

HB 1453: Diligent Search:

The significant changes made to Diligent Search are the following:

- Requires the Division to conduct a diligent search for the biological parents of a child who is in the custody of the Division when the parents' identity or location is unknown. **Section 210.127.1.**
- This bill, also provides the following definition for diligent search-Diligent search includes efforts to locate or identify the biological parents of a child, initiated as soon as the division is made aware of the existence of the parent, with progress reports at each court hearing until the parent is identified and located or the court excuses further search. **Section 210.127.2**

Current Policy:

Current policy states that a worker is to do a diligent search using all systems available i.e. Family Support Division, Court, in locating the Non-Custodial Parent when a child enters out-of-home care, and the whereabouts of one or both biological parents may be unknown.

New Policy:

Workers need to conduct a diligent search for the whereabouts of one or both of the biological parents or unknown. The search should be documented in the case narrative and on the CS-1.

- This section indicates when a diligent search will begin and includes ways to conduct a diligent search, and where to document diligent search effort in the case record.

Link to FSD/OSCA "Federal Parent Locator Service" is forthcoming.

Division staff will use Family Support Teams to assist in diligent searches.

The definition of diligent search includes efforts to locate or identify the natural parents of a child, initiated as soon as the division is made aware of the existence of the parent, with progress reports at each court hearing until the parent is identified and located or the court excuses further search.

Expected Outcomes

Locating biological parents of a child who is in the custody of the Division initiated as soon as the division is made aware of the existence of the parent will help to ensure children and birth parents get the services needed and children can be safely reunited as soon as possible.