFS 1690 "DOCUMENTATION OF THE PRE-ADOPTIVE STAFFING AND UPDATES, the JFS 1689 "Documentation of the Placement Decision-Making Process", the JFS 1688 "Individualized Child Assessment" if applicable, and the child's preference may be considered if the child has the capacity to express a preference.
9. BCCS shall document each matching conference for each child on the JFS 01610 "Child's Permanency Planning Data Summary (rev. 4/2017).
10. The matching conference decision shall be based on the following, at minimum:
 - (a) Consideration of the placement of siblings together.
 - (b) The JFS 01690.
 - (c) The child study inventory.
 - (d) The JFS 01688 "Individualized Child Assessment" (rev. 4/2014), if applicable.
 - (e) The child's preference may be considered if the child has the capacity to express a preference.

11. Regardless of geographic location, the following preferential order shall be given when considering families in the matching process:
 - (a) For a child federally recognized as a member of a tribe or Alaskan native village, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C. 1901 (11/1987) (ICWA) shall take precedence in any adoption proceedings.
 - (b) Whenever possible and in the best interest of the child (ren), sibling groups should not be separated.
 - (c) Any adult relative, adult non-relative, or the child's current foster caregiver, whose placement would be in the best interest of the child, when the following apply:
 - (1) The adult has expressed an interest in adopting the child and already has an approved adoptive homestudy, or has submitted the required document listed below at least five business days prior to the scheduled matching conference:
 - The JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 12/2014).
 - The JFS 01692 "Application for Adoption of a Foster Child or Sibling Group" (rev. 12/2014).
 - The adoption application or equivalent document that is required in the state the adult resides in.
 - (d) A foster caregiver with whom the child has resided in the past, whose placement would be in the best interest of the child and who is approved for adoption pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code or the laws of the state where the previous foster caregiver now resides.
 - (e) Any other approved adoptive parent(s) who is accepting of the child's characteristics, who has expressed an interest in adopting the child, and whose placement would be in the best interest of the child.
12. Subsequent matching conferences shall be held for the child, at least once every ninety days.
13. BCCS will conduct a child-specific recruitment for a child prior to the next

matching conference if there are no families identified to be presented at any matching conference. Child specific recruitment shall include at a minimum:

- (a) Distribution of written information regarding the child to two (2) or more adoption agencies.
 - (b) Review case file information for relatives or individuals in the child's past who may be able and willing to provide a permanent home for child.
 - (c) Exploration with the child of the ability of individuals with whom the child is familiar who may be able and willing to adopt the child.
14. Subsequent matching conferences are not required when the signature of the adoptive parent(s) and applicable agencies have been completed on the JFS1654 "Adoptive Placement Agreement, the child's custody changes to a status other than permanent custody", or the child reaches age eighteen years old. However, BCCS has the option to continue holding matching conferences until the child reaches the age of twenty-one (21) if the child is mentally or physically handicapped and still in the permanent custody of the agency.
15. BCCS will document each matching conference on the JFS 1689 "Documentation of the Placement Decision-Making Process" during the matching conference.
16. BCCS will provide information necessary for the completion of the JFS 1609 "Family Permanency Planning Data Summary to any Ohio public or private agency which had a family presented at the matching conference no later than seven business days after each matching conference.
17. When an applicant knowingly makes a false statement in the application or homestudy process, BCCS will not present that family at the matching conference if the outcome of the agency review results in a reassessment of the homestudy.

PLACEMENT

1. Butler County Children Services shall make an adoptive placement only when it has permanent custody of the child, whether custody is obtained by surrender or commitment. A child shall only be placed into an adoptive home which meets the best interests and special needs of the child.
2. No child shall be placed adoptively by the agency with a family who has not been studied and approved for adoption by the Butler County Children Services or by another private or public agency with authority recognized by the Ohio Department of Human Services to complete adoptive home studies.
3. The agency may place a child in an adoptive home in another state provided that the adoptive home has been approved by the receiving state pursuant to rules governing the Interstate Compact on Placement of children.
4. Prior to the date of adoptive placement the BCCS will provide the prospective adoptive parent with the "Child Study Inventory (CSI)" and a completed and signed JFS 01667 "Adoption Information Disclosure".
5. The JFS 1654, "Adoptive Placement Agreement" shall be signed by the agency having permanent custody of the child, by the adoptive parent and, if applicable, by any other agency providing adoption services, on or before the date of adoptive placement. A copy of the signed agreement shall be given to the adoptive parent and any other signer of the agreement. The agreement shall explain the responsibilities and authority of all signers of the agreement.
6. Butler County Children Services will not refuse to provide or arrange for services within Butler County to another Public Children Services Agency on behalf of a special needs child when such services, if not provided, would cause a delay in the adoptive placement of a special needs child. Services shall include, but are not limited to: homestudy services; pre-finalization and post-finalization services; and services needed to provide the court with information required for adoption finalization.
7. When Butler County Children Services is placing a child in a county other than Butler, BCCS will notify in writing the Public Children Services Agency in the county in which the child is to be placed of the impending placement no later than ten days prior to the placement. In the case of an infant placement, the notification may be made prior to the birth of the child.
8. When the permanent custody of a child is under appeal through a court of appropriate jurisdiction or awaiting journalization by the court, the agency may place the child in a substitute care placement certified as a foster home that is also approved as an adoptive placement.

9. All placement activities shall be in compliance with rules 5101:2-42-18.1 and 5101:2-48-13 of the Administrative Code and with the Multiethnic Placement Act, Oct. 20, 1994, P.L. 103-382, as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, P.L. 104-188 (MEPA), and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), as it applies to the foster care and adoption process.
10. If there is probable cause to believe that falsification of an adoptive application or homestudy has been committed under section 2921.13 of the Ohio Revised Code and an adoptive child is placed in the approved adoptive parent(s) home, the BCCS Placement or designee must determine in twenty four hours of completing the agency's internal investigation, if there is probable cause related to the adoptive child's safety and well-being to remove the child from the adoptive parents(s) home until the result of an investigation is rendered.

7-25-17
Approval Date:


William Morrison, Director