

	STATE OFFICE for SERVICES to CHILDREN and FAMILIES	NUMBER: I-F.6
	CLIENT SERVICES MANUAL I	SECTION: F. Pre-Adoption Services
	ISSUED BY: Program Operations EFFECTIVE DATE: September 17, 1996	SUBSECTION:
SUBJECT: 6. Sibling Placement Planning in Adoption		

Interpretation: Manager,
Permanency and Adoptions

Approval: *Carol Hopper for*
Assistant Administrator,
Program Operations

REFERENCE: SOSCF Policy I-G.1.1, Relative or Current Caretaker Adoption Planning

PURPOSE

413-110-0100 These administrative rules provide guidelines on maintaining sibling relationships to whatever extent is in the best interest of the children.

Statutory Authority: HB2004

Stats. Implemented: HB2004

DEFINITIONS

413-110-0110 (1) "Regional Adoption Council" consists of SOSCF management, and Permanency and Adoption Representatives from the region. Each region has a Regional Adoption Council. The Council meets regularly and makes decisions about adoptability, sibling planning, adoption disruptions and about adoption selections referred by the branch. The Permanency and Adoptions Manager has delegated decision-making in these areas to the councils. For the purpose of these rules, when the term Regional Adoption Council is used it also applies to Regional Adoption Council Sub-Committees.

(2) "Regional Adoption Council Sub-Committee" is a smaller committee than the Regional Adoption Council, and is made up of Regional Adoption Council members. Often the Regional Adoption Council delegates their authority to a Regional Adoption Sub-Committee.

(3) "Siblings" are children with at least one biological parent in common.

Statutory Authority: HB2004

Stats. Implemented: HB2004

VALUES

413-110-0120 (1) Sibling relationships can be the longest-lasting family relationships and should be preserved when in the best interest of the children.

(2) Siblings should be in the same substitute care placement whenever possible and when in the best interest of the children.

(3) If separation occurs in foster care, it should be viewed as temporary with the goal to reunite siblings when in the best interest of the children.

Statutory Authority: HB2004

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PROCEDURE

413-110-0130 (1) Attempts will be made to place siblings in the same adoptive family. Early separation of siblings in substitute care can impact the probability of the siblings being adopted by the same family. Therefore, when siblings are separated in substitute care, effort will be made to reunite them in placement as soon as possible.

(a) The child's worker should review all attempts to reunite siblings and document in the case file the reasons why the attempts were not successful;

(b) If siblings are not placed together in foster care, the agency should ensure that the children have the opportunity for continuing contact. If a visitation plan between siblings is developed, it should be documented in the case file.

(2) When adoption is being planned for a child, the child's worker should search out the whereabouts of the child's siblings, including those who may have already been placed for adoption.

(a) When siblings do not move toward adoption simultaneously, efforts will be made, when appropriate, to give them an opportunity for maintaining sibling relationships:

(A) A sibling may join his/her sibling in an adoptive home;

(B) Siblings may have contact when placed in separate adoptive homes.

(b) If it is learned that the child has siblings who were previously placed in adoptive homes, efforts will be made by the child's worker to determine if any of those families are interested in being considered as an adoptive resource for this child. If the adoptive parent(s) of the child's sibling is interested, they may be considered with other prospective studied adoptive families for the child. The child's worker will give written information to the interested prospective adoptive parent(s) regarding the need to complete a current adoptive home study and the timelines necessary for completion, and document this in the case file record. (Refer to policy I-G.1.1 for timelines.) **Using non-identifying information, the child's worker will document:**

(A) Efforts made to contact the adoptive parent(s) of the siblings;

(B) Responses of the contacted adoptive parent(s);

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(c) When the child for whom adoption is being planned has a sibling who may need an adoptive placement at some point in the future, (i.e., child's birth mother is currently pregnant or a child is being placed in substitute care), the child's worker will look for potential adoptive families who may be able to adopt both/all these siblings.

(3) When sibling separations are being considered in adoptive planning, the child's worker should:

(a) Consider the following for each child:

- (A) Significant family data;
- (B) Attachments;
- (C) Medical condition;
- (D) Psychological evaluations;
- (E) Treatment needs;
- (F) Therapist recommendations;
- (G) Behavior;
- (H) Unsuccessful, six-month intensive adoption recruitment for sibling groups;
- (I) Other relevant information.

(b) Discuss a possible sibling separation with their supervisor or branch manager;

(c) Staff the case with the Regional Adoption Council and obtain written documentation of the council's final decision. Interested parties who wish to present information on the child may be included in the child presentation portion of the staffing. Only SOSCF staff may attend the decision-making portion of the sibling planning staffing;

(d) Any sibling planning staffing will include at least three committee members not involved in the specific case to be heard.

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(4) When the Regional Adoption Council has made a decision to place siblings in separate adoptive homes, recruitment efforts will include searches for families who can maintain some contact between the children when in their best interest.

Statutory Authority: HB2004

Stats. Implemented: HB2004

APPEAL PROCESS

413-110-0140 When the Regional Adoption Council has staffed a case and reached a decision which the child's worker finds difficult to accept, the child's worker will staff the case with his/her supervisor and branch manager. If the branch manager agrees with the child's worker, she/he will consult with the regional administrator or assistant regional administrator to review the council decision. If the regional administrator or assistant regional administrator concurs with the branch manager, he/she will request review of the decision by the Permanency and Adoptions Manager for a final determination.

Statutory Authority: HB2004

Stats. Implemented: HB2004