



Series: 300 Child & Family Services

Policy Name: Adoption Sibling Separation Staffing

Policy Number: 306

Origination Date: 4/1/2017

Revision Date: 2/4/2021

Regulation: 65C-16 F.A.C.

Attachments: Separation of Sibling Staffing for the Purpose of Adoption

When considering adoption placement of a sibling group, CCKids will consider the fact that the sibling relationship is the longest lasting relationship of a child and placing siblings together, whenever possible, preserves the family unit. In situations where consideration is being given to separating siblings who are in an open dependency case, a sibling separation consultation and a sibling separation staffing shall be held.

The following factors, in no particular order, are considered in determining the best interest of the child when considering selecting an adoptive family and when multiple families apply to adopt the same child:

- A. Attachment
- B. Siblings
- C. Kinship
- D. Permanence
- E. Post Communication or contact

Procedure

1. The Adoption Case Manager (ACM), the Dependency Case Manager (DCM), or Communities Connected for Kids staff will request a Sibling Separation Consultation (SSC Meeting) when identification of a case in which sibling separation for adoption is being contemplated. The ACM will request a Sibling Separation Consultation within 30 days of case transfer from case management. The DCM will complete the SSC referral form, record in FSFN, and forward to the Adoption Case Manager (ACM). The ACM will review the form for completion and accuracy and forward to the CCKids designee. The CCKids designee will coordinate the Sibling Separation Consultation.

This meeting may include the dependency case manager and supervisor, the case management permanency specialist, the GAL, the children's therapist, other service providers working with the children, the children's attorney ad litem, the CLS and GAL attorneys, the potential and existing caregivers, and the children, as appropriate.

2. The Sibling Separation Staffing committee shall consist of three members, preferably with adoption experience. Committee member's participation in the SSC meeting is encouraged but not required.



These may include; GAL management, adoption program management, CCKids licensing and caregiver support specialist or supervisor, or other CCKids senior management representative. The members must consider the emotional ties existing between and among the siblings and the degree of harm which each child is likely to experience as a result of separation. The positive and negatives of keeping the children together must be thoroughly explored. Consideration will be given to include a Department of Children and Families staff person.

- a. In particularly difficult cases, professionals who have expertise in sibling bonding and adoptions may be consulted.
 - b. At least one member of the staffing will be assigned the role of defending the position of placing the children together.
 - c. The Staffing may be chaired by the Adoptions Supervisor or CCKids designee.
3. The decision to separate the siblings who are in an open dependency case must be approved in writing by the committee members and documented in the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) by the ACM. The completed, and signed Separation of Sibling Staffing for the Purpose of Adoption Form will serve as the memorandum describing the efforts made to keep the siblings together, an assessment of the short term and long range effects of separation on the children, and the plan for post-adoption communication or contact, and document the committee's rationale for approving or denying the separation. The ACM will ensure that the completed form is uploaded to FSFN.
4. In any adoptive placement of a Native American child, the federal "Indian Child Welfare Act" governs the order of placement preference.
5. In the event that the Sibling Separation Staffing results in additional recommendations to be explored, a second staffing with the same committee members, may be held.
6. Each agency represented in the Sibling Separation Staffing will have one recommendation. In the event that members of the Sibling Separation Staffing committee are unable to come to consensus on the decision of whether or not to separate, or the committee's decision is challenged, a written request, documenting the rationale for reconsideration, may be submitted to the CCKids CEO or designee for a final decision.
7. If, after the placement of the sibling group, one child does not adjust to the family, a decision must be made regarding what is best for all of the children. The adoption staff, the primary dependency case manager, and their supervisors, must review the situation as a team in a consultation conducted as any other sibling separation consultation, as outlined above, to determine the plan that will be least detrimental to the children. The decision and rationale will be documented in FSFN and include the plan for future contact if the decision is to pursue separate placements.



Approved: Carol Deloach

Carol Deloach, CEO