

BUTLER COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

POLICY NO.: 5.3	SUBJECT: PRE-ADOPTIVE STAFFING, MATCHING, AND PLACEMENT PROCEDURES
OAC: 5101:2-48-16	EFFECTIVE DATE: 3-27-07
PCSAO:	REVISION DATE: 10/08

PURPOSE: To ensure timely and consistent planning and coordinating of placement decisions for children in the permanent custody of Butler County Children Services.

POLICY:

5.3.1 All activities described in this section will be in compliance with Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-48-16

PRE-ADOPTIVE STAFFING:

- (1) A pre-adoptive staffing is the process of identifying, planning and coordinating services for a child after the execution of the permanent surrender or the file stamp date of the permanent custody order.
- (2) BCCSB will conduct a pre-adoptive staffing no earlier than the date of the filing for termination of parental rights or the birth of the child if the child is being adopted as an infant less than six months of age or no later than forty-five days after the execution of the permanent surrender or the file stamp date of the permanent custody order of a child.
- (3) The following individuals will be invited to attend the pre-adoptive staffing:
 - (a) The child's caseworker and caseworker's supervisor.
 - (b) The assessor who will be assigned to work with the child and the assessor's supervisor.
 - (c) The homestudy specialists.
 - (d) The guardian ad-litem.
 - (e) Key professionals working specifically with the child.
 - (f) The child's current caregiver, if deemed appropriate.
 - (g) The child, if in the best interests of the child and deemed appropriate.
 - (h) The birth family, if in the best interests of the child and deemed appropriate.
 - (i) The Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) monitor.
- (4) The JFS 1690 "Documentation of the Pre-adoptive Staffing and Updates" will be completed, distributed to adoption assessors who complete adoption homestudies, and maintained in the child's adoption file.

MATCHING:

- (1) A matching conference is the process of determining the most appropriate family to adopt a child based on the child's individual needs and the ability of the prospective adoptive parent to meet those needs.
- (2) The matching conference must be held prior to the placement of the child for adoption. The initial matching conference will be held within ninety days of the execution of the permanent surrender or the file stamp date of the permanent custody order, unless the order is under appeal. If the order is under appeal, the agency will hold a matching conference within forty-five days of the issuance of the final decision.
- (3) Subsequent matching conferences will be held for each child, at least once every ninety days following the initial matching conference. The JFS1690 "Documentation of the Pre-adoptive Staffing and Updates" must be updated 30 days prior to the conference and made available to all homestudy specialists.
- (4) BCCSB will conduct a search for prospective families in the statewide automated child welfare information system if there are no families identified to be presented at any matching conference.
- (5) Subsequent matching conferences are not required when the signature of the adoptive parent(s) and applicable agencies have been completed on the JFS1654 "Adoptive Placement Agreement", a child reaches age eighteen years old, or the child's custody changes to a status other than permanent custody.
- (6) The following individuals will be invited to attend the matching conference:
 - (a) For the initial matching conference, the child's current and previous caseworker and their supervisor.
 - (b) The assessor assigned to the child and the assessor's supervisor.
 - (c) All homestudy specialists if there are no families identified for the child being presented in the matching conference.
 - (d) Any assessor from any agency who is responsible for an approved adoptive applicant being presented at the matching conference.
 - (e) The guardian ad-litem.
 - (f) Any other professional who may have knowledge of the child's history and current needs that will be helpful to determine the child's placement needs.
 - (g) The MEPA monitor.
 - (h) The ODJFS external MEPA monitor.
- (7) The minimum number of individuals who must be in attendance at the matching conference to make any matching decision include:
 - (a) The adoption caseworker for the child.
 - (b) The caseworker for the adoptive family.
 - (c) A member of the administrative or supervisory staff of the adoption program.
 - (d) A representative from another Public Children Services Agency, Private Child Placing Agency or Private Non-Custodial Agency if applicable.

- (8) Participation by teleconference is acceptable for the representatives listed in (d) above.
- (9) At a minimum, the matching decision shall be based on the consideration of the placement of siblings together, information contained in the JFS 1685 "Child Study Inventory", the JFS 1689 "Documentation of the Placement Decision-Making Process", and the JFS 1688 "Individualized Child Assessment" if applicable.
- (10) Butler County Children Services strongly supports adoption. The purpose of adoption is not to provide children for adults who want them, but to provide for children families that give them the experience of intact married family life as much as possible. Notwithstanding this Butler County Children Services recognizes that we do not have a sufficient number of adoptive families and anyone who meets the state criteria is welcomed and encouraged to become an adoptive parent.
- (11) Regardless of geographic location, the following preferential order shall be given when considering families in the matching process:
 - (a) All adult relatives of the child; a relative or non-relative that the birth mother has indicated by name as a potential resource to adopt her child. The identified relative or non-relative must have, at a minimum, a signed JFS 1691 "Application for Child Placement" or other signed adoption application on file with another state, five days prior to the matching conference. The resource must meet all relevant state child protection standards unless the agency determines that the placement is not in the best interest of the child;
 - (b) Married mother and father as long as such are available;
 - (c) The child's foster caregiver who is approved to adopt or who has completed the "Application for Child Placement" prior to the placement decision or matching conference unless the agency determines that the placement is not in the best interest of the child;
 - (d) Other suitable approved adoptive families accepting of the child's characteristics.
- (12) BCCSB will not use race, color or national origin as the basis for denying or delaying presentation of a family at a matching conference.
- (13) BCCSB will document each matching conference on the JFS 1689 "Documentation of the Placement Decision-Making Process" during the matching conference and the JFS 1610 "Child's Permanency Planning Data Summary" for each child.
- (14) BCCSB will provide information necessary for the completion of the JFS 1609 "Family Permanency Planning Data Summary" to any Ohio public or private agency which had a family presented at the matching conference.
- (15) When an applicant knowingly makes a false statement in the application or homestudy process, BCCSB will not present that family at the matching conference if the outcome of the agency review results in a reassessment of the homestudy.

PLACEMENT:

- (1) Butler County Children Services shall make an adoptive placement only when it has permanent custody of the child, whether custody is obtained by surrender or commitment. A child shall only be placed into an adoptive home which meets the best interests and special needs of the child.
- (2) No child shall be placed adoptively by the agency with a family who has not been studied and approved for adoption by the Butler County Children Services Board or by another private or public agency with authority recognized by the Ohio Department of Human Services to complete adoptive home studies.
- (3) The agency may place a child in an adoptive home in another state provided that the adoptive home has been approved by the receiving state pursuant to rules governing the Interstate Compact on Placement of children.
- (4) Prior to the date of adoptive placement the BCCSB will provide the prospective adoptive parent with the "Child Study Inventory (CSI)" and a completed and signed JFS 01667 "Adoption Information Disclosure".
- (5) The JFS 1654, "Adoptive Placement Agreement" shall be signed by the agency having permanent custody of the child, by the adoptive parent and, if applicable, by any other agency providing adoption services, on or before the date of adoptive placement. A copy of the signed agreement shall be given to the adoptive parent and any other signer of the agreement. The agreement shall explain the responsibilities and authority of all signers of the agreement.
- (6) Butler County Children Services will not refuse to provide or arrange for services within Butler County to another Public Children Services Agency on behalf of a special needs child when such services, if not provided, would cause a delay in the adoptive placement of a special needs child. Services shall include, but are not limited to: homestudy services; pre-finalization and post-finalization services; and services needed to provide the court with information required for adoption finalization.
- (7) When Butler County Children Services is placing a child in a county other than Butler, BCCSB will notify in writing the Public Children Services Agency in the county in which the child is to be placed of the impending placement no later than ten days prior to the placement. In the case of an infant placement, the notification may be made prior to the birth of the child.
- (8) When the permanent custody of a child is under appeal through a court of appropriate jurisdiction or awaiting journalization by the court, the agency may place the child in a substitute care placement certified as a foster home that is also approved as an adoptive placement.
- (9) All placement activities shall be in compliance with rules 5101:2-42-18.1 and 5101:2-48-13 of the Administrative code and with the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 622(b)(9),

671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1996(b) (MEPA) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq, as they apply to the care and adoption process (Title VI).

- (10) If there is probable cause to believe that falsification of an adoptive application or homestudy has been committed under section 2921.13 of the Ohio Revised Code and an adoptive child is placed in the approved adoptive parent(s) home, the BCCSB Placement or designee must determine in twenty four hours of completing the agency's internal investigation, if there is probable cause related to the adoptive child's safety and well-being to remove the child from the adoptive parents(s) home until the result of an investigation is rendered.