

Section 4 Overview

This section pertains to the policy and procedures necessary when an out-of-home placement of a child is imminent or has occurred.

Chapter 28 Overview

This chapter will discuss the policy and procedures for selecting adoptive families for children in Out-of-Home Care.

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Memoranda History:

[CD04-73](#), [CD06-47](#), CD07-52, CD16-11

28.1 Adoptive Family Recruitment Process

Any child in CD custody who is available for adoption and is not being adopted by the current resource provider family is available for placement with any approved adoptive family. Selecting a placement resource shall be conducted via the Adoption Staffing process.

Prior to the staffing, recruitment of perspective adoptive families may be necessary. The adoptive family selection process begins with the Children's Service Worker conducting a search for approved adoptive families. Search activities may include using the AdoptUSKids website, or the Adoption Exchange's website. Staff can also use a reverse e-mail blast; sending an email out to Resource Development workers across the state requesting approved home assessments from families who are Keep in mind, the email may be forwarded on to adoptive families by the Resource Development workers. The e-mail message should include the following:

- **Purpose Statement** (to be used at the beginning): "The purpose of the information provided below is to briefly introduce you to the child (ren) for whom our agency is recruiting an adoptive placement."

Do Include:

- At the top of the profile list separately the child's first name, date of birth (mo/yr), race and gender. School grade information can be added if necessary.
- Within the narrative, be creative, energetic, use descriptive words (see list of descriptive adjectives located in Section 6, Chapter 1, Attachment E of this manual.)
- Use an attention-getting phrase to begin the narrative and draw readers in.
- Include likes, hobbies, interests, what they want (family, life, goals, pets, church)
- Describe the child's personality.
- School – information about the child's educational accomplishments or needs.
- Special issues – contact with siblings, family or past placement providers
- Positive quotes from the child caregiver (don't refer to the "residential" caregiver)

- Quotes from the child describing themselves (i.e. Favorite thing about themselves, etc.)
- Serious medical diagnosis and treatment involved.
- A description of the child's need for a family with particular skills or family configuration (don't limit to a two-parent family if that is not necessary).
- Legal Status
- Add the date updated/completed at the bottom of profile.
- The profile needs to be at least three paragraphs, and 120-150 words. NO more than 1 – 1 ½ pages in length.
- If you have a photo, state it is available upon request.
- **Ending Statement** (to be used at the end): "For more detailed information about **(child's name)** contact **(worker name and phone).**"

Do Not Include:

- Identifying information within the narrative(i.e., child's last name, school's name, city where child resides, parent's names, date and reason the child is in care, and history of abuse/neglect (any significant information may be included in the confidential narrative section).
- Details about failed past placements (any significant information may be included in the confidential narrative section).
- Anything that might be embarrassing to the child. Ask yourself, "Would I feel comfortable showing this to the child, and would it make them uncomfortable?"
- Date of births, age or grades in school as a part of the narrative.

Answer all responses to search/e-mail recruitment activities, within five (5) working days, using the following instructions as applicable:

- a. Submit assessment(s) to requesting county, identifying the sending worker and location. The information should note approval for submittal by the supervisor/Circuit Manager.
- b. Refer responses to the County Office or other state/private agency consistent with their residence, if responding family requires an adoption study.
- c. Regularly inform county of jurisdiction of results of recruitment activities.

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The initial number of assessments accepted for Adoption Staffing review will be reduced to three (3) to five (5) identified families through the preliminary screening process.

See [Section 4 Chapter 28 Subsection 2](#) for details on the preliminary screening process.

In some instances it may be necessary to wait for an adoptive assessment to be completed before selecting a family. The family's worker should be kept informed of plans for the staffing.

Related Subject: Section 6, Chapter 1, Subsection 5: Finding Adoptive Families for Children and Section 6, Chapter 1, Subsection 6: Photo Listing

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[CD04-73](#), [CD06-47](#)

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28.2 Preliminary Screening Process

The Children's Service Worker, adoption specialist, supervisor and/or Circuit Manager will screen the Adoptive Family Assessments according to staffing criteria and select at least three (3) and no more than five (5) for consideration by the staffing committee.

Those involved in the screening include:

- a. Direct Children's Service Worker, if applicable
- b. Adoption specialist
- c. Children's Service Supervisor I or Circuit Manager
- d. Case manager

Criteria to consider during preliminary screening, but not limited to, is as follows:

- a. Ability to meet the needs of the child
- b. Ability to accept the physical, emotional, and mental conditions of child
- c. Acceptance of legal risk, if applicable
- d. Acceptance of continued contact with siblings, and significant others when beneficial to the child
- e. Acceptance of the background of the birth parents
- f. Commitment to encourage and preserve the child's cultural identity
- g. Availability of and acceptance of use of community resources required by the child
- h. Acceptance of supervision during adoption process

In certain instances, it may be appropriate and necessary to hold an adoption staffing for a child when only one family becomes available as an adoptive placement resource for the child or sibling group at the request of the FST or Regional Director.

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28.3 Adoption Staffing Team

The purpose of this team is to apply a Consensus Building approach to the practice of selecting a permanent family for a child in Children's Division (CD) custody who is in need of an adoptive placement. Additionally, CD recognizes the child's placement provider and other foster/adoptive families along with professional staff are essential, vital members of this selection process.

Team Membership - The following persons are mandatory members and shall be invited to participate in the Adoption Staffing:

1. Child's Children's Service Worker and his/her supervisor
2. Case manager and his/her supervisor
3. Adoption specialist and his/her supervisor, if applicable
4. Child's placement provider (if placement provider is not an adoptive applicant for the child)

<p>NOTE: The staff representative from a child-caring facility should be that person who has the greatest knowledge/rapport with the child.</p>
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5. Other foster or adoptive parents of special needs children
6. CASA/GAL
7. Juvenile officer
8. Child's counselor, therapist, psychologist, etc.
9. Community representative
10. Any other person who has vital significance in the child's life
11. Prospective adoptive family's Resource Development Worker, if geographically feasible
12. Other members - While the membership is mandatory as is notification of each member of the formal staffing meeting, it is not mandatory that all be in attendance. There shall be at minimum 80% of invited members present for the Adoption Staffing to be considered an official Adoption Staffing. Opinions, in writing, must be sought from any members unable to attend the Adoption Staffing and utilized in the staffing discussion. Member participation may be obtained via conference call during the meeting or by asking them to submit their preferences in writing prior to the meeting. To achieve consistency for all prospective family interviews, the same members must be present for

each interview. If that is not possible the team member may submit their preference in writing for all prospective families. The basic intent is to obtain as much participation as possible from those who have significance in the child's life while recognizing practical issues of busy schedules and geographic constraints.

NOTE: Conflict of Interest: If a relationship between a member of the team and the person being staffed exists, that precludes them from being objective, that member of the team shall be excused from the discussion and selection process.

The child's placement provider must be invited to the staffing and every possible effort should be made to include them in the staffing decision. When geographic constraints exist, conference calls are an option. If the placement provider cannot participate in the staffing, staff should request the placement provider review the prospective families' information and provide recommendations as to the family they selected as well as their first alternative and second alternative in writing. Staff should work hand-in-hand with placement providers to obtain their feedback and participation.

NOTE: If the placement providers have indicated an interest in adopting the child, they are not members of the decision making process but provide information of the child to the team before being excused.

The foster or adoptive family appointed to serve as standing members of the team should be well versed in the philosophy of permanence and achieving the best interests of the child. Additionally, they shall not be Children's Division staff members. They should be chosen on the basis of:

- Their skill/knowledge about out-of-home/permanency planning for children
- Demonstrated ability to successfully foster/adopt special needs children
- Availability to participate on a regular basis
- Ability to effectively participate as a team member

The representative of the child placing agency should be the staff member who has the greatest rapport with the child.

The community representative should be one who is interested and knowledgeable about public child welfare services.

All members of the Adoption Staffing Team shall sign the Statement of Confidentiality for Adoption Staffing Team Members, (CD-135).

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28.4 Preparing for the Adoption Staffing

Prior to an Adoption Staffing being scheduled the Child's Summary for Adoption should be provided (with identifying information- if any, blacked out) to the pre-adoptive families selected through the preliminary screening process. The families should then be given ten (10) business days to review the Child's Summary and provide their written responses on the Family Response Form (CD-192). Once the Children's Service Worker has received the Family Response Forms back from the prospective adoptive families, the Children's Service Worker shall mail Child Information Packets to the team members participating in the Adoption Staffing. The Child Information Packet should contain the following information:

1. A Cover Letter with the following information:
 - A. The Adoption Staffing Meeting Time and Location (should be scheduled a minimum of two (2) to four (4) weeks in advance to allow for maximum participation)
 - B. A reminder to the team members about confidentiality of the information contained in the Child Information Packet
 - C. A request that if they are unable to attend that their recommendations in writing be provided five (5) business days before the scheduled meeting so that copies can be made for all staffing team members in attendance
 - D. A request they return any copied material to the CD office at the time of the meeting or when they mail in their written recommendation, if they are unable to attend the Adoption Staffing. All written material copied and shared with non-CD members must be returned to the Adoption Specialist for destruction
2. The Child's Summary
3. The Statement of Confidentiality for Adoption Staffing Team Members (CD-135)
4. The Family Response Form (CD-192)
5. The Adoptive Family Home Assessment
6. A blank copy of the Adoption Staffing Prospective Adoptive Family Interview Questionnaire (CD-134) should also be included in the packet so that the team members can review and come prepared to offer suggestions as to which questions on the Questionnaire they would like to ask of the potential adoptive families during the Adoption Staffing interview.

- Explain to the Team that they are not required to ask the prospective adoptive families every question on the tool; however they shall use the same set of questions for every family being interviewed for the same child or sibling group. If the Adoption Staffing Team has additional questions specific to an identified family, they can include questions that are not posed in the questionnaire in order to make an informed decision regarding the family that is selected to adopt the child or sibling group.

Appropriate notice shall be given to the prospective adoptive families to allow them to make arrangements to participate in an interview either in person or by phone. Families are not required to participate in the interview process, however if they elect not to participate they should be informed of the possibility of an interviewed family being selected.

Workers shall explain to prospective families ahead of time that the purpose of the interview is to allow the Staffing Team the opportunity to get to know them so that the best possible match for the available child(ren) can be made.

Workers shall also explain to prospective adoptive families as well as to all members of the Adoption Staffing Team, how they may request a review of the decision made by the Adoption Staffing Team, given there was a perceived error during the process or the requestor provides specific examples of perceived bias which precluded consensus from being reached.

The request must be submitted within three (3) working days of the Adoption Staffing Team decision. Requests received after the prescribed time frame will not be considered. The request is submitted on the Request for Review of Family Support Team or Adoption Staffing Team Decision, CD-190. Policy regarding the Adoption Staffing Team Decision Review is located in [Section 6 Chapter 7 Sub-section 9](#).

It must be recognized that most families will be ill at ease and sensitive to the competition with other families. Every effort must be taken to make them comfortable upon their arrival at the office and during the interview.

Plans should be made to conduct the interviews on the same day if possible; all the same members of the staffing team must be present for each interview in order to achieve consistency in the interview process. Families should be prepared to bring their own children if this is important to the decision to place a child with a particular family.

Have the following documents available at the Adoption Staffing:

1. The Statement of Confidentiality for Adoption Staffing Team Members (CD-135)
2. The Child's Summary for Adoption Placement
3. The Adoptive Family Assessments

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4. The Family Response Forms (CD-192)
5. The Adoptive Staffing Prospective Adoptive Family Interview Questionnaires (CD-134)
6. The Adoption Staffing Decision Worksheet (CD-189)
7. Statement of Legal Risk (CD-191; optional at time of staffing)

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[CD04-73](#), [CD06-47](#)

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28.5 Conducting the Adoption Staffing and Utilization of the Consensus Building Approach

Although operating as a team, at least one (1) person must be designated to facilitate the meeting. This should be the adoption specialist, but in the event there is no adoption specialist involved, the child's A/C worker, CD Supervisor or Children's Service Specialist may facilitate the meeting. Conducting the Adoption Staffing:

1. State the purpose of the meeting, and review and remind the membership of the importance of maintaining confidentiality of the information shared. The facilitator will need to have all team members sign the Statement of Confidentiality for Adoption Staffing Team Members form (CD-135).
2. Introductions should be made of all Adoption Staffing Team Members.
3. The facilitator, child(ren)'s A/C worker, and child's current placement provider, present information about the child(ren), using the Child Summary for Adoption as a guide, including a recommendation regarding characteristics of the type of family who can best meet the needs of the child. This information should be concise and provide adequate information about the child's needs, behaviors, background, etc. Answer any questions about the information provided.
4. Share information about each prospective family. The Family Response form (CD-192) should be discussed along with information contained in the Adoptive Family Assessment.
5. Explain to the Team the purpose of the interview and the use of the Adoption Staffing Prospective Adoptive Family Interview Questionnaire (CD-134). Team members should be made aware each questionnaire will be collected at the end of the staffing and retained in the child's file.
 - A. The Adoption Staffing Team should utilize the same set of questions for each family interested in and being considered for the same child or sibling group.
 - B. The prospective adoptive families shall be given the opportunity to ask questions about the child and if selected what the transition plan may look like.
 - C. Prospective families should also be given the opportunity to speak with their Adoptive Worker privately (away from the staffing) to ask any further questions related to the staffing process or the child and their background.
6. Interview the family either in person or by phone utilizing the Adoption Staffing Prospective Adoptive Family Interview Questionnaire (CD-134). Use the following guidelines for adoption staffing where prospective adoptive families are to be interviewed before making a final recommendation regarding the placement

choice for a child. This interview should serve to enhance the information included in the adoptive family assessment and the Family Response Form (CD-192). The purpose of the interview is to enhance the staffing team's ability to make an informed decision about which family can best meet the needs of the child. The Adoption Staffing Interview:

- A. Confidentiality expectations will be discussed. The Statement of Confidentiality for Adoption Staffing Team Members, CD-135, must be signed by all participants.
 - B. A Brief overview of the child will be provided, utilizing the Child's Summary for Adoption Placement, as a guide. At a minimum, the presentation must include the child's legal status and a clear, but concise description of the child's condition, including any changes or updates since the Child's Summary for Adoption Placement was completed. The child's desires in an adoptive family and any special requirements established for the child by the child's jurisdictional court must be discussed. Examples of requirements of the jurisdictional court include the right to make the final selection of the adoptive family or a review of the CD recommendations before allowing the family to know of the final decision.
 - C. At the end of the staffing meeting, the prospective adoptive family should be asked directly whether they continue to be interested in the specific child. Explain that there are no negative consequences to their status if they elect not to accept the child.
 - D. Information should be given to families of when they will be notified of the selection decision. Consideration should be given to what is involved in making the final decision and approximately how long it will be before the decision is made.
7. After the interviews are complete, the Adoption Staffing Team should discuss each prospective family, discussing their strengths and identify skills needed to be successful with the child to determine if they will be able to meet the needs of the child.
 8. Discuss questions and comments to achieve consensus on the family selected, first alternative family and, second alternative family with the skills to meet the needs of the child(ren) being placed using the following criteria:
 - A. Ability to meet the needs of the child
 - B. Ability to accept the physical, emotional, and mental conditions of the child
 - C. Acceptance of the background of the birth parents

- D. Acceptance of continued contact with siblings, and significant others when beneficial to the child
- E. Acceptance of legal risk, if applicable
- F. Commitment to encourage and preserve the child's cultural identity and religious beliefs
- G. Availability of and acceptance of use of community resources required by the child
- H. Acceptance of supervision during the adoption process
- I. Ability to rear the child to adulthood or make an alternative plan
- J. Consideration of what may happen to the child in the event of the prospective adoptive resource provider's death or incapacitation

Consensus is a decision-making process that fully utilizes the resources of a group. It is more difficult and time consuming to reach consensus than a democratic vote or autocratic decision. There may be trade-offs and the various decision alternatives will not satisfy everyone. Complete unanimity is not the goal and this is rarely possible. However, it is possible for each individual to have had the opportunity to express their opinion, be listened to, and accept a group decision based on its logic and feasibility considering all relevant factors. This requires mutual trust and respect of each team member.

A consensus decision represents a reasonable decision that all members of the group can accept. It is not necessarily the optimal decision for each member, however it represents a decision that is in the best interest of the child(ren) being staffed. Guidelines for reaching Consensus:

- Make sure everyone is heard from and feels listened to. Avoid arguing for your own position. Present information as clearly as possible. Listen to each other's reactions and comments to assess understanding of the position being presented.
- Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose when a discussion reaches a stalemate. Instead, look for the most acceptable decision to meet the child's needs. Try to think creatively.
- Team members should not change their mind simply to avoid confrontation, conflict, or to reach an agreement or maintain harmony. Explore the reasons and be sure that everyone accepts the solution for similar or complementary reasons. In

this environment, the best interest of the child should be the primary focus.

- Avoid conflict reducing techniques such as a majority vote, averaging, coin tosses or bargaining.
 - Differences of opinion are natural and expected. Seek them out; value them, and try to involve everyone in the decision process. Disagreements can improve the group's decision.
9. The facilitator shall obtain the consensus of the team with the recommendations as to why they have selected a specific family as well as the team's recommendation on a first alternative family and second alternative family. This information shall be recorded on the Adoption Staffing Decision Worksheet (CD-189) and maintained in the child's record.
 10. Before adjourning the meeting, obtain all the copies of the adoptive family assessments shared with the membership. Destroy all copies except one set of those considered and retain this set in the child's file.
 11. The leader shall notify all prospective adoptive families Resource Development Workers of the decision, if not already present at the staffing.
 12. The family's Resource Development Worker should notify the family of the decision reached by the Staffing Team.
 13. Notify the families not selected by the Adoption Staffing Team of their ability to request an Adoption Staffing Decision Review.

Although, the committee should reach a decision within one (1) meeting, in unusual circumstances it may be necessary to reconvene another staffing for a specific child to arrive at a final recommendation of the families considered.

This process should be repeated as often as necessary until the child is placed for adoption. The Leader should seek supervisory consultation and review if consensus is not met.

Adoption Staffing Decision Review

The procedure to provide an outside review for a family not selected by an Adoption Staffing Team is to provide the family a voice and explanation regarding the reasons they were not chosen.

A request for a review may be made by the family not selected as an adoptive resource by an Adoption Staffing Team or by any Adoption Staffing team member if there was a perceived error during the process or the requestor provides specific examples of perceived bias which precluded consensus from being reached. The request is

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submitted on the Request for Review of Family Support Team or Adoption Staffing Team Decision form, CD-190.

The request must be submitted within three (3) working days of the Adoption Staffing Committee decision. Requests received after the prescribed time frame will not be considered. There are specific timeframes listed in [Section 6 Chapter 7 Subsection 7.9](#) for each step in the review process.

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28.6 An Adoptive Family Is Selected

Once an adoptive family has been selected the case manager/direct Children's Service Worker will:

1. Present complete information about the child to the pre-adoptive family using an updated child's summary within seven (7) days of selecting the family.
2. Obtain commitment from family within seven (7) days of presentation, if they wish to pursue adoption of the child:
 - a. Explain importance of filing adoption petition within 90 days of approval for adoption.
 - b. If the family does not want to pursue adoption, present the information about the child to the first alternative and second alternative families.
 - c. Continue search for new family if none of the alternative families accept the child.
 - d. Obtain the adoptive family's signature with date on the child's summary, give the original to the family and retain a copy for the adoptive family's case record.
3. Within five (5) days of obtaining commitment from the family, with the support of the Family Support Team, develop specifics of pre-placement plan which accommodates the wishes of the child, current foster family and pre-adoptive family, including the following:
 - a. First meeting
 - b. Additional visits
 - c. Other relationship building activities
 - d. Filing of adoption petition if licensed as a foster/adoptive family
4. Place child with the family after obtaining any required authorization from court.
 - a. Comply with ICPC and/or ICAMA requirements if applicable
 - b. Update the Placement Screen in FACES to reflect the correct type of adoptive placement and financial assistance (if the family is the current resource provider, DO NOT change the placement type, as they will lose PPMN)
 - c. Review with the family and child, if age appropriate, any concerns and issues that have evolved during pre-placement activities.

5. Inform pre-adoptive family of the availability of adoption subsidy, if needed, for the child's care.
6. Decide on the appropriate financial assistance plan using out-of-home care funding sources or adoption subsidy according to procedures related to each of these funding sources.
7. If there are no other competing petitions anticipated or filed, and the juvenile office and legal services have declined to file the TPR, consult with the family regarding their willingness to proceed with a petition for adoption and termination of parental rights.

Related Subject: [Section 4 Chapter 26 Subsection 5: Procedures for Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights \(TPR\)](#)

8. Explain child's right to make a written request to the court that finalized the adoption to obtain identifying information about the biological parents or adult siblings at the time the child reaches age 18 as well as the right to register with the Missouri Adoption Information Registry to permit contact with biological parents or adult siblings. Contact will be made by the registry if a match is made.
9. Explain adoptive family rights to obtain non-identifying information about the biological parent or child after adoption.
10. Explain child's right to obtain non-identifying information regarding the biological parents and child's siblings, at age 18 and after.

Related Subject: [Section 5, Chapter 2.6.6, Adoption Information Registry](#)

11. Prepare child and family for adoption, including discussion of the following issues:
 - a. Understanding and acceptance of the past
 - b. Separation from birth family
 - c. Meaning of and desire for adoption
 - d. Placement with siblings, if planned
 - e. Plans to continue to encourage and preserve the child's cultural identity

12. Assess and process child and family's readiness to complete the adoption through scheduled visitation in pre-adoptive home.

Once the Division has committed to adoption by the family, removal of the child can occur only at the family's decision that they do not wish to adopt the child, or the child's emotional and/or physical safety is at risk (i.e., a child abuse and neglect investigation has found "preponderance of evidence" and the child is not safe in the home).

13. Prepare child and family for court hearings.
14. Prepare and submit necessary reports to the court for transfer of custody and/or final decree hearings.
15. Interpret confidential nature of adoption to child and family:
 - a. Develop plan for visits with siblings after adoption, if it is part of the adoption plan for the child.
 - b. Develop plan for continued parental or relative contact if the plan is in the best interest of the child.
16. Attend court hearings, being prepared to testify if so ordered.
17. Make one visit with family and child after final decree hearing to:
 - a. Make a referral to community support groups, if needed
 - b. Reinforce the lifetime commitment of adoption
 - c. Maintain links to any needed rehabilitation services
 - d. Remind family of yearly review of subsidy and necessary maintenance activities
 - e. Plan for continued counseling, if needed
 - f. Assure that services will be extended if at any time in the future the family or child determines they are in need of services related to the adoption
18. Record all activities every 30 days.
19. Once the adoption is finalized, change the legal status of the child to LS-5.
 - a. Prior to the LS-5 being added on the AC function the following must be in place:
 - i. Child's DCN on adoption subsidy contract
 - ii. TPR/Death entered on biological parents
 - iii. Adoption Petition(Adoption Hearing) entered
 - iv. Adoptive Placement (same DVN as on the adoption contract)

20. The alternative care case will close once an LS-5 Adoption Assistance is open in FACES. For cases without adoption subsidy, manually close the case with the change of legal status. Close the alternative care case record with a termination summary and copy of final decree:
 - a. Keep case open if continued services are required, closing case at mutually agreed upon point (if subsidy is not active)
 - b. Copy information needed for the Adoption Subsidy case file, either adding it to the family's existing subsidy file or begin a subsidy case file for the family

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28.8 Current Resource Provider Family Is Selected

The case manager/direct Children's Service Worker will:

1. Explain permanent plan to current resource provider family including services needed and required legal actions needed to achieve plan:
 - a. Explain that if they are interested in adoption of the child in their care, an adoptive application and assessment will be needed.
 - b. Explain consideration rights if they have had the child for less than nine months.
 - c. Give preferential rights if they have had the child in their care nine months or longer.
 - d. Explain importance of continuing to provide an environment that encourages and preserves the child's cultural identity.
 - e. Advise resource provider parent that the court may allow them to present evidence for court consideration if they desire to adopt the foster child in their home who is the subject of a TPR hearing.
 - f. If the family elects not to adopt the child, explain importance of their mandatory participation in the formal adoption staffing.
 - g. Explain that if they wish to adopt the child, at CD's option, a staffing committee will determine if adoption by them is the best plan that can be recommended to the court. If so, they will not be a member of the staffing committee.
 - h. Explain child's right to obtain identifying information about the biological parents at the time the child reaches age 18.
 - i. Explain resource provider parent rights to obtain non-identifying information about the biological parent or child after adoption.
 - j. Explain child's right to obtain non-identifying information regarding the biological parents and child's siblings, at age 18 and after.
 - k. Explain child's right at age 18 to register with the Missouri Adoption Information Registry to permit contact with biological parent or adult siblings. Contact will be made by registry staff if a match is made by the registry.
 - l. Explain child's right at age 18 or over to make a written request to the court that granted the adoption for identifying information regarding an adult sibling.

2. Confirm family's interest in adoption within seven (7) days of explaining the permanent plan:
 - a. Explain importance of filing adoption petition within 90 days of approval for adoption.
 - b. If not interested or inappropriate, follow procedure 28.9 of this Chapter to select another family to achieve the permanency plan of adoption for the child.
3. If interested, refer family for adoptive application and family assessment to adoption specialist.
4. Within seven (7) days of the decision that the child is available for adoption, assess and decide appropriateness for and interest of care provider in the adoption of the child:
 - For siblings currently separated, adjustments and planning will have to be made for one of the current families to plan for adoption of all.
5. Record factors that resulted in the decision that the foster/kinship family is appropriate as an adoptive parent within five (5) working days of decision.
6. Obtain assurance that adoption petition has been filed by the family within 90 days of family's approval for adoption:

When the petition is filed by the resource provider family, the SS-61 must immediately be revised to indicate the child is in an adoptive placement.

- a. Plan for placement of child in an adoptive family if foster/kinship family is not approved for adoption.
- b. Consider adoptive placement plan for child if family has not filed the adoption petition.

Although resource provider families have the right to indicate their preference to adopt a child in their care, they should not delay in taking action to demonstrate this preference. Assistance should be given in interpreting the child's need for permanency and the child's understanding of time.

7. Provide a written, dated summary of child's past and current condition to family within seven (7) days of commitment to adoption (i.e., date CD is notified as to filing of the adoption petition). This must include a synopsis of any professional evaluations and treatment recommendations for the child. (i.e., medical, educational, dental, psychological, psychiatric, etc.)

NOTE: Guidelines for the written summary are located in [Section 4, Chapter 27.3](#) Permanency through Adoption – Child's Summary for Adoption Placement

NOTE: The information shared must not include anything that would specifically identify natural parents or siblings (not placed together) but may be descriptive of natural parents or siblings. However, when knowledge of siblings (not placed together) is important to a child's adjustment in an adoptive placement, information should be included regarding the identity and whereabouts of the siblings. (This only applies prior to the adoption being finalized or the adoption record being closed.)

8. Obtain adoptive parents' signature on summary with date of signature at time it is provided.
9. Sign summary at time adoptive parent(s) sign the written summary.
10. Give original copy of summary to adoptive parent(s) and maintain a signed and dated copy in the adoptive parents' case record.
11. Interpret family's responsibility in assisting with the child's understanding of adoption.

NOTE: This includes sharing information about the child's right, at age 18, to obtain identifying or non-identifying information regarding biological parents.

[Related Subject: Section 5, Chapter 2.6.6, Adoption Information Registry](#)

12. Prepare child and family for adoption, including discussion of the following issues:
 - a. Understanding and acceptance of the past;
 - b. Separation from birth family;
 - c. Meaning of and desire for adoption;
 - d. Placement with siblings, if planned; and
 - e. Plans to continue to encourage and preserve the child's cultural identity.
13. Assist caretaker with placement support services of social, medical, and legal actions necessary to consummate the adoption:
 - a) Conduct an assessment of the child's physical, emotional and legal needs, if adoption subsidy is to be used.

b) Plan for subsequent placement when disruption appears likely.

14. Assess and process child and family's readiness to complete the adoption.

NOTE: Once the Division has committed to adoption by the family, removal of the child can occur only at the family's decision that they do not wish to adopt the child, or the child's emotional and/or physical safety is at risk (i.e., a child abuse and neglect investigation has found "preponderance of evidence" and the child is not safe in the home).

15. Prepare child and family for court hearings.

16. Prepare and submit necessary reports to the court for transfer of custody and/or final decree hearings.

17. Interpret confidential nature of adoption to child and family:

- a. Develop plan for visits with siblings after adoption, if it is part of the adoption plan for the child.
- b. Develop plan for continued parental or relative contact if the plan is in the best interest of the child.

18. Attend court hearings, being prepared to testify if so ordered.

19. Make one visit with family and child after final decree hearing for purpose of:

- a. Referral to community support groups, if needed;
- b. Reinforcing the lifetime commitment of adoption;
- c. Maintaining links to any needed rehabilitation services;
- d. Completing subsidized agreement, if indicated, and reminding family of yearly review and necessary maintenance activities;
- e. Planning for continued counseling, if needed; and
- f. Assuring that services will be extended if at any time in the future the family or child determine they are in need of services related to the adoption.

20. Record all activities every 30 days.

21. Close case with a recorded termination summary and copy of final decree:

- a. Keep case open if continued services are required, closing case at mutually agreed upon point.
- b. Copy information needed for the Adoption Subsidy case file, either adding it to the family's existing subsidy file or begin a subsidy case file for the family.
- c. Maintain subsidy if this service is utilized and record subsidy transactions as needed.

NOTE: When providing services other than those relating to the maintenance of an adoption subsidy, the child's status in ACTS should be reported as a closing and reopened in the Protective Services Automated System as a safekeeping case. Those children receiving both post-adoption services and an adoption subsidy remain open cases in ACTS and must be opened or reopened in the Protective Services System.

Memoranda History: (prior to 01-31-07)

[CD04-73](#), [CD06-47](#)

Memoranda History:

CD11-75

28.9 Adoption With A New Family

Any child in CD custody who is available for adoption and is not being adopted by the current resource provider family is available for placement with any approved adoptive family in the state, region, or nation. Selecting a placement resource shall be conducted via the staffing committee process described in this procedure. **Selecting a placement resource shall not be delayed for reasons of the child's cultural identity.**

When the former foster parent chooses not to pursue adoption, they shall make every effort to support and encourage the child's placement in a permanent home, including but not limited to providing information on the history and care needs of the child and accommodating transitional visitation.

Whenever possible and practical siblings are placed for adoption together; separate placements may be considered after step 9 through 13 actions have not resulted in a potential resource for the entire group, and six (6) months have passed since the children became available for adoption. Exceptions to this policy must be requested through supervisory channels to the Regional Director prior to recommending any home to the juvenile court or embarking on placement planning.

Adoption planning for a child must include a physical, dental (beginning at age three (3) years), and psychological examination (beginning at age five (5) years) within six (6) months prior to the child's placement. Results of these activities shall be included in the required written summary provided to the adoptive parent(s) at the time of placement.

The Case Manager Will:

1. Inform child of permanent plan decision. If age appropriate include:
 - a. Information about their right, the legal guardian's right, the child's right at age 18, to request non-identifying information about biological parents or biological siblings from the Division;
 - b. Information about the child's right at age 18 to request identifying information from the court granting the adoption; and
 - c. Information about child's right at age 18 to register with the Adoption Information Registry.
2. Explore and counsel with the child about the following issues:
 - a. Understanding and acceptance of what has occurred in the past;
 - b. Separation from birth family and present caretaker;
 - c. The meaning of and the child's desire for adoption;

- d. The placement with siblings, if applicable; and
 - e. Characteristics of possible adopting families including families who may be of dissimilar cultural identity from the child.
3. Refer child to the adoption specialist when adoption becomes the case plan. Include the following information:
- a. Name, birth date, gender and cultural identity;
 - b. Termination of parental rights (TPR) status;
 - c. Status of permission for recruitment;
 - d. Brief description about siblings and whether placement with them is required;
 - e. Brief description of special needs;
 - f. Possible resources already identified (i.e., foster family, relative family, kinship family, visiting family, etc.); and
 - g. Name of worker, location and telephone number.

Adoption Specialist/Case Manager Will:

1. Provide a detailed, written, dated summary of child's base and current condition to family within ten (10) days of referral to the adoption specialist.

NOTE: Guidelines for the written summary are located in Section 4, Chapter 27.3 Permanency Through Adoption – Child's Summary for Adoption Placement

NOTE: Staff may obtain an evaluation of attachment through HCY or other contracted services, if the child's condition suggests an outside opinion is needed. Staff may also ask the current counselor/therapist to provide this information if they agree they are qualified to do so. Staff may also provide their own observations as well as request foster parents or another type of current caretaker to do so.

NOTE: This summary will be updated later in preparing the required written summary for a specific adoptive placement.

2. Continue developing "lifebook" with the child, integrating the following:
 - a. Chronology of significant events;

- b. Accumulated memorabilia (pictures, awards, school records, etc.); and
 - c. Birth and medical history.
3. Utilize resource provider family in preparing the child for placement via discussion and participation in the following areas:
- a. Feelings toward biological parents;
 - b. Entitlement to a new family;
 - c. Reasons why the child cannot stay with foster parents;
 - d. Giving the child permission to leave the foster family; and
 - e. Obtaining information about child's behavior patterns, daily routine, and parenting needs.
4. Assist current resource provider family to release child as comfortably as possible if they are unable to assist in preparing the child.
5. Outline with resource provider family and child necessary pre-placement activities including the:
- a. Selection of an adoptive family;
 - b. Plan for introduction and visiting with the prospective family; and
 - c. Child's right to participate in the decision to be placed with the family selected.

NOTE: Keep in mind the child does not carry the full burden of the decision.

6. Conduct a search for an appropriate family using the following resources:
- a. Local agency or community resources;
 - b. ACTS Vendor Subsystem through ZVRS transaction; and

NOTE: This search includes approved adoptive families.

- c. Use e-mail to obtain seven (7) to eight (8) families with an approved adoptive assessment from other counties and regions in the state. Keep in mind, the e-mail may be forwarded on to adoptive families by workers

within the Division. When making the request include the following information in the profile sent by the worker:

Purpose Statement (to be used at the beginning): “The purpose of the information provided below is to briefly introduce you to the child(ren) for whom our agency is recruiting an adoptive placement.”

Do Include:

- List separately at the top of the profile: the child’s first name, date of birth (mo/yr), race and gender, and grade in school if necessary;
- Within the narrative, be creative, energetic, use descriptive words (see list of descriptive adjectives located in Section 6, Chapter 1, Attachment E of this manual.);
- Use an attention-getting phrase to begin the narrative and draw readers in;
- Include likes, hobbies, interests, what they want (family, life, goals, pets, church);
- Describe the child’s personality;
- School – information about the child’s educational accomplishments or needs;
- Special issues – contact with siblings, family or past placement providers;
- Positive quotes from the child caregiver (don’t refer to the “residential” caregiver);
- Quotes from the child describing themselves (i.e. Favorite thing about themselves, etc.);
- Serious medical diagnosis and treatment involved;
- A description of the child’s need for a family with particular skills or family configuration (don’t limit to a two-parent family if that is not necessary);
- Legal Status;
- Add the date updated/completed at the bottom of profile;

- The profile needs to be at least three paragraphs, and 120-150 words. NO more than 1 – 1 ½ pages in length;
- If you have a photo, state it is available upon request.

Ending Statement (to be used at the end): “For more detailed information about **(child’s name)** contact **(worker name and phone).**”

Do Not Include:

- Identifying information within the narrative (i.e., child’s last name, school’s name, city where child resides, parent’s names, date and reason the child is in care, and history of abuse/neglect (any significant information may be included in the confidential narrative section);
 - Details about failed past placements (any significant information may be included in the confidential narrative section);
 - Anything that might be embarrassing to the child. Ask yourself, “Would I feel comfortable showing this to the child, and would it make them uncomfortable?”
 - Date of births, age or grades in school as a part of the narrative.
7. Answer all responses to search/e-mail recruitment activities, within five (5) working days, using the following instructions as applicable:
- a. Submit assessment(s) to requesting county, identifying the sending worker and location. The information should note approval for submittal by the supervisor/Circuit Manager.
 - b. Refer responses to the County Office or other state/private agency consistent with their residence, if responding family requires an adoption study.
 - c. Regularly inform county of jurisdiction of results of recruitment activities.
8. Screen available resources received to three (3) to four (4) families using the same criteria listed for the staffing conference in step 12 below.

Those involved in the screening include:

- a. Direct Children's Service Worker, if applicable;
 - b. Adoption specialist;
 - c. Children's Service Supervisor I or Circuit Manager; and
 - d. Case manager.
9. Provide the families that will be staffed, with a copy of the child's summary (with identifying information blacked out – including current foster family and previous placements) at least one week prior to the scheduled staffing.
10. Convene the staffing committee with at least two (2) weeks advance notice of date, time and location.

NOTE: Local juvenile court protocol should be followed in processing the recommendations.

All non-Division members of the committee must complete a CS-8, Statement of Confidentiality for Non-CD Members of the Permanency Planning Team, which has the appropriate temporary changes made. Refer to 28.4 of this chapter.

Membership of Staffing Committee - Mandatory:

- Child's worker and his/her supervisor; if applicable;
- Case manager and his/her supervisor;
- Adoption specialist and his/her supervisor;
- Child's foster parents (if foster family is not an adoptive applicant for the child) or other out-of-home care provider;
- Other foster or adoptive parents of special needs children;
- CASA/GAL;
- Juvenile officer;
- Child's counselor, therapist, psychologist, etc.;
- Community representative;
- Any other person who has vital significance in the child's life; and

- Adoptive family workers, if geographically feasible.

NOTE: The staff representative from the other out-of-home care provider should be that person who has the greatest knowledge of and rapport with the child.

NOTE: Re: Conflict of interest: If a relationship between a member of the team and person being staffed exists, that member of the team shall be excused from the discussion and selection process.

It is recognized that it may not be possible for the family workers to be present because of the distance involved. However, their understanding of each prospective family under consideration is very important to the selection process. Commitment to the final three (3) choices should not be made until those family workers have been consulted. Contact should be made via telephone or e-mail to obtain commitment. It may also be possible to obtain their participation through a conference call.

Whatever method is used, the family workers should be provided with a brief summary of the committee's discussion and decision by the adoption specialist or case manager. Agreement should be obtained that the choices are satisfactory.

11. Conduct staffing conference to select first, second, and third choice families from the three (3) to four (4) selected by the screening committee using the following criteria:

- a. Ability to meet the needs of the child;
- b. Ability to accept the physical, emotional, and mental conditions of child;
- c. Age of child in relationship to age of potential adoptive family;

NOTE: Consideration of age may be discriminatory. However, CD believes that the selected family should be of an age capable of rearing the child to adulthood. If not, before the adoptive placement, plans must be made with the potential adoptive family for immediate and extended family members to take responsibility should the child be without a caretaker before reaching majority age.

- d. Acceptance of legal risk, if applicable;
- e. Acceptance of continued contact with siblings, and significant others when beneficial to the child;
- f. Acceptance of the background of the birth parents;

- g. Commitment to encourage and preserve the child's cultural identity;
- h. Availability of and acceptance of use of community resources required by the child; and,
- i. Acceptance of supervision during adoption process.

NOTE: The staffing committee may elect to interview all families selected. If so, this information is to be shared at the time the families are notified of their consideration.

NOTE: If delays in the child's placement for adoption occur and the six (6) months time allowed for the required medical, dental and psychological evaluations has expired, these evaluations should be repeated as indicated by the child's need or condition, or at the request of selected and accepting prospective adoptive parents.

- 12. Within five (5) working days, record staffing decision identifying the criteria from step 13 and any other factors used in determining the first, second and third choice families most capable of meeting the range of the child's needs.
- 13. Continue to conduct recruitment activities if the review of resources indicates no suitable families are available. Recruitment includes:
 - a. Registration with the state/national photo listing service;

Related Subject: Section 6, Chapter 1 Attachment D: Use Of The Photo Listing and Section 6, Chapter 1 Attachment E: Media Profile.

- b. Registration with the national exchange when indicated; and
 - c. Child specific recruitment through the use of television features and other community resources.

NOTE: Family assessments obtained through this process should be included in the search and family's worker should be notified of their status. In some instances it may be necessary to wait for an adoptive assessment to be completed before selecting a family. The family's worker should also be kept informed of plans for the staffing. In other instances, it is most appropriate and necessary to staff a child when only one family becomes available for an adoptive placement for the child or sibling group.

- 14. Notify all family workers of staff committee decision, if any were not present.

- If a family's worker was not included at the formal staffing, notification of the committee decision should be delayed until their opinion can be solicited and integrated into the decision.

NOTE: The family's worker should notify the family of the decision reached by the staffing committee.

15. Record primary considerations and staffing conclusion in child and adoptive family records within five (5) days of staffing.
16. Within one day of decision, notify, via e-mail, the Regional Office where family resides. Include the following information:
 - a. Name of child and location; and
 - b. Name of family selected and county of residence.
17. Within seven (7) days of selection of family, present complete information about child to family using an updated child's summary. Review this information in depth with the family.

NOTE: Guidelines for the written summary are located in Section 4, Chapter 27.3 Permanency Through Adoption – Child's Summary for Adoption Placement

NOTE: Include the fact that the child's right to identifying and non-identifying information at age 18 has been discussed with the child, if age appropriate.

18. Obtain commitment from family within seven (7) days of presentation, if they wish to pursue adoption of the child:
 - a. Present the information about the child to the second and third family choices, if decision is negative.
 - b. Continue search for new family if none of the above families accept the child.

NOTE: Repeat the staffing process as many times as necessary when a family resource becomes available for a specific child until that child is placed or the goal is no longer adoption.

19. Within five (5) days, develop specifics of pre-placement plan which accommodates the wishes of the child and family, including the following:
 - a. First meeting;
 - b. Additional visits;

- c. Other relationship building activities; and
 - d. Filing of adoption petition if licensed as a foster/adoptive family.
20. Implement pre-placement plan, recognizing it may disrupt at any time depending on feelings of family and child.
- a. Continue search for a new family if pre-placement plan fails.
 - b. Interpret to child reasons for the failed plan.

NOTE: In general, pre-placement plan execution should not take more than six (6) weeks.

21. Inform family of the availability of adoption subsidy, if needed, for the child's care.

NOTE: HDN, Out-of-Home Care IV-E or Title XIX (FFP) may be used, depending on the eligibility of the child placed with the family licensed to provide foster/adoptive care (FA).

22. Decide on the appropriate financial assistance plan using out-of-home care funding sources or adoption subsidy according to procedures related to each of these funding sources.
23. Coordinate financial processing activities with new family, present caretaker, and the court action necessary.
24. Place child with the family after obtaining any required authorization from court.
- Comply with ICPC and/or ICAMA requirements if applicable.
25. Update the Vendor Licensure/Approval and Renewal and the Alternative Care Client Information screens in FACES to reflect the correct type of adoptive placement and financial assistance.
26. Within seven (7) days of placement, provide an updated written and dated summary of the child's past and current condition to the adoptive family.

NOTE: Guidelines for the written summary are located in Section 4, Chapter 27.3, Permanency Through Adoption – Child's Summary For Adoption Placement

- Provide written non-identifying information on birth parents' reasons for voluntary relinquishment, if applicable.

The child's summary that was written at the time of the referral to the Adoption Specialist should be used as a guide for material which must be summarized and included in the written summary. This summary should reflect all information that has previously been given to the family and shall include a synopsis of any professional evaluations of and treatment recommendations for the child (i.e., medical, educational, dental, psychological, and psychiatric, etc.).

The information shared must not include any that would specifically identify the birth parents or siblings (not placed together), but may include a general description of the birth parents or siblings. However, when knowledge of siblings (not placed together) is important to a child's adjustment, information regarding the siblings' identity and whereabouts should be included. (This only applies prior to the adoption being finalized and the adoption record being closed.)

27. Obtain adoptive parents' signature and date of signature on summary when it is provided.
28. Sign and date summary at the time summary is provided.
29. Give the original copy of the summary to adoptive parents and maintain a copy in the adoptive parents' case record.
30. Review with the family and child, if age appropriate, any concerns and issues that have evolved during pre-placement activities.
31. Outline with the family and child the sequence of activities of placement support services:
 - Prepare the family and child for the transfer of custody hearing if this has not already occurred.

<p>NOTE: Removal of the child after placement can only occur at the family's decision not to adopt the child, or because the child's emotional and/or physical safety is at risk (i.e., a child abuse and neglect investigation has found "preponderance of evidence" and the child is not safe in the home).</p>

32. Record all activities every 30 days.
33. Transfer record, which includes a transfer summary, within ten (10) working days of placement, as appropriate, to county that is to provide adoptive placement support services:
 - a. Plan with other state for adoptive placement support services including regular reports of service progress.

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- b. Do not transfer record if placement is in another state or if another in-state agency will be providing placement support services. A summary of the child's history and current condition and status should have been shared previously.

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