

DSS Policy and Procedure Guide

Division 3: Child Welfare

Chapter 8: Adoptions

Item 4: Risk-Adopt Placement Matching

Suggested changes send to: [DSS PSOA](#) Mailbox

Issued: **09-23-2011**

References: Title 22 Division 6 Chapter 9; Multiethnic Placement Act Interethnic Adoptions Provisions; California Codes Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16115-16124

Replaces Issue: **New**

Policy

A uniform and standardized method for placing children in Risk-Adopt homes will be followed by Adoption staff.

Purpose

To inform Department of Social Services (DSS) Staff of policies, procedures and general requirements for selecting an adoptive family that best meets the needs of a child (ren) who require adoptive placement due to their birth parents' inability to care for them without continuing to abuse and/or neglect them. Without a plan of adoption, these children would remain in long-term foster care.

Definitions

Child Coordinator-The social worker (SW) responsible for assisting the child's SW in searching, and locating an approved Risk-Adopt family for placement. The Child Coordinator will maintain a log of children in need of a Risk-Adopt placement.

Family Coordinator-The social worker responsible for assessing and approving DSS Risk-Adopt families.

Risk-Adopt Family- A family licensed by Fresno County, or certified through a Foster Family Agency, to provide foster care with an approved adoptive home study for the purpose of completing an adoption of a child (ren).

Presentation Meeting- The meeting between the selected Risk-Adopt family, child's social worker, Child Coordinator, SW's Supervisor, Public Health Nurse and Family Coordinator. If the Risk-Adopt family is certified through an adoption agency the adoption agency social worker will also be in attendance. The DSS will provide full disclosure at this meeting including, not limited to: reasons for removal, juvenile court dependency status, psycho social history and medical history for birth parents and child(ren).

Meet and Greet- The initial meeting between the Risk-Adopt parents and the child.

Procedure

The Adoption Matching Process:

- The child's assigned SW assesses the case to determine the availability of family members. The SW engages the extended family to determine the roles they will play as permanent connections for the child. If there are no family members who are able to provide a permanent placement, then a Risk-Adopt family should be considered.
- The [Child Focus Team](#) Permanency Specialist should be consulted on any 0-5 age child prior to determining that a Risk-Adopt Referral is needed.
- Once the child's assigned SW identifies the need for a Risk-Adopt family, the child's assigned SW will complete the [Risk-Adopt Referral](#). The referral will be sent via email to the [DSS Risk Adopt Referral](#) mailbox.
- Upon receipt of a Risk-Adopt referral, the Child Coordinator will consult with the Family Coordinator to inquire about available families that meet the needs of the child. The Family Coordinator will consider DSS approved families prior to contacting outside adoption agencies.
- Private adoption agencies will be contacted if DSS does not have at least three families to consider for placement of the child. The child's SW is responsible to complete the [Child Available](#) form and submit it to the Child Coordinator via the DSS Risk Adopt Referral mailbox for submittal to outside adoption agencies.
- The Child Coordinator will schedule a Matching Staffing upon identifying three Risk-Adopt families. Staff required to attend the Matching Staffing include the child's SW, social worker's supervisor, Adoption Supervisor, Child and Family Coordinators, SW(s) to the child's (ren) siblings and a Public Health Nurse.
- In preparation for the Matching Staffing the assigned SW will review the Psycho-Social and Medical history of the parents and child(ren) including, but not limited to, Addiction Severity Index, Domestic Violence Inventory, Mental Health and Psychological assessments, Medical records, Individualized Education Plans and other Education records. The SW will also take the case file to the Matching Staffing.
- Prior to the matching staffing, the Child and Family Coordinators will submit the available home studies to the child's SW for review.
- During the Matching Staffing the Child's SW will give an oral presentation of the child's needs. The areas to be considered when selecting a family include the family's ability to meet the child's total health, educational, religious, recreational, social and emotional needs, maintain permanent connections, Multiethnic Placement Act/Interethnic Adoptions Provisions regulations (child(ren)'s cultural needs), waiver of AAP and home study approval date. The children of the same family shall be kept together whenever possible unless it has been determined that this is not in the best interest of the children.

Presentation Meeting:

- Prior to the Presentation Meeting being scheduled, the child's SW is responsible for gathering information about the child from the different treating agencies. The information should include, but is not limited to, the "[C](#)" Case Summary, medical reports, developmental assessments, mental health assessments, quarterly reports, school reports, permanent connections and birth records. The SW must redact all identifying information of the birth parents, child(ren), the child's sibling(s) or any biological family member.
- The child's SW may request assistance from the Child and Family Coordinators for help with pulling and copying case documents related to the disclosure of the child's needs.
- Once a family is selected, the Child Coordinator will schedule a presentation meeting. The Family Coordinator, the child's SW, Adoption Supervisor, Public Health Nurse and Child Coordinator will be invited. If the family is certified through an adoption agency, the family's SW will be also be present. The DSS will provide full disclosure during the presentation meeting. At the presentation, the family will be provided with information on the child's well-being and current dependency status.
- The child's SW, Adoption Supervisor, Child Coordinator, family's SW and the Risk-Adopt parent(s) will sign the Presentation Documentation form acknowledging receipt of the disclosure documents.
- After the presentation the Risk-Adopt family will be given 24 hrs. to decide whether they would like to proceed with a Meet and Greet. If the family chooses to proceed, the Child Coordinator will schedule a Meet and Greet to include the Risk-Adopt family, the child (ren), the Child Coordinator and the child's SW.
- If a decision is made by the DSS that the placement will not occur, the assigned SW will meet face to face with the Risk-Adopt family to advise them of this decision.
- If the family chooses to move forward with placement and the DSS is in agreement, a Pre-Placement Plan will be developed by the Child Coordinator to include input from the Risk-Adopt family and the child's current care provider. The Pre-Placement Plan will include the following information: date, time and place of the first three visits, contact information for the child's SW, the Child Coordinator and Family Coordinator. If the family is certified through an adoption agency, the agency SW contact information will also be provided. After the initial three visits, the team will come together to assess the need for additional visits prior to placement.
- The Child Coordinator will contact the family during the transition period (transition from foster care placement to Risk-Adopt Placement) to support the family and inform them of any new case related information pertinent to placement.
- If the Risk-Adopt family is a DSS Risk-Adopt home, the Family Coordinator will follow up with the family during the transition period and after the placement has occurred to help the family identify services that would help support the placement. Ongoing contact with the child and Risk-Adopt family is to occur no less than once a month until the adoption is finalized. Contacts with the child and Risk-Adopt family will be documented (narrated) in CWS/CMS.

- If the Risk-Adopt family is certified through a private adoption agency, the assigned SW is responsible for ongoing communication with the Risk-Adopt family's SW to ensure that all services are in place to support the placement.
- The assigned SW shall have ongoing contact with the child and Risk-Adopt family no less than once a month until the adoption is finalized. Contacts with the child and Risk-Adopt family will be documented (narrated) in CWS/CMS.