

	STATE OFFICE for SERVICES to CHILDREN and FAMILIES CLIENT SERVICES MANUAL I ISSUED BY: Program Operations EFFECTIVE DATE: August 12, 1999	NUMBER: I-G.1.5
		SECTION: G. Adoption
		SUBSECTION: 1. Adoption Services
SUBJECT: 5. Adoption Placement Selection		

Responsible Manager: Manager,
Permanency and Adoptions

Approval: _____
Assistant Administrator,
Program Operations

Interpretation: Manager,
Permanency and Adoptions

REFERENCES: Attachment A, "Materials for Adoption Committee"
 "Instructions for Scheduling Central Adoption Committee"
 ORS 418.280-418.285
 SOSCF Policy I-G.1.1, Current Caretaker Adoption Planning
 SOSCF Policy I-F.5, Legal Risk Placements
 CF 963, "Required Information for Adoption Workers and Adoptive
 Parents"
 CF 250, "Adoption Selection Report"
 CF 409, "Adoption Home Study Response Checklist"
 DHR 2100, "Disclosure of Information"

PURPOSE

413-120-0000 These administrative rules outline the process and decision-making authority for selecting either an adoptive placement for a child who is in the permanent custody of the State Office for Services to Children and Families or a legal risk adoptive placement.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.280 to 418.285

DEFINITIONS

413-120-0010 (1) "Legal Risk Adoptive Placement" means that the State Office for Services to Children and Families believes an adoption is in the best interest of the child; has made a formal decision to free the child for adoption; the child is placed in an approved adoptive home; and the agency intends to approve this placement for

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adoption if the child becomes legally free for adoption. (Refer to SOSCF policy I-F.5, "Legal Risk Placements".)

(2) "Approved Family" is a family that has been selected for a child by an SOSCF adoption committee and has not been subject to an administrative review, or if subject to a review, has been sustained by that review.

(3) "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 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.

(4) "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 Council Sub-Committee.

(5) "Transition " means any activities related to the move of a child(ren) from one home to another for the purpose of adoption.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.280 to 418.285

VALUES

413-120-0015 (1) The best adoption placement selection decisions are always made as the result of a collaborative process.

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(2) Adoption selection is an important decision with a lifelong impact.

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Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.280 to 418.285

MULTILATERAL DECISION-MAKING REQUIRED

413-120-0020 When a child is determined to be appropriate for a legal risk adoptive placement (see SOSCF policy I-F.5, Legal Risk Placements) or a child is legally free for adoption, the child's worker shall refer the child to the appropriate adoption committee for review. After having been provided information about the child and potential adoptive families, an adoption committee composed of three individuals shall carefully review potential adoptive homes for the child. The majority of the designated adoption committee shall select by vote one adoptive family when an appropriate "match" appears to exist. In some instances, the adoption committee may identify a back-up family. If the adoption committee does not select an adoptive family, the adoption committee will make a recommendation on how to proceed.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.280 to 418.285

ADOPTION COMMITTEES

413-120-0030 (1) Two types of adoption committees review cases and identify placement selections:

(a) Branch or Regional Adoption Council Committees. Branch offices or Regional Adoption Councils shall be responsible for establishing adoption committees. SOSCF staff shall follow any written procedures that have been established by the regional administrator, branch manager or central office Permanency and Adoption Unit regarding the composition and operation of the branch or Regional Adoption Council Committee. If neither the region nor the branch have established procedures for the branch or Regional Adoption Council Committee, the branch manager or, in the case of the Regional Adoption Council, the regional administrator will designate three committee members not

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involved in the case to act as the adoption committee. The chairperson of the adoption committee shall assure that committee meetings are promptly scheduled and that committee concerns/recommendations are recorded on the CF 250, "Adoption Selection Report," and sent to the central office Permanency and Adoption Unit within three working days of the committee date;

(b) Central Adoption Committees. The central office Permanency and Adoption Unit shall select staff from SOSCF, licensed adoption agencies or knowledgeable community partners to serve on central adoption committees. The central office Permanency and Adoption Unit is responsible for the staff work associated with the operation of central adoption committees. The chairperson will communicate in writing on the CF 250, "Adoption Selection Report," any committee concerns/recommendations to the central office Permanency and Adoption Unit within three working days of the committee date.

(2) The child's worker shall refer the child and potential adoptive homes to the appropriate adoption committee based on the following criteria:

(a) SOSCF shall refer children who are being considered for placement with a relative family or families as defined in OAR 413-070-0069, or a person who has intervenor status, to the appropriate adoption committee as required in OAR 413-070-0093 (2)(a) through (c), (Policy I-E.1.1).

(b) Children under six with minimum special needs being placed without siblings will be referred to the branch or Regional Adoption Council Committee;

(c) Children six years of age or older, children part of a sibling group, and/or children with significant special needs will be referred to a central adoption committee;

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(d) When a current caretaker is being considered along with other resources for a child, the case will be staffed at a central adoption committee, per OAR 413-120-0530(2)(A)(ii)(Policy I-G.1.1)

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.280 to 418.285

CONFIDENTIALITY

413-120-0033 All persons attending adoption committee are bound by Oregon Statute and SOSCF confidentiality administrative rules, OAR 413-010-0000 through 413-010-0140, Confidentiality of Client Information.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.280 to 418.285

ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEE

413-120-0035 (1) Individuals to Attend Full Committee. The child's worker and adoption workers presenting specific families shall participate in the adoption committee. If these workers are unavailable, their supervisor or designated co-worker shall represent the child or family. When an out-of-state relative is being presented, the branch shall determine who presents.

(2) Individuals to Attend Child Presentation Only: (The child's worker shall inform the committee chairperson of individuals planning to attend.)

(a) The child's worker may ask a child's current or previous caretaker(s) to attend committee to assist in the presentation of the child. This is especially important for a child with serious behavior or emotional issues, serious physical or medical issues, or other special circumstances;

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(b) The child's worker may invite other professionals involved with the child, such as therapists, child's attorney, contracted caretakers, evaluators or CASA's, to assist in the presentation of the child;

(c) Either the child's worker or the chairperson may invite consultants with regard to a child, such as a child development specialist, or a medical expert;

(d) On a case-by-case basis, the child's worker may ask that the child attend a portion of the presentation on the child.

(3) Individuals Who May Attend the Presentation of a Particular Family at Committee. The adoption worker, with prior knowledge of the committee chairperson, may invite a consultant such as a medical expert, to present specific information with regard to a particular family. The adoptive family must sign a DHR 2100, "Disclosure of Information," authorizing the consultant's attendance at this portion of the committee. After the consultant presents information regarding the family, the chairperson shall excuse the consultant from the remainder of the family's presentation.

(4) Limitations on Committee Attendance. The following shall not attend committee:

(a) Prospective adoptive parent(s) and legal or personal advocates for a family under consideration. These individuals may give their input to the committee through written communication;

(b) A current caretaker who is being considered as an adoptive resource along with other resources shall not assist in the presentation of the child.

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POTENTIAL FAMILIES

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413-120-0040 (1) Refer to policy I-G.1.1, Current Caretaker Adoption Planning, and policy I-E.1.1 Working With Relatives Toward Placement of Children, for guidelines when considering relatives or current caretakers. In all other situations, the child's worker shall select appropriate families for committee from completed home studies.

(2) When selecting families from completed home studies for committee, the child's worker shall review and select for presentation a sufficient number of appropriate families in the order the home studies have been date stamped by the Central Office Adoption Unit; earliest dates first. The caseworker shall respond to all workers submitting home studies. The caseworker may use form CF 409, "Adoption Home Study Response Checklist" or send an e-mail providing the same information.

(3) On a case-by-case basis, where there has been a voluntary relinquishment of parental rights, the child's worker, in consultation with his/her supervisor, may involve the birth parent(s)' in the selection of potential adoptive families to be presented to adoption committee through discussion of non-identifying information from home studies.

(4) The child's attorney or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) may provide information to the child's worker regarding the type of adoptive family which the attorney or CASA thinks might be the most suitable for the child, but it is SOSCF's responsibility to select the most appropriate adoptive family for the child, and the information in the home study is confidential.

(5) It is the responsibility of the adoption worker to inform potential adoptive families of the entire adoption placement selection process.

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EFFORTS TOWARDS ADOPTION; NO DELAY IN PLACEMENT

413-120-0045 (1) In the case of any child for whom the permanency plan is adoption, the worker shall make reasonable efforts to place the child in a timely manner in accordance with the permanency plan. The worker shall document in the permanency plan the steps SOSCF is taking to find an adoptive family for the child, to place the child with an adoptive family, and to finalize adoption. At a minimum, such documentation shall include child specific recruitment efforts such as the use of state, regional, and national adoption exchanges, including electronic exchange systems.

(2) SOSCF shall not delay or deny placement of a child for adoption when an approved family is available outside the State of Oregon.

(3) An individual who alleges denial of adoption approval as a result of residing outside the State of Oregon has the right to a contested case hearing pursuant to the Attorney General's Model and Uniform Rules of Procedure, OAR 137-03-001 through 137-03-093.

(4) SOSCF shall not delay or deny placement of a child for adoption on the basis of the race, color or national origin of the adoptive parent, or the child, involved. Cultural heritage shall not be used as a proxy for race.

Statutory Authority: 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418-280 to 418-285

REVIEW OF ADOPTION COMMITTEE DECISION

413-120-0060 (1) Committee Decisions are Final. All SOSCF adoption committees' decisions are final and do not qualify for a contested case hearing. Adoption committee decisions, including the current caretaker decision making process, i.e., preliminary and final recommendations, may be reviewed as provided in this section.

(2) Review Process:

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(a) At Worker's Request. If an adoption committee reaches a decision with which the child's worker does not agree, the child's worker will staff the case with his/her supervisor and branch manager. The child's worker with the approval of the supervisor and branch manager, is the only SOSCF staff person who can request a review. If the branch manager agrees that further review should occur, the branch manager shall consult with the regional administrator or assistant regional administrator. If the regional administrator or assistant regional administrator concurs with the branch manager, she/he will request review of the decision by the Director of SOSCF or the Director's designee; or

(b) At Director's Discretion. The Director of SOSCF or the Director's designee may, on his or her initiative, review an adoption committee's decision;

(c) Time Frame. A person other than the child's worker who wishes to request a review of an adoption committee's decision must submit the request to the Adoption Manager or designee. In order for the request to be considered, the Adoption Manager or designee must receive the request within 10 calendar days of the committee decision.

(3) Notice of Review. The Director or the Director's designee must give Notice to the requestor, with copies to the child's worker, supervisor, branch manager, assistant regional Administrator and regional administrator or their designees, other adoption workers, and committee chair, of Intent to Review the decision of the committee within 14 calendar days of the committee meeting date.

(4) Director's Actions. If the Director or the Director's designee gives Notice of Intent to Review, then the Director or Director's designee may:

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(a) Remand the decision to the current caretaker, adoption, relative placement and/or other committee which participated in making the permanency decision on behalf of the child, with instructions to gather or review information or consider additional issues, and to issue a new decision; or

(b) Conduct a review of all relevant files and information, and issue a decision affirming or changing the committee's decision, and where appropriate, directing a legal risk placement or adoptive placement; or

(c) Appoint someone to conduct a review of all relevant files and information, and make a recommendation to the Director or the Director's designee to affirm or change the committee's decision and where appropriate, recommend a legal risk placement or adoptive placement.

(5) Director's Decision is Final. The decision upon review by the Director or the Director's designee made as a result of the review is final, and does not qualify for a contested case hearing.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.280 to 418.285

TRANSITION TO ADOPTIVE HOME

413-120-0075 (1) Scheduling Transition. The transition into an adoptive placement, including sharing of family information with the child, cannot begin until the 14 day time period for the Notice of Intent to Review has passed or, in the event that the Director gives Notice of Intent to Review, until the Review is completed.

(2) Requesting Earlier Transition. The worker may initiate the waiver approval process in OAR 413-120-0070(4) and request permission to begin transition into the adoptive placement under the following circumstances;

(a) The worker has supervisory approval to do so;

(b) The Branch Manager has given written approval; and

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(c) Due to exceptional circumstances, the 14 day waiting period would adversely affect the child. Exceptional circumstances may include but are not limited to the following:

(i) The current caretaker requests early transition due to a compelling reason such as illness, or needs to be relieved of caretaking responsibilities for the child; or

(ii) It is in the best interest of the child, for example, the child needs to be in the adoptive home prior to the start of a new academic year or semester; or

(iii) The selected adoptive family is a relative with whom the child has a pre-existing close relationship and the relative has requested that transition begin earlier than 14 days.

(3) Documentation Required. In addition to the exceptional circumstances which may warrant a waiver of the 14 day period, the following conditions must be in place and demonstrated by written documentation:

(a) Diligent search for potential relative resources has been conducted according to the requirements of OAR 413-070-0072, and suitability assessments of identified relative resources have been completed according to OAR 413-070-0081; and

(b) The current caretaker is in agreement with the request for waiver or reduction of the waiting period; and

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(c) No information has been presented at adoption committee that would indicate anyone is likely to contest the committee's decision and it is unlikely a review will be requested; and

(d) In the case of an out-of-state placement, all Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) requirements have been satisfactorily completed, and ICPC has approved the placement; and

(e) In the case of placement through an in-state or out-of-state private agency, all contract requirements have been satisfactorily completed, and a contract is in place.

(4) Waiver Approval Process:

(a) If the Branch Manager or designee approves, he/she shall submit the written request and any supporting documentation to the Regional Manager or designee;

(b) If the Regional Manager or designee approves, he/she shall submit the written request and any supporting documentation to the Assistant Administrator, Field Operations and the Assistant Administrator, Program Operations or their designees;

(c) If the Assistant Administrator, Field Operations and the Assistant Administrator, Program Operations, approve, they shall refer the request to the Permanency and Adoption Manager or designee who shall verify with Central Office records that all the requirements of OAR 413-120-0070(2) and (3) have been met. If the waiver is approved, the Director shall provide written authorization waiving his/her right to review the adoption committee's decision in the case, and stating why SOSCF is not waiting the 14 days.

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LEGAL CONSENT

413-120-0080 The Director of SOSCF or the Director's designee is the person responsible for providing legal consent for the adoption of a child in SOSCF's permanent custody.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.280 to 418.285