



Series: 300 Child & Family Services - Communities Connected for Kids Network Provider Policies

Policy Name: Adoption Match Staffings

Policy Number: 307

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

Policy: This policy describes the Communities Connected for Kids (CCK) process for matching children with prospective adoptive parents.

It is Communities Connected for Kids' policy that adoption placements must be made consistent with the best interest of the child(ren). Therefore, the most important criteria is the adoptive family's ability to meet the child's specific needs.

Match Staffing means a staffing that is convened to match a child available for adoption without an identified adoptive family with prospective adoptive families with non-child-specific approved adoptive home studies.

Procedure:

A. Match Staffing Team

1. Staff responsible for case planning for children who are permanently committed to the Department with a goal of adoption shall meet every 60 days to discuss and assess the strengths and needs of children without an identified adoptive family with the goal of matching them with approved prospective adoptive families. The available families for the waiting children will be sought from the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN), community-based care (CBC) agencies, AdoptUSKids, and Children Awaiting Parents (CAP).
2. The staffing will be conducted by a team of at least three (3) individuals, preferably with adoption experience. The child's case will be presented by the adoption case manager.
3. The staffing team shall determine all potential matches from the pool of prospective adoptive families.
4. If there is only one prospective family interested in the child(ren), this family shall be discussed in detail among the team prior to matching the family and child(ren).
5. In the instance where multiple families with an approved adoption home study have been matched with an available child, the team will evaluate each family based on the family's ability to meet the identified needs of the child based on information documented in FSFN, the Child Study and the adoptive parent's



home study.

6. The team will be required to obtain input (either verbally or in writing) from adults with significant knowledge of the child's needs, including the adoption case manager, dependency case manager, current caregiver, the child, if age appropriate, guardian ad litem, school professional, and therapist.
7. The child's Adoption Worker will present the child(ren)'s strengths and specific needs.
8. The Adoption Worker who completed each Adoption Home Study for a family being considered will present the strengths and needs of the Adoptive Family as well as the benefits of placing the child(ren) in that home. If an Adoptive Home Study for a family living outside of Circuit 19 is being considered, every effort will be made to ensure that the worker completing their home study is available to present the family (may be telephonic). If that is not possible, a local Adoption Worker will present the family.

B. Adoptive Family Selection:

1. Adoption placements must be made consistent with the best interest of the child. The assessment of the best interest of the child must include the current and projected future needs of the child, consideration of the birth family's medical and mental health history and the strengths of the potential adoptive family to meet the child's needs.
2. The adoptive placement decision must be shaped by the following considerations:
 - (a) Grandparent. A grandparent who is entitled to notice pursuant to Section 63.0425, F.S., must be afforded the opportunity to have a home study completed and to petition for adoption. Entitled to notice means the child has lived with a grandparent for at least 6 months within the 24-month period immediately preceding the filing of a petition for termination of parental rights pending adoption. If grandparents apply to adopt the child, prior to a Memorandum of Agreement to Adopt being signed by another applicant, the application must be evaluated through an adoptive home study.
 - (b) Current caregiver. If the current caregiver applies to adopt the child, the application must be evaluated through an adoptive home study. The home study must assess the length of time the child has lived with the current caregiver, and the depth of the relationship existing between the child and the caregiver, and whether it is in the best interest of the child to be adopted by the caregiver
 - (c) Relatives and nonrelatives with whom child has a relationship. Persons known to the child, but who do not have custody of the child, may wish to be considered for adoption. If such persons apply to adopt the child, prior to a Memorandum of Agreement to Adopt being signed, the application must be evaluated through an adoptive home study. The depth of the relationship existing between the child and the applicant must be assessed and included in the home study. The "Memorandum of Agreement," CF-FSP 5072, October 2010, is incorporated by reference and available at www.dcf.state.fl.us/dcf/forms/.
 - (d) Family new to the child. Many families who pursue adoption do not have a specific child in mind when they apply. These families must be provided information about the children available for adoption through the Department, and must be helped, through training, preparation, and the home study process, to determine if special needs adoption is appropriate for their family.



(e) Siblings. When considering adoption placement of a sibling group, consideration must include the fact that a sibling relationship is the longest lasting relationship for a child and placing siblings together, whenever possible, preserves the family unit. Please see sibling separation policy (CCK policy 143) for additional guidance.

C. Outcome of Match Staffing

1. In instances where a sole family was under consideration, the Adoptions counselor will proceed with adoption activities for the family and the matched child upon completion and adoption program director approval of the match.
2. The adoption program director shall make a referral to the Circuit 19 Adoption Applicant Review Committee (AARC) for all cases when two or more approved adoptive families have applied to adopt the child(ren). The referral shall include, but is not limited to:
 - (a) Recommendation of the Match Staffing Team for the selected family.
 - (b) Adoptive home studies and supporting documentation for each approved adoptive family.
 - (c) Copies of the completed selection staffing form for each approved adoptive family, and the written record of the match staffing meeting, and copies of supporting documentation that was reviewed in the determination of the team's recommendation.
3. The Adoptions program director will notify the applicants and all appropriate parties (Case manager, Guardian ad Litem, etc) that a Match staffing recommendation has been made, and that no further adoption activities can occur until the final decision has been communicated.
4. The Circuit 19 AARC will make Communities Connected for Kids' final recommendation on the approval or denial of each applicant to the Department of Children and Families. Please refer to CCK Policy 308 for additional information on the AARC process.
5. The Department of Children and Families regional managing director or designated Department staff person shall provide the applicant(s) with written notification of the decision to deny the application, within 10 business days of the decision. The written notice must include the reason for the denial, and must advise the applicant of his or her option for review of the denial pursuant to Chapter 120, F.S.
6. No further action can be taken with any of the families affected by the decision until completion of the appropriate appeal period outlined in the written notice, and written confirmation received from DCF that no appeal has been filed. Should an appeal be filed, no further action can be taken until the appeal has been resolved as outlined in Chapter 120, F.S.

Approved: Carol DeLoach

Carol DeLoach, CEO