



Series	300: Child and Family Assessment and Services
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References	F.A.C. 65C-16.002; The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351)

Related Documents

Policy

It is the policy of Partnership for Strong Families (PSF) to provide a safe environment for all children, to respect the inherent dignity of children and families with permanency in mind, and to commit to accountability using outcomes to measure performance and improve practice.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) established a time frame for permanency decision making and for filing for termination of parental rights. ASFA requires a permanency hearing and decision within 12 months of a child's entry into care and every 12 months thereafter. ASFA also requires that states file a petition to terminate parental rights and concurrently, identify, recruit, process, and approve a qualified adoptive family on behalf of any child, regardless of age, that has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months.

For those children who cannot be reunified with their parents, adoption is the permanency option most likely to ensure protection, stability, nurturing, and lifelong relationships throughout their childhood as well as their adulthood. PSF will seek and support the option that addresses the best interest of the child in a timely fashion in accord with Federal and State requirements, while respecting the dignity and diversity of the children and families involved.

It is also the policy of PSF to maintain and utilize procedures to implement this policy. PSF embraces a collaborative, strategic approach to risk management, which includes identifying and addressing threats and opportunities the organization faces at every level. This policy is written in accordance with the PSF Risk Management Plan.

Procedure

A. General Information

1. PSF will be responsible for the provision of adoption case management activities beginning at the establishment of the goal of adoption, which will continue until finalization of the adoption, while the Family Care Counselor remains responsible for primary case management needs. Concurrent planning will be implemented whenever possible to help expedite permanency.
2. Adoption related services that will be managed by PSF include:
 - a) Adoptive family recruitment and training
 - b) Assessment of adoptive families through adoption home studies
 - c) Preparation of the child and the child's case for adoption
 - d) Matching waiting children with approved families
 - e) Adoptive placement, transition, and support of adoptive placements
 - f) Adoption subsidy eligibility determination and maintenance of payments and
 - g) Post-adoption services.
3. An adoption case manager will be assigned secondary to a child's case at the time a child's goal is changed to adoption toward provision of the adoption services prerequisite to adoption for the child and family.

B. Principles to Guide Adoption Services

1. The child's interests are paramount.
2. Every child is deserving of a safe environment.
3. The inherent dignity of children and families must be safeguarded with permanency in mind.
4. The child for whom permanency with his/her family is not an option must be legally freed for adoption and placed with an adoptive family in a timely manner and in consideration of his/her current and projected future needs, the birth family's medical and mental health history, and the strengths of the potential adoptive family to meet the child's needs.
5. The child should be placed in a family that is suitable and supportive of the child's best interests including the maintenance of sibling and other appropriate connections. When considering the adoption placement of a sibling group, consideration must include the fact that a sibling group is the longest lasting relationship for a child and placing siblings together whenever possible preserves the family unit.

C. Eligibility for Adoption Services

1. All children as defined in Fla. Stat. § 409.166(2) whose parental rights are terminated are eligible for adoption.
2. To expedite the adoptions process, all children with a court-approved goal of adoption are eligible for adoption services by an adoption case manager.
3. An Adoption Program Supervisor or designee will participate in permanency staffing to become aware of children for whom adoption is being considered as a goal in anticipation and consideration of upcoming adoption needs.
4. All children whose parental rights are terminated and have a permanency goal of adoption are presumed to be available for adoption.

D. Other Considerations

1. Children who are available for adoption but who will need interstate or out of county (OCS) placement will also be referred to the appropriate agency for handling pursuant to ICPC and OCS agreements while remaining a support to the adoptive placement throughout the ICPC and OCS process.
2. Decisions regarding match staffing, separation of sibling staffing, Adoption Applicant Review Committee meetings, transition meetings, and adoption disruptions and dissolutions will be prepared by adoption staff and documented in the child's case file in FSFN.
3. When an adoptive applicant is an employee of the Department, PSF, or a Sub-Contracted Agency of PSF, guidelines set forth in PSF Policy 1005 and Florida Administrative Code Section 65C-16.005(n) shall be applied toward making a decision regarding whether the adoption home study for the employee will be completed by the CBC agency or if the services of another agency will be sought.