



Progress Towards Adoption: Adoption Within 12 Months Once a Child is Legally Free FY2022
Performance Standard is 45.8%
 (July 2021 - June 2022)

Kansas City Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	0	3	5	0	8	5	8	6	6	10	9	15	75
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	4	9	14	8	11	11	25	8	17	33	27	29	196
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	0.0%	33.3%	35.7%	0.0%	72.7%	45.5%	32.0%	75.0%	35.3%	30.3%	33.3%	51.7%	38.3%

Northeast Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	4	3	5	7	7	4	2	5	2	11	3	8	61
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	14	6	7	9	18	10	6	13	13	15	11	19	141
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	28.6%	50.0%	71.4%	77.8%	38.9%	40.0%	33.3%	38.5%	15.4%	73.3%	27.3%	42.1%	43.3%

Northwest Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	7	5	3	1	1	5	4	4	5	3	11	3	52
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	9	22	11	12	8	14	7	7	10	10	13	7	130
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	77.8%	22.7%	27.3%	8.3%	12.5%	35.7%	57.1%	57.1%	50.0%	30.0%	84.6%	42.9%	40.0%

Southeast Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	0	7	2	6	4	4	13	4	6	5	3	4	58
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	1	16	11	13	8	18	25	15	10	13	11	5	146
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	0.0%	43.8%	18.2%	46.2%	50.0%	22.2%	52.0%	26.7%	60.0%	38.5%	27.3%	80.0%	39.7%

Appendix A

Southwest Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	3	3	2	13	8	2	11	8	10	7	7	4	78
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	13	15	8	28	13	6	18	23	25	14	18	11	192
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	23.1%	20.0%	25.0%	46.4%	61.5%	33.3%	61.1%	34.8%	40.0%	50.0%	38.9%	36.4%	40.6%

Wichita Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	10	9	10	10	10	12	7	7	5	8	11	30	129
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	17	27	17	30	25	22	22	16	35	23	34	47	315
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	58.8%	33.3%	58.8%	33.3%	40.0%	54.5%	31.8%	43.8%	14.3%	34.8%	32.4%	63.8%	41.0%

Statewide	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	24	30	27	37	38	32	45	34	34	44	44	64	453
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	58	95	68	100	83	81	103	82	110	108	114	118	1,120
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	41.4%	31.6%	39.7%	37.0%	45.8%	39.5%	43.7%	41.5%	30.9%	40.7%	38.6%	54.2%	40.4%

Catchment Area 1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	5	2	3	4	0	3	1	2	6	4	10	2	42
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	11	8	6	16	4	10	5	8	14	11	20	4	117
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	45.5%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	30.0%	20.0%	25.0%	42.9%	36.4%	50.0%	50.0%	35.9%

Catchment Area 2	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	5	6	2	10	9	4	14	10	9	6	8	5	88
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	11	29	13	24	17	10	20	22	21	13	11	14	205
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	45.5%	20.7%	15.4%	41.7%	52.9%	40.0%	70.0%	45.5%	42.9%	46.2%	72.7%	35.7%	42.9%

Appendix A

Catchment Area 3	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	4	3	5	7	7	4	2	5	2	11	3	8	61
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	14	6	7	9	18	10	6	13	13	15	11	19	141
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	28.6%	50.0%	71.4%	77.8%	38.9%	40.0%	33.3%	38.5%	15.4%	73.3%	27.3%	42.1%	43.3%

Catchment Area 4	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	0	7	2	6	4	4	13	4	6	5	3	4	58
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	1	16	11	13	8	18	25	15	10	13	11	5	146
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	0.0%	43.8%	18.2%	46.2%	50.0%	22.2%	52.0%	26.7%	60.0%	38.5%	27.3%	80.0%	39.7%

Catchment Area 5	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	0	2	3	0	6	5	3	2	3	4	5	3	36
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	4	4	9	4	9	7	18	4	10	16	18	11	114
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	0.0%	50.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	71.4%	16.7%	50.0%	30.0%	25.0%	27.8%	27.3%	31.6%

Catchment Area 6	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	0	1	2	0	2	0	5	4	3	6	4	12	39
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	0	5	5	4	2	4	7	4	7	17	9	18	82
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months		20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	71.4%	100.0%	42.9%	35.3%	44.4%	66.7%	47.6%

Catchment Area 7	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	8	6	8	6	6	12	5	7	3	7	10	28	106
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	9	21	15	17	16	19	17	16	18	18	29	41	236
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	88.9%	28.6%	53.3%	35.3%	37.5%	63.2%	29.4%	43.8%	16.7%	38.9%	34.5%	68.3%	44.9%

Catchment Area 8	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children who became legally free and were also discharged to finalized adoption in less than 12 months	2	3	2	4	4	0	2	0	2	1	1	2	23
# of children who became legally free 12 months prior to year shown	8	6	2	13	9	3	5	0	17	5	5	6	79
% of children who became legally free and were adopted in less than 12 months	25.0%	50.0%	100.0%	30.8%	44.4%	0.0%	40.0%		11.8%	20.0%	20.0%	33.3%	29.1%

Numerator: The number of children in foster care in the report period who became legally free for adoption in the 12 months prior to the year shown, who were discharged to a finalized adoption in less than 12 Months of becoming legally free.

Denominator: The number of children in Foster Care in the report period who became legally free for adoption in the 12 months prior to the reporting month.

Data Source: FACTS



Achieving Permanency: For all Children with Termination of Parental Rights SFY2022
Performance Standard is 96.8%
SFY 2022

Kansas City Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	25	12	12	25	26	11	15	18	10	10	10	13	187
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	29	18	16	29	27	11	19	18	11	12	12	16	218
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	86.2%	66.7%	75.0%	86.2%	96.3%	100.0%	78.9%	100.0%	90.9%	83.3%	83.3%	81.3%	85.8%
Northeast Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	12	6	17	7	15	6	8	10	2	4	14	21	122
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	14	7	21	9	15	6	10	12	4	5	16	21	140
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	85.7%	85.7%	81.0%	77.8%	100.0%	100.0%	80.0%	83.3%	50.0%	80.0%	87.5%	100.0%	87.1%
Northwest Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	9	6	2	7	28	16	5	7	4	6	4	8	102
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	12	6	2	7	31	18	7	8	5	8	4	9	117
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	75.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	90.3%	88.9%	71.4%	87.5%	80.0%	75.0%	100.0%	88.9%	87.2%
Southeast Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	11	20	15	6	13	14	4	4	11	19	22	3	142
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	12	23	17	7	13	14	5	4	11	20	23	4	153
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	91.7%	87.0%	88.2%	85.7%	100.0%	100.0%	80.0%	100.0%	100.0%	95.0%	95.7%	75.0%	92.8%
Southwest Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	17	21	14	13	33	17	12	10	8	15	11	13	184
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	17	23	17	16	33	19	12	10	9	16	14	15	201
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	100.0%	91.3%	82.4%	81.3%	100.0%	89.5%	100.0%	100.0%	88.9%	93.8%	78.6%	86.7%	91.5%

Wichita Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	15	31	5	12	23	18	17	11	31	20	27	25	235
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	18	31	6	14	26	19	19	15	33	22	27	26	256
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	83.3%	100.0%	83.3%	85.7%	88.5%	94.7%	89.5%	73.3%	93.9%	90.9%	100.0%	96.2%	91.8%
Statewide	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	89	96	65	70	138	82	61	60	66	74	88	83	972
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	102	108	79	82	145	87	72	67	73	83	96	91	1,085
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	87.3%	88.9%	82.3%	85.4%	95.2%	94.3%	84.7%	89.6%	90.4%	89.2%	91.7%	91.2%	89.6%

Numerator: The number of children discharged from foster care, who were legally free (parental rights termination dates or date of death for both mother and father) for adoption at the time of discharge, and who were discharged to a permanent home (discharge reasons of adoption, permanent custodianship, reunification, or living with relative) prior to their 18th birthday.

Denominator: The number of children discharged from foster care, who were legally free (parental rights termination dates or date of death for both mother and father) for adoption at the time of discharge.

Data Source: FACTS



Achieving Permanency: For all Children with Termination of Parental Rights SFY2022
Performance Standard is 96.8%
SFY 2022

Area 1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	9	18	2	11	23	9	6	6	5	14	3	4	110
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	9	20	5	12	24	10	6	6	6	15	4	5	122
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	100.0%	90.0%	40.0%	91.7%	95.8%	90.0%	100.0%	100.0%	83.3%	93.3%	75.0%	80.0%	90.2%
Area 2	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	17	9	14	9	38	24	11	11	7	7	12	17	176
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	20	9	14	11	40	27	13	12	8	9	14	19	196
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	85.0%	100.0%	100.0%	81.8%	95.0%	88.9%	84.6%	91.7%	87.5%	77.8%	85.7%	89.5%	89.8%
Area 3	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	12	6	17	7	15	7	8	10	2	4	14	21	123
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	14	7	21	9	15	7	10	12	4	5	16	21	141
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	85.7%	85.7%	81.0%	77.8%	100.0%	100.0%	80.0%	83.3%	50.0%	80.0%	87.5%	100.0%	87.2%
Area 4	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	11	20	15	6	13	14	4	4	11	18	22	3	141
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	12	23	17	7	13	14	5	4	11	19	22	4	151
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	91.7%	87.0%	88.2%	85.7%	100.0%	100.0%	80.0%	100.0%	100.0%	94.7%	100.0%	75.0%	93.4%
Area 5	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	17	1	8	18	10	9	15	14	5	5	5	5	112
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	21	3	8	21	11	9	19	14	6	7	6	7	132
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	81.0%	33.3%	100.0%	85.7%	90.9%	100.0%	78.9%	100.0%	83.3%	71.4%	83.3%	71.4%	84.8%

Area 6	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	8	11	4	7	16	2	0	4	5	5	5	8	75
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	8	15	8	8	16	2	0	4	5	5	6	9	86
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	100.0%	73.3%	50.0%	87.5%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	83.3%	88.9%	87.2%
Area 7	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	10	25	2	11	17	14	10	6	21	20	25	22	183
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	11	25	3	11	20	15	12	10	21	21	25	22	196
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	90.9%	100.0%	66.7%	100.0%	85.0%	93.3%	83.3%	60.0%	100.0%	95.2%	100.0%	100.0%	93.4%
Area 8	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of children discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday, who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge	5	6	3	1	6	4	7	5	10	0	2	3	52
Total # Children discharged who were legally free for adoption at time of discharge.	7	6	3	3	6	4	7	5	12	1	2	4	60
% of children who were discharged to permanent home prior to 18th birthday and were legally free.	71.4%	100.0%	100.0%	33.3%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	83.3%	0.0%	100.0%	75.0%	86.7%

Numerator: The number of children discharged from foster care, who were legally free (parental rights termination dates or date of death for both mother and father) for adoption at the time of discharge, and who were discharged to a permanent home (discharge reasons of adoption, permanent custodianship, reunification, or living with relative) prior to their 18th birthday.

Denominator: The number of children discharged from foster care, who were legally free (parental rights termination dates or date of death for both mother and father) for adoption at the time of discharge.

Data Source: FACTS



Timely Adoption in Less Than 24 Months FY2022
Performance Standard is 26.8%
(July 2021 - June 2022)

Kansas City Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	3	2	1	2	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	16
Total # of Children Adopted	25	11	11	25	27	10	15	16	10	10	10	22	192
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	12.0%	18.2%	9.1%	8.0%	11.1%	10.0%	6.7%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%	4.5%	8.3%

Northeast	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0	0	0	2	2	0	4	0	1	1	1	2	13
Total # of Children Adopted	12	6	17	7	15	7	8	9	2	4	14	25	126
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	13.3%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	7.1%	8.0%	10.3%

Southeast	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	2	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	9
Total # of Children Adopted	10	19	15	5	13	11	4	3	11	18	22	3	134
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	20.0%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	18.2%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%

Northwest	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	1	0	0	1	3	4	1	0	0	0	3	1	14
Total # of Children Adopted	8	6	2	7	28	16	5	7	4	6	4	8	101
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	10.7%	25.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	12.5%	13.9%

Southwest	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0	6	4	2	1	0	1	1	1	4	2	1	23
Total # of Children Adopted	15	21	13	13	33	15	12	10	8	15	11	10	176
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0.0%	28.6%	30.8%	15.4%	3.0%	0.0%	8.3%	10.0%	12.5%	26.7%	18.2%	10.0%	13.1%

Wichita	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	3	8	0	2	3	4	3	1	3	4	10	7	48
Total # of Children Adopted	15	30	5	12	22	18	17	11	31	20	27	26	234
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	20.0%	26.7%	0.0%	16.7%	13.6%	22.2%	17.6%	9.1%	9.7%	20.0%	37.0%	26.9%	20.5%

Statewide	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	9	17	5	9	13	11	10	2	8	11	16	12	123
Total # of Children Adopted	85	93	63	69	138	77	61	56	66	73	88	94	963
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	10.6%	18.3%	7.9%	13.0%	9.4%	14.3%	16.4%	3.6%	12.1%	15.1%	18.2%	12.8%	12.8%

Catchment Area 1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0	4	1	1	3	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	14
Total # of Children Adopted	7	18	2	11	23	7	6	6	5	14	4	4	107
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0.0%	22.2%	50.0%	9.1%	13.0%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	25.0%	25.0%	13.1%

Catchment Area 2	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	1	2	3	2	1	2	2	1	1	3	4	1	23
Total # of Children Adopted	16	9	13	9	38	24	11	11	7	7	11	14	170
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	6.3%	22.2%	23.1%	22.2%	2.6%	8.3%	18.2%	9.1%	14.3%	42.9%	36.4%	7.1%	13.5%

Catchment Area 3	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0	0	0	2	2	0	4	0	1	1	1	2	13
Total # of Children Adopted	12	6	17	7	15	7	8	9	2	4	14	25	126
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	13.3%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	7.1%	8.0%	10.3%

Catchment Area 4	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	2	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	9
Total # of Children Adopted	10	19	15	5	13	11	4	3	11	18	22	3	134
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	20.0%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	18.2%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%

Catchment Area 5	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	3	0	1	1	3	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	11
Total # of Children Adopted	17	0	7	18	11	9	15	12	5	5	5	14	118
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	17.6%		14.3%	5.6%	27.3%	11.1%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.3%

Catchment Area 6	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	5
Total # of Children Adopted	8	11	4	7	16	1	0	4	5	5	5	8	74
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0.0%	18.2%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%		0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	6.8%

Catchment Area 7	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	3	8	0	2	3	3	1	1	2	4	10	6	43
Total # of Children Adopted	10	25	2	11	17	14	10	6	21	20	25	23	184
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	30.0%	32.0%	0.0%	18.2%	17.6%	21.4%	10.0%	16.7%	9.5%	20.0%	40.0%	26.1%	23.4%

Catchment Area 8	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD Totals
# of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	5
Total # of Children Adopted	5	5	3	1	5	4	7	5	10	0	2	3	50
% of Children Adopted in less than 24 Months	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	28.6%	0.0%	10.0%		0.0%	33.3%	10.0%

Numerator: Number of children who were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption in less than 24 months from the removal from home date in the report period.

Denominator: Children who were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption in the report period.

Data Source: FACTS

Checklist for Request for Consent to Adopt

This form is to be used by the PPS Adoption Specialist to review the consent to adopt packet prior to submission to the Regional Director/designee for approval. If deficiencies are noted, the form will be returned to the sender for further action.

Child:	DOB:
To:	From:
Date Sent:	Date Received:

Information Regarding Child:

Yes	No	NA	Information Provided
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Request for Consent to Adopt Form
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Birth Certificate (Check if name and DOB match on all documents)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Social Security Number
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Journal Entry terminating parental rights approved by the Regional DCF Attorney OR parental rights relinquishment accepted by DCF or death certificate for deceased parent(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Journal Entry with authority for DCF to consent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ICPC Approval (to include the 100A and Concurrence from Receiving State)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		PPS 3114 Child's Social History
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		PPS 5340 Medical and Genetic Information for Child (With affidavit if no parent signatures)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Properly executed authorization for release of the child's birth and hospital records
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Indian Child Welfare Act addressed

Information Regarding Adoptive Parent(s):

Yes	No	NA	Information Provided	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		PPS 5318 Adoptive Family Assessment that includes the following information (completed within the last year, with information about this child):	
	Yes	No	NA	Information Provided
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Legal Name, SSN, DOB of Adoptive Parent 1
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Legal Name, SSN, DOB of Adoptive Parent 2
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		County of Residence of Adoptive Parents

Checklist for Request for Consent to Adopt

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Adoptive Placement Supervision Report (if not addressed in home study)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Results of KBI/CANIS/Fingerprint checks* Adoptive Parent 1 (Actual records do not need to be submitted for out of state home studies)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Results of KBI/CANIS/Fingerprint checks* on Adoptive Parent 2 (Actual records do not need to be submitted for out of state home studies)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		PPS 5343 Adoptive Placement Agreement

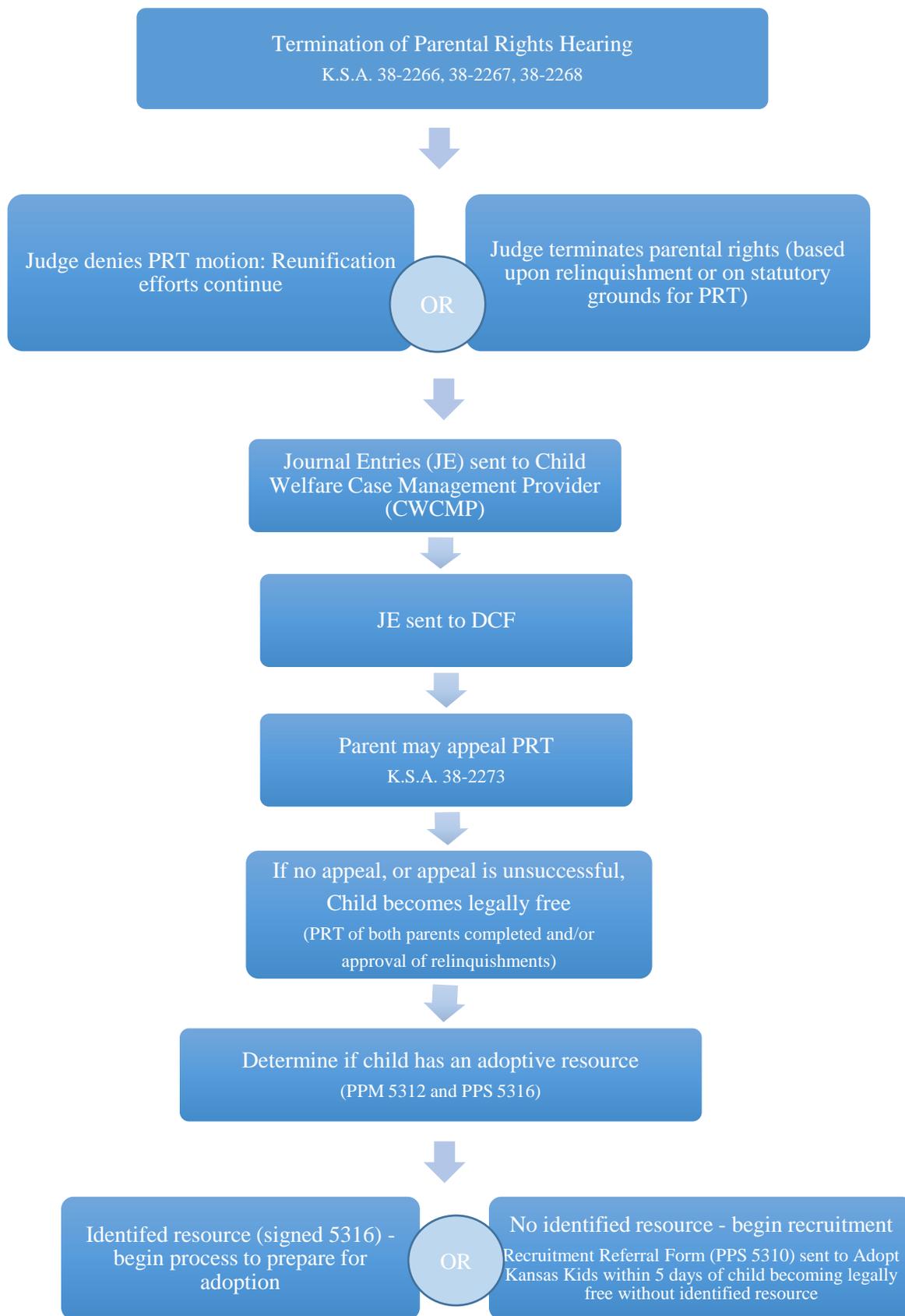
*Actual results from fingerprint checks may not be shared, but the home study shall document if there were records, what the records indicated, and if they are a prohibited crime, plans to address the issue. Fingerprint checks do not need to be updated annually.

PPS Adoption Specialist Signature

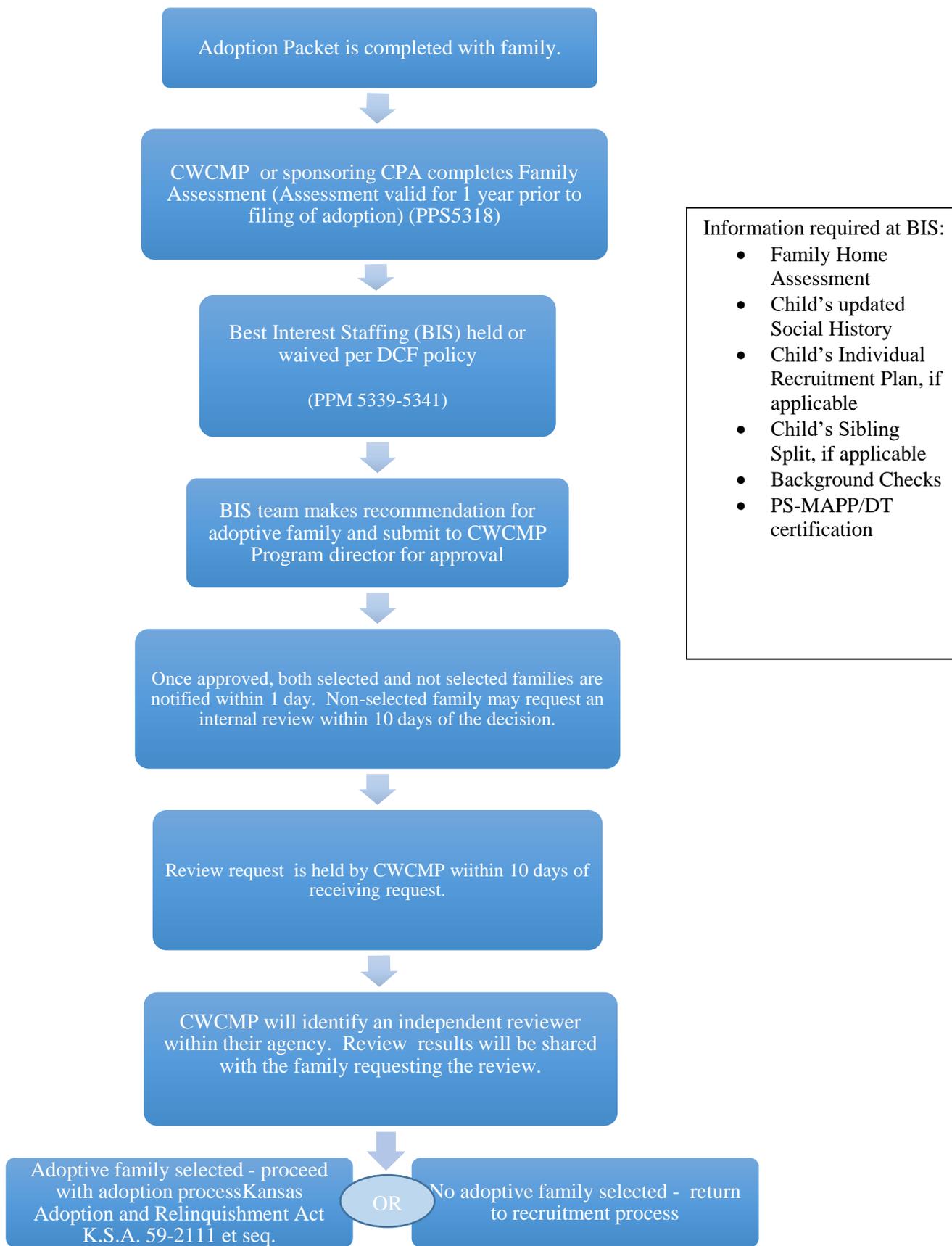
Date

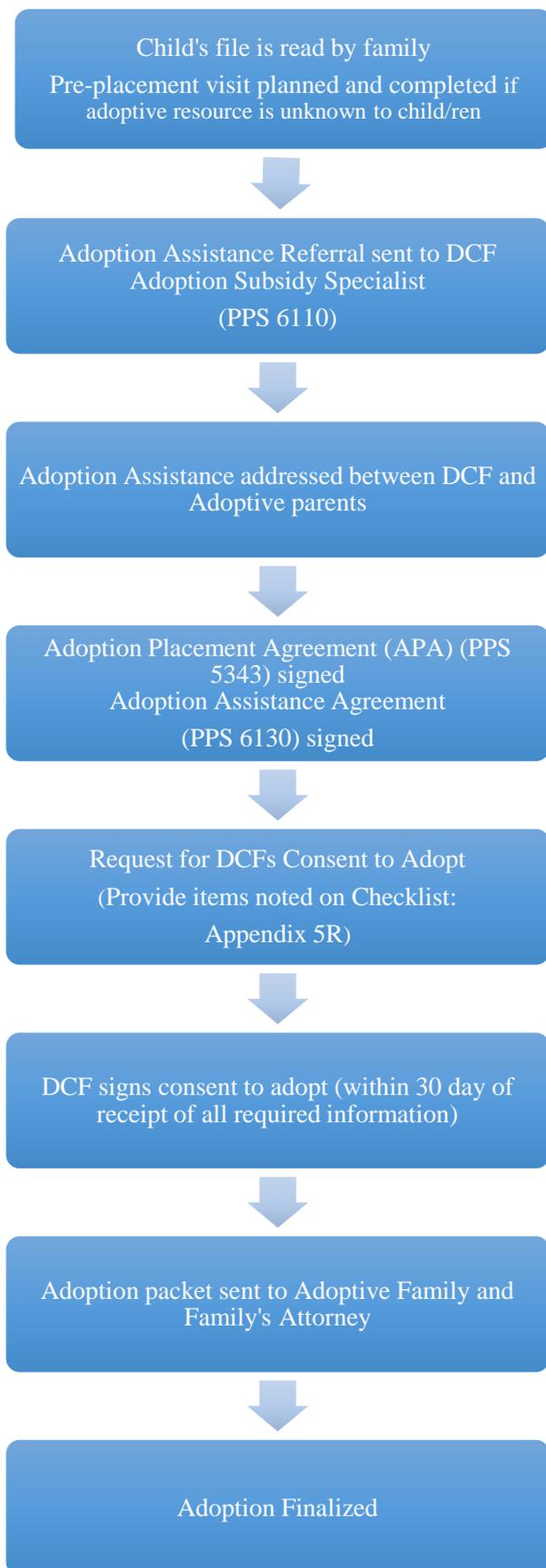


ADOPTION A-Z



Parents may relinquish parental rights at any time prior to a hearing on PRT if child's permanency plan is either Adoption or Permanent Custodianship. The DCF Secretary must approve relinquishments to stand *in loco parentis* to consent to adoption. K.S.A. 38-2268





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ADOPTION TRACKING TOOL (ATT)

Kansas-“Legally free for adoption”: A child in foster care is “legally free for adoption” when the birth parents’ parental rights have been terminated and appeals, if any, have been completely finalized/resolved. The court may terminate parental rights, per applicable statute, or a parent or parents may relinquish their parental rights, per applicable statute. If a parent executes a relinquishment of parental rights, the relinquishment should have been accepted and approved by the Secretary of Department for Children and Families in writing in order to put the Secretary *in loco parentis* to be able to later consent to the adoption of the child. NOTE: If a parent appeals a termination of their parental rights, a petition for adoption of the child may not be filed until the appeal is completed. If workers want to determine whether an appeal has been filed and the status of the appeal, they should seek the assistance and input of their legal staff regarding that issue.

Regardless of whether or not an appeal is pending, workers should continue to obtain and compile all information and documentation needed for the adoption legal packet, with the exception of completing the Adoption Placement Agreement/Subsidy Agreement which should be signed after appeal is completed.

Use of the Adoption Tracking Tool (ATT): When a child has adoption as the case plan goal and parental rights have been terminated by the court or terminated as the result of a parent relinquishing rights and agency accepted and approved such relinquishment, the Tool shall be used to compile all relevant information related to moving the matter forward to adoption and provided to the court (it may be attached to the court report form if one is being filed at the same time). The needed information is fully set out in the Tool to ensure the applicable agency and court have complete and well-organized information to identify progress and any remaining steps to be completed leading up to the filing of a petition for adoption. Some of the information included in the ATT will not apply to every case, i.e. Interstate Compact on Placement of Children (ICPC), Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Social Security benefits. The ATT is intended to be a support and organizational tool for the agency/grantee workers and the court to promote collaboration, communication and focus in moving a case forward when the case plan is adoption and to avoid any unnecessary delay in permanency. The ATT can assist both the agency and the court in clearly identifying any barriers to the case progressing and they may work collaboratively to ensure such barriers are appropriately and expeditiously addressed.

If a DCF grantee determines it wants to use the ATT **internally** prior to child being “legally free for adoption”, said grantee may do so. The ATT should NOT, however, be

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ADOPTION TRACKING TOOL
PPS 5400 Instructions

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submitted to the court prior to the child being “legally free for adoption”. If parental rights have not yet been terminated or relinquishments given, accepted and approved by Secretary, submitting the ATT earlier could create much confusion for all involved including, but not limited to, parents/caregivers and their attorneys, other bio relatives, GALs, prosecutors and courts. **It is recommended the ATT be attached to the front of the Court Report when it is submitted to the Court as described above.**

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF _____ COUNTY, KANSAS

Appendix H

IN THE INTEREST OF

Child's Name _____ Court Case No. _____

Date of Birth _____ Male Female

Removal date:	
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Current Placement Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Adoptive	Date Placed:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Relative		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Foster Home		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

Does the Indian Child Welfare Act apply?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, see Section 9	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Undetermined
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Section 1 – Legal History		
Date child became legally free:		
Parent 1		<input type="checkbox"/> Relinquishment Accepted and Approved by Agency <input type="checkbox"/> Parental Rights Terminated <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal Complete
Parent 2		<input type="checkbox"/> Relinquishment Accepted and Approved by Agency <input type="checkbox"/> Parental Rights Terminated <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal Complete

Section 2 – Adoptive Resource	
Does the child have an identified adoptive resource?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes; If Yes, date identified and name/s	
<input type="checkbox"/> No, date referral sent to Adopt KS Kids (PPS5310)	
Adoption application and supporting documentation was provided to the adoptive resource	
Date adoption application completed and received by the Child Welfare Case Management Provider (CWCMP):	
Home Study/Assessment	
Date Started:	
Date all supporting documents were received by CWCMP:	
Date Completed:	

Appendix H

Section 3 – Best Interest Staffing		
Is the child's case exempt from the Best Interest Staffing (BIS) Per Agency policy (PPM 5340)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If exempt:		
Date waiver email sent:		
Date authorized by CWCMP Director:		
If not exempt:		
BIS	Date:	
Date report sent to CWCMP Director:		
Date authorized by CWCMP Director:		
Selected and non-selected families informed of decision by CWCMP	Date:	
Request for internal review received from non-selected family, if applicable (non-selected family may request an internal review within 5-working days of notice)	Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
Internal review held, if applicable (to be held within 5-working days of receiving request for internal review)	Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
Written internal review decision sent to requesting family, if applicable,	Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
Final adoptive resource selection	Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

Section 4 – Child's Consent		
Is the child over the age of 14?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the child consent to the adoption?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Section 5 – Adoption Subsidy		
Is the child placed with the selected adoptive resource?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Selected resource has reviewed the child's foster care case file? (to be completed within 7-working days of selection per Agency policy)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Date:		
<input type="checkbox"/> No Date scheduled:		
		Date Completed
Referral for adoption assistance subsidy sent by CWCMP to Agency per Agency policy (PPS 6110)		
Family contacted to schedule subsidy negotiation		
Adoption assistance meeting between the Agency and the adoptive resource		
Adoption assistance agreement - (PPS 6130) signed per Agency policy (PPM 6260)		
Adoption placement agreement - (PPS 5343) signed per Agency policy (PPM 5360)		

Appendix H

Section 6 – DCF’s Consent to Adopt		
	Estimated Date of Completion	Date Completed
Complete consent to adopt packet per Agency policy (PPM 5360) (Appendix 5R) sent to Region		
Consent to adopt (PPS 5350) signed by Agency Region and sent to CWCMP (to be signed by the Regional Director or designee within 30-days of receiving a complete and accurate consent to adopt packet)		
Adoption packet was provided by the CWCMP to attorney for the adoptive family (PPM5363) (signed consent to adopt is valid for 6-months)		

Section 7– Supplemental Security Income (SSI)		
Is SSI application indicated? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If yes, complete this section). <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Date of initial SSI application:		
Date of initial SSI decision:		
Date of SSI request for reconsideration/Appeal:		<input type="checkbox"/> NA
Date of SSI reconsideration/Appeal decision:		<input type="checkbox"/> NA

Section 8 – The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), (only applicable if ICPC applies)	
Does ICPC apply? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If yes, complete this section).	Date Completed
CWCMP sent referral to Kansas ICPC	
Placement decision by receiving state (approval/denial on 100A)	
Child was placed in receiving state	
ICPC Case Closure	

Section 9 – Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), (Complete if ICWA applies)	
Name of Applicable Tribe	
Documentation of the Initial Certified Letter sent to the Tribe	
Is identified placement an ICWA preferred placement?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If No, findings to support good cause deviation	

Appendix H

Section 10 – Adoption Hearing

Judicial District	
County	
Court Case Number	
Hearing date	
Finalization date	

Section 11 – Additional Information Requested by the Court



5339 Best Interest Staffing

Adoption from foster care is a service for the child, and a Best Interest Staffing (BIS) is held to select an adoptive family that can best meet the needs of the child. BIS team members shall consider and discuss all information presented about the child and prospective adoptive families in accordance with what is in the best interest of the child. A Best Interest Staffing (BIS) shall be convened and facilitated by the Child Welfare Case Management Provider (CWCMP) unless waived by the BIS team members. (See PPM 5340.) Once an adoptive family is identified and deemed a viable option, a BIS shall be held without delay.

A. Prior to a BIS Team Meeting

1. If siblings are not being adopted together and have a permanency goal of adoption, the CWCMP shall document the reasons and complete a Sibling Split request, PPS 5147. (See also Appendix 5I) The request shall be approved by Sibling Split Request Review Team, which shall include the CWCMP Director or designee.
2. For children with no potential identified adoptive resource, the CWCMP shall seek to identify approved prospective adoptive families from the Kansas Adoption Exchange and AdoptUSKids to be considered in a best interest staffing for a specific child. When selecting families to be considered in the BIS, the CWCMP shall exclude families who do not have the capacity to meet the child's emotional and social needs, but they shall not exclude families based solely on their race, color or national origin. (See the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act in Section 5231).
3. The CWCMP shall be responsible to schedule and provide notification to all participants. Persons who shall be invited/notified to participate in the BIS meeting and/or to provide input include:
 - a. Child's Guardian ad litem (GAL);
 - b. Child's current and former Case Manager/Support Worker;
 - c. DCF Foster Care Liaison;
 - d. Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), if applicable;
 - e. Assigned supervisors;
 - f. Court Services Officer, if applicable;
 - g. Child's therapist;
 - h. Teacher or other adult (coach, scout leader, youth pastor etc.);
 - i. Current placement resource, unless there is a conflict of interest, e.g. they are one of the families being considered;
 - j. Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) tribal representative for the affiliated tribe, if applicable;
 - k. Any other relevant service providers;
 - l. Worker for each family being considered.

Others may be invited as appropriate. If the youth is age 14 or older, he/she shall be encouraged to attend and/or provide input. If the child does not participate, the reason shall be documented and the Child Welfare Case Management Provider shall be responsible to communicate the youth's perspective and input.

All participants are BIS Team members and shall receive the Appendix 5S, Best Interest Staffing Brochure. If BIS Team members are not able to attend in person, participants shall be included by conference call or video conference upon request. Input can also be submitted in writing prior to the staffing.

4. Prior to a BIS, the CWCMP shall submit to all members of the BIS Team a packet including the following:
 - a. Family Assessment and Preparation Study (PPS 5318), for each family being considered in the BIS;
 - b. Child's current social history (PPS 3114);
 - c. Approved Sibling Split Request (PPS 5147), if applicable.

The BIS team members shall review the packet and let the CWCMP know in advance of the meeting if there are concerns or questions about a prospective family's capacity to meet the needs of the child.

B. BIS Meeting

1. The BIS Team shall include members of the child's case team who have working knowledge of the strengths and needs of the child(ren). BIS Team members shall review the PPS 5318 Adoptive Family Assessment for each potential adoptive resource being considered, as well as the PPS 3114 Child's Social History for each child. Members may include, but shall not be limited to the following:
 - a. The child, if deemed appropriate based upon age and development. The child may choose to provide their input in an alternative method, such as in writing to the team or through the verbal representation of another identified, trusted, person on their case team
 - b. Relatives or positive adult connections to the child(ren)
 - c. Potential adoptive resources shall be given an opportunity to present the strengths of their family and discuss their desire and intent to provide permanency through adoption. They shall be given an opportunity to answer any clarifying questions as presented by other members of the case team, in a family friendly and solution focused manner. Potential adoptive resources shall not participate in the entire BIS, rather only the portion in which their family is being presented. They are not required to attend, however may provide information about their family through alternative means such as a family photo album, or letter to the team. The professional completing the PPS 5318 may present information on their behalf. Potential adoptive resources shall be given an opportunity to review the child(ren)'s social history; they shall not review the PPS 5318 for other families being considered as a potential adoptive resource.
 - d. Guardian Ad Litem (GAL)
 - e. Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
 - f. County/District Attorney
 - g. Professionals completing the PPS 5318 for potential adoptive resource. These individuals shall not participate in the entire process, rather the portion related to the presentation of the family in which they are representing.
 - h. Child's providers: therapist, teacher, educational advocate, pediatrician, probation officer, mentor, or other identified providers.

- i. A participant identified to document the scope of the conversation throughout the BIS
- j. Reintegration workers, as previously assigned
- k. DCF staff
- l. Court Service Officers

Participants who are in attendance for the entirety of the process are able to weigh in and provide recommendations as to the most appropriate adoptive resource. They should be prepared to discuss the strengths and needs of the potential adoptive resource(s) as it is related to the strengths and needs of child(ren).

2. The meeting process shall include the following:

- a. The CWCMP shall first present information about the child which includes the reason the child came into care, the completed child social history, the strengths and needs of the child, and the child's/youth's input. Participants who know the child well may provide clarifying information as needed to ensure the team has adequate knowledge to make an informed decision regarding what is in the best interest of the child(ren).
- b. The worker for each family, in partnership with the writer of the PPS 5318, if not the same person, shall present an overview of the family information including their strengths, limitations, and needs. See PPS 5320, Family Match Form as well as the PPS 5318.
- c. All factors shall be considered in identifying which family(ies) can best meet the needs of the child. The BIS team shall consider and document each family's ability to:
 - i. meet the needs and temperament of the child currently and over time;
 - ii. understand the current and future impact on their family of adopting this child;
 - iii. recognize and advocate for the needs/interests of the child;
 - iv. understand and support the child through loss and grieving issues;
 - v. recognize adoption is a life-long commitment with many unknown challenges;
 - vi. provide the child with a safe and secure environment;
 - vii. provide unconditional love and acceptance of the child;
 - viii. accept and incorporate the child's emotional, physical, social, educational, and developmental needs into the family;
 - ix. demonstrate application of knowledge of the effects of deprivation, abuse and neglect on a child and the potential impact on the child's behavior;
 - x. encourage the child(ren) to develop at his/her own rate to reach his/her maximum potential;
 - xi. accept and support the child's background, culture, ethnicity, heritage, race, medical and mental health needs, and genetic and social history;
 - xii. help the child to learn and accept his/her background;
 - xiii. understand the importance of planning and facilitating child/children's future contact with siblings and/or other family members as deemed appropriate;
 - xiv. manage their financial resources.

- d. Discussion shall include the impact of separation, loss, attachment, and subsequent reattachments for the child.
 - e. Discussion shall include the impact of the child on the prospective adoptive family and their children.
 - f. Upon conclusion of the BIS meeting, the CWCMP shall document the record of the meeting and the BIS team decision that is achieved through consensus regarding selection of adoptive family that can best meet the needs of the child. Refer to PPM 5341.
 - g. If additional information is needed for the Team to make a decision, the BIS shall be reconvened by phone or in person within 3 working days so a decision can be made. The new information gathered shall be documented on the PPS 5341 Best Interest Staffing Report and Approval. Materials shall be reviewed prior to the BIS.
 - h. If consensus is not achieved within 3 working days of the original BIS date, the CWCMP shall make the final decision regarding what is in the best interest of the child within 24 hours.
3. Documentation of the BIS Team's Decision:
- a. The Child Welfare Case Management Provider shall document the decision of the BIS Team on the PPS 5341 Best Interest Staffing Report and Approval.
 - b. Within 3 working days of the BIS, the CWCMP shall send the child's complete packet as noted in PPM 5339.A.4, the PPS 5341 and the chosen prospective Adoptive Family Assessment to the CWCMP Program Director, or designee.
- C. On occasion, new information may arise after the BIS is concluded and the decision has been approved. If new information arises that may impact the decision of the BIS Team, that information shall be provided by the CWCMP to all BIS members. A determination shall be made as to allowing the BIS decision to stand, or reconvening the BIS Team to discuss the new information and possibly change the BIS decision. If the BIS Team agrees the new information impacts the BIS decision and a different decision needs to be made, that decision shall be documented on the PPS 5341 and routed through to the CWCMP Program Director, or designee, for approval.

5340 Exceptions to the Best Interest Staffing Meeting

A. When the following criteria are met in a case situation, a formal Best Interest Staffing (BIS) Meeting may be waived:

1. The child is legally free for adoption, and;
2. There is one potential identified adoptive resource who is a relative, non-related kin or foster family, and;
3. If the child is not placed with a relative, concerted efforts to identify, locate and evaluate maternal and paternal relatives as adoptive resources and life-long connections are documented.
4. The child has been placed with the one identified resource for a minimum of 6 consecutive months with no disruptions.

The Child Welfare Case Management Provider (CWCMP) shall contact DCF to inquire if the identified adoptive resource has been listed as an alleged perpetrator on a DCF intake assigned for an investigation and consider the nature of the report(s) in making the decision to waive the BIS.

B. If all of the above criteria are met, the following process shall be followed:

1. The CWCMP shall provide notification to all participants (see PPM 5339A.3.), and;
2. All documentation in the packet identified in 5339B.3, and;
3. The following message shall be sent with each notification and packet:

Enclosed please find all documentation related to a Best Interest Staffing (BIS) for _____ (child's name and DOB). There is one potential identified adoptive resource who is a relative, non-related kin or foster parent, _____ (name), and the child has been placed with them for 6 consecutive months. If you have any objections to the selection of the identified adoptive resource without holding a BIS, please email _____ within 7 working days of the date of this letter. If one or more persons to whom the notifications have been sent emails an objection, a BIS meeting will immediately be scheduled. If there are no objections, received within 7 working days of the date of this letter, it will be understood you approve the adoptive resource and agree to a waiver of a formal BIS meeting. If all of the persons who received the BIS notifications in a case unanimously approve the potential identified adoptive resource (no invitee emails with objections) a formal BIS meeting will be waived and the adoption will proceed.

C. Documentation of the BIS Team's Decision:

1. The CWCMP shall document the waiver of the formal BIS meeting and the decision of the BIS Team on the PPS 5341 Best Interest Staffing Report and Approval.
2. Within 3 working days of the BIS, the CWCMP shall send the child's complete packet and the completed PPS 5341 to the CWCMP Program Director or designee.

5341 Authorization of Best Interest Staffing Team Decision

- A. Child Welfare Case Management Provider (CWCMP) Program Director or designee Review
 - 1. The CWCMP Program Director or designee shall, within 5 working days, review the documentation provided by the case manager and considered by the BIS Team and approve or not approve the selected family to adopt the child.
 - 2. If the CWCMP Program Director or designee does not approve the family selected in the BIS, they shall provide the rationale in writing to the case manager.
- B. Informing Selected Prospective Adoptive Family
 - 1. Once the CWCMP Program Director or designee approves the prospective adoptive family for the child, the case manager shall, within 1 working day, contact the family's adoption worker to inform them of the family's selection as the adoptive family. The CWCMP shall coordinate with the family's adoption worker to establish a time for the family to review the child's file. The review shall occur within 7 working days of the family being notified of their selection to determine the family's willingness to proceed with adoption of the child.
 - 2. The family shall have a staff person with them to assist and answer questions during the file review.
 - 3. If the child does not have an existing relationship with the prospective adoptive family, the family shall review the file with the assigned CWCMP before visits can begin. Refer to PPM 5350 on preparing a family for adoption and visitation.
- C. Informing Non-Selected Prospective Adoptive Families

Within 1 working day of the approval by the CWCMP Program Director or designee, the CWCMP shall contact the adoptive family's worker for the families who were considered and not chosen during the BIS. The worker for the family shall promptly inform the family of the approval made by the CWCMP Program Director, or designee. The CWCMP sends a letter the next working day to the families who were not chosen, using the format in Appendix 5Y Notice to Parents Considered at a BIS.

D. Informing DCF

Within 1 working day of approval by the CWCMP Program Director or designee, the CWCMP shall contact the assigned regional DCF staff member(s) and Foster Care Administrator, inform them of the results of the BIS, and provide a copy of the PPS 5341 Best Interest Staffing Recommendation and Selection.

1. If families not chosen at a BIS or not approved by the CWCMP Program Director or designee want a review of the decision, the request must be sent in writing within 5 days of the notification of the non-selection. When the CWCMP receives a request for review of the decision, within one working day the request shall be submitted to a designated independent reviewer with the CWCMP organization. The independent reviewer shall have no connection and no conflict of interest regarding the family or child and shall demonstrate competencies in adoption and BIS staffing policy. The purpose for the review is to identify the presence of policy error or omission during the process, or bias which unduly influenced the BIS decision.

The review shall be completed within 5 working days after the request is received and a written response sent to the prospective adoptive family by the next working day.

If the independent review concludes policy was not followed or bias unduly influenced the outcome of the BIS, the reviewer shall reconvene and facilitate another BIS staffing.

5237 Sibling Placements and Connections

A. Sibling Connections in Out of Home Placement

1. The CWCMP shall make reasonable efforts to keep siblings removed from the home placed together in the same foster home, relative placement, adoptive home, or custodianship placement unless placement together is contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings. The potential impact of separating siblings in placement or in permanency shall be considered and documented at multiple points in the progression of a case. See Appendix 5X.
2. Siblings shall be placed with the same placement resource whenever possible. If siblings are not placed together when they enter out of home placement, a plan shall be made to move them into the same placement as soon as possible. If after 90 days the siblings are still not in the same placement, a staffing which includes the children (if appropriate), parents, relatives/kin and other significant people, shall be held to review the actions taken to reunite siblings and plan further actions needed to accomplish this goal. The Sibling Separation Staffing form, PPS 5146, shall document each 90-day staffing and the efforts to place the siblings together, or explain why they should not be placed together. The PPS 5146 shall be sent to the DCF Liaison within 5 days of the staffing. The staffing shall occur every 90 days until the siblings are placed together unless a Sibling Split Request has been approved.

B. Sibling Connections in Permanency

The Child Welfare Case Management Provider shall:

1. Make every effort to place siblings together when possible. Review Appendix 5I. Requests for a sibling split for siblings to achieve permanency separately will be thoroughly assessed and approved only in extreme situations and after all possible efforts have been made and documented to place siblings together. Sibling splits shall not be requested prior to parental rights being terminated or a relinquishment for at least one of the children in custody.
2. Convene a Review Team to determine if the sibling split is in the children's best interest, and if it is anticipated siblings will not attain permanency together. The Review Team shall consist of at minimum the CWCMP Case Manager, CWCMP Supervisor and the CWCMP Program Director. DCF shall provide support/consultation as needed/requested. The recommendations of the Review Team shall be documented on the Sibling Split Staffing form, PPS 5147.
3. Seek to secure a commitment from the adoptive, permanent custodianship, or foster/relative/kin families to maintain connections between siblings when a request to split siblings is granted.

See PPM 3237 for regarding sibling visitation and Appendix 5X regarding information about sibling connections.

3237 Interactions/Visitations

1. Parent/Child Interaction

1. Parents retain the right of reasonable contact with their children, regardless of the case plan goal, unless parental rights have been legally terminated or the court orders no contact. Maintaining connections for a child in foster care is important, and interactions/visitations shall not be based on whether the parent/child is completing case plan tasks or behaving appropriately. For allowable exceptions to visits, see G. below.
 1. If the case plan goal is reintegration, in person parent/child interaction shall occur at least once a week, with telephone and email contact if deemed appropriate and in the best interests of the child. Parent/child interaction shall increase in duration, as appropriate.
 2. If the case plan goal is other than reintegration, the in-person parent/child interaction shall occur at least once a month, or more frequently if deemed in the best interest of the child.
 3. Parent/child interactions shall occur in naturally occurring settings, and foster parents shall have input and opportunity for involvement in these interactions.
2. The location of the parent/child interactions shall be determined based on the best interests of the child, and the activity in which the parent and child shall be engaged. When possible, parent/child interactions shall occur in the parents' home and be unsupervised.
3. Parent/child interactions may occur in the foster home. Prior to a first interaction in the foster home, roles and expectations shall be reviewed with the birth parents, child, and foster family.
4. Plans for required interactions between the parent and child, and the schedule for interactions shall be documented on the PPS 3053, Parent/Child Interaction Schedule. The PPS 3053 is a stand-alone document that shall be updated and sent to all affected parties whenever the Interaction Schedule changes. Illness, inclement weather or other situations may arise which may affect a planned interaction; however, documented interactions should demonstrate a pattern of consistent and frequent visitation.

Parent/child interactions shall be documented in the case file. An encounter data code has been created for these interactions, and these interactions shall be included in the monthly submission of encounter data to PPS.

2. Supervised Interactions

Interactions shall be supervised as required by a court order, or as determined by the case manager and supervisor. The basis for the supervision shall be documented on the PPS 3053.

3. Sibling Visitation

Siblings are defined as children who have one or more parents in common either biologically, through adoption, or through the marriage of their parents, and with whom the child lived before his or her foster care placement, or with whom the child would be expected to live if the child were not in foster care.

1. The responsibility for arranging visitation with siblings who reside with the parent(s) rests with the parent(s) and shall occur with the same frequency provided for parent/child interactions unless joint visitation does not further the permanency goal.
2. Visitation between siblings in the custody of the Secretary and in out of the home placement shall occur at least twice monthly.
3. When siblings are not placed together, a visitation plan shall be in place which allows for frequent and regular contact between the siblings not placed together. Sibling visits shall occur at least twice monthly. At least one of these visits shall occur during a parent/child interaction to allow the parent(s) and all children to be together at least once per month (N/A if PRT has occurred).

Plans for sibling visitation shall be made at the case planning conference and documented on the PPS 3054 Visitation Schedule. The PPS 3054 is a stand-alone document that shall be updated and sent to all affected parties when the Visitation Schedule changes. All sibling visits shall be documented in the case file.

4. Worker/Child Contacts

In-person worker/child contact shall occur a minimum of once a month. Contact shall be with the Child Welfare Case Management Provider (CWCMP) case manager or a paraprofessional, who is part of the child's case planning team and responsible for the child's case. A primary contact, Child Welfare Case Management Provider case manager or paraprofessional shall be designated on the visitation form. At least half of the worker/child visits shall occur where the child is placed. Plans for Worker/Child contact shall be made at the case planning conference and documented on the PPS 3054 Visitation Schedule. The quality of all worker/child contacts shall be documented in the case file, using the CWCMP approved Child/Worker visit guide or protocols. The guide/protocol shall document the safety assessment, review of progress on the case plan, and alone time with the child if the child is over 12 months old and/or verbal. The offer of the Monthly Individual Contact PPS 3061 form shall also be documented.

Worker/child interactions shall be documented in the case file. An encounter data code has been created for these interactions, and these interactions shall be included in the monthly submission of encounter data to PPS.

5. Worker/Parent Contacts

In-person contact with mothers and fathers, in the family home, shall be at least monthly, when reintegration or maintenance at home is the goal. For children with a case goal other than reintegration, the frequency of worker/parent contact shall be a family driven decision reflected in the case plan for the child. Contact shall be accomplished by the child's CWCMP case manager worker or with a paraprofessional who is part of the child's case planning conference and assigned this activity. Plans for required contact between the worker and parent shall be made at the case planning conference and be documented on form PPS 3054 Visitation Schedule. All worker/parent contacts shall be documented in the case file.

The required frequency of worker/parent contact may be modified for valid therapeutic reasons documented in the service plan.

Worker/parent interactions shall be documented in the case file. An encounter data code has been created for these interactions, and these interactions shall be included in the monthly submission of encounter data to PPS.

6. Worker/Sibling Contacts

When reintegration or maintenance at home is the case plan goal for the child referred to out-of-home care, face-to-face worker contact shall occur with siblings in the family home, to ensure safety of those children. These visits shall occur at least monthly. Contact shall be with the CWCMP case manager or a paraprofessional, who is part of the child's case planning team. Plans for the required contact shall be made at the case planning conference and documented on the PPS 3054 Visitation Schedule.

Worker/sibling interactions shall be documented in the case file. An encounter data code has been created for these interactions, and these interactions shall be included in the monthly submission of encounter data to PPS.

7. Exceptions for Interactions/Visitations

Exceptions to interactions/visitations shall be made only when:

1. There are safety issues that threaten participants, or;
2. The whereabouts of a participant are unknown, or;
3. They are therapeutically inappropriate, based on the recommendation of a physician or mental health practitioner, or;
4. There is a court order that limits contacts.

Exceptions to having interactions/visitations in the home or where the child is living may be made for the same reasons, or if the parents are homeless. The reason for any exception shall be clearly documented and based on input from team members. Plans for other ways to stay connected (i.e. phone calls, other media, letters) shall be made.

The importance of sibling connections may vary for each individual; however, sibling connections provide a sense of continuity through childhood and this connection is often the longest relationship in an individual's life. The sibling connection may be intensified in families who have experienced abuse or neglect as siblings may be the ones that provide support and nurturing to each other when parents are unable to fulfill this role. Siblings who are placed together in foster care may have greater chances of reintegration, are more likely to reach other forms of permanency such as adoption or custodianship, have fewer disruptions, and experience generally better outcomes than siblings who are not placed together. Foster and adoptive families who are prepared to deal with this dynamic can help the siblings develop appropriate roles.

Separating siblings is detrimental to each child. Younger children who are separated must face life in unfamiliar circumstances without the support of the older child, and the older child is often left feeling responsible for the younger sibling(s) even when they are not placed together. Separating siblings teaches the children to walk away from conflict and increases the trauma they already feel in being separated from all that is familiar to them. It does not allow the children an opportunity to learn to resolve differences and develop stronger sibling relationships in a healthy, supportive environment.

The abuse of one sibling by another is often considered to be a reason for separating siblings. It is important to distinguish between true abuse and all other forms of sibling hostility while considering measures other than separation that can protect a child who is being abused. Removing a child from his/her sibling does not guarantee that the child will not be abused in another setting. Having foster and adoptive parents who are aware of the abuse and who put in place safety plans to address it is an option to keep siblings together.

A child with special needs is also often considered to be a reason to place siblings separately. A foster or adoptive family who is prepared to meet the special needs of a child as well as that child's siblings may offer the best opportunity for the child to receive the attention he/she needs. A child placed with his/her siblings may actually receive more personalized attention than a child placed into a family where there are other children with special needs requiring increased attention and resources.

Children who experience life in the child welfare system often form a variety of "sibling like" relationships with non-related brothers and sisters they have lived with both in their biological families and in foster care. Professionals placing children need to take into consideration the child's definition of who is and is not a sibling before making placement decisions.

Most waiting families registered on AdoptUSKids (83%) are willing to adopt more than one child. Some adoptive families express the desire to adopt "ready made" families of

sibling groups. Other larger families are willing to adopt larger sibling groups. Exceptions and incentives for families who adopt sibling groups are essential.

Research indicates that siblings placed together benefit from the sibling bond in ways that do not present problems to the parent / child relationship. Older children in the sibling group are thought to provide emotional support to their younger siblings. There is evidence to suggest that siblings who are placed separately in adoption have more anxiety and depression than those who are placed together.

Siblings who are placed separately are more likely to demonstrate greater emotional and behavioral problems. Research indicates that when siblings are placed together, they experience many emotional benefits with less moves and a lower risk for failed placements.

Adapted from Ten Myths and Realities of Sibling Adoption, National Center for Diligent Recruitment





Sibling Issues in Foster Care and Adoption

Sibling relationships can provide positive support and improved outcomes for children involved with child welfare as well as for those in the general population (Richardson & Yates, 2014). Connections with siblings can serve as a protective factor for children who have been removed from their birth homes, but for a variety of reasons, siblings may not be placed together or may not have regular contact. Child welfare professionals can support children's well-being by attempting to preserve their connections to any brothers and sisters while in foster care or any subsequent permanent placements. This bulletin explores relevant research, strategies, and resources to assist child welfare professionals in preserving connections among siblings.

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Importance of Sibling Relationships

Having a brother or sister provides children with a peer partner with whom they can explore their environments, navigate social and cognitive challenges, and learn skills (Richardson & Yates, 2014). Sibling relationships can provide a source of continuity throughout a child's lifetime and can be the longest relationships that people experience. Unfortunately, though, many siblings may be separated upon removal and not have frequent contact while in care (Wojciak, McWey, & Helfrich, 2013). However, for some siblings in care, their separation or infrequent visiting can cause those relationships to wither, sometimes to the point of permanent estrangement. The following sections describe the benefits sibling connections have on the well-being and permanency outcomes of children involved with foster care.

Well-Being Outcomes

Experiencing maltreatment and being removed from their homes are traumatic experiences for children. They can cause children to suffer from feelings of worry and confusion as well as loss of identity, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging, which can be exasperated by separation from a sibling (Wojciak, McWey, & Waid, 2018). Preserving ties with siblings, however, can help buffer children from the negative effects of maltreatment and removal from the home (Aguiniga & Madden, 2018).

The following are examples of positive well-being outcomes that can arise from supporting sibling relationships or copacements:

- Children who have positive relationships with their siblings are less likely to exhibit internalizing behaviors (i.e., behavior problems, such as anxiety or depression, that are directed inward or "kept inside") after experiencing a traumatic event (Gass, Jenkins, & Dunn, 2007; Wojciak, McWey, & Helfrich, 2013).
- Being placed with siblings or maintaining sibling connections while in care serves as a protective factor for children's mental health (Jones, 2016; McBeath et al., 2014).
- Being placed with all their siblings may improve children's school performance (Hegar & Rosenthal, 2011).

- When siblings who are all placed together were compared with those in "splintered" placements,¹ those placed together tend to show more closeness to their foster caregivers and like living in the foster home more than those not placed with a sibling (Hegar and Rosenthal, 2011).
- Separating siblings can hinder adjustment and adaptation to the new home. This is in part due to children worrying about their siblings in other foster homes or those remaining with their birth families (Affronti, Rittner, & Semanchin Jones, 2015).

Siblings can also provide support to youth after they have emancipated or otherwise exited from foster care. Based on a small convening of youth formerly in foster care, FosterClub—which helps connect youth in foster care with tools, resources, and peer support—noted that siblings can help by providing emotional and spiritual support, guidance about college or other opportunities, assistance required due to physical and developmental disabilities, and information about health concerns or history (C. Teague, personal communication, April 22, 2019).

Permanency Outcomes

Joint sibling placements can increase the likelihood of achieving permanency and stability. Studies have found that placing siblings in the same foster home is associated with higher rates of reunification, adoption, and guardianship (Jones, 2016; Akin, 2011). Additionally, siblings placed together are more likely to exit to adoption and guardianship than if they are placed apart (Jones, 2016). Some studies find that children placed with their siblings also experience at least as much placement stability—if not more—than those who were separated from their siblings (Jones, 2016). A large study of placement disruptions in Texas found that placements of all siblings together led to a lower risk of disruptions due to incompatibility between the child and caregiver or child-initiated disruptions (e.g., the child ran away or refused to stay) compared with placements of siblings placed apart (Sattler, Font, & Gershoff, 2018).

¹ A "splintered" placement is one in which a child is placed with at least one sibling but is also not placed with at least one sibling.

Legal Framework for Protecting Sibling Connections

Even when professionals believe that maintaining sibling relationships is in children's best interests, laws and policies must be in place to support these connections, both in foster care and when permanency is achieved. At the Federal level, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Fostering Connections Act) was the first Federal law to address the importance of keeping siblings together. The law mandates that, to receive Federal funding, States must make reasonable efforts to maintain sibling connections. This means that States must seek to place siblings in the same home or, if the children are not placed in the same home, provide for frequent visitation or ongoing contact, unless either of these actions would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings.

As of January 2018, approximately 37 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam have statutes requiring child-placing agencies to make reasonable efforts to place siblings in the same home when they are in need of out-of-home care, except when there are documented reasons why a joint placement would not be in the best interests of any of the siblings. Additionally, approximately 35 States and Puerto Rico have statutes requiring that siblings who cannot be placed together be given opportunities for visits and/or other contact or communication (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018).² State statutes regarding siblings may vary. For more information, refer to Information Gateway's *Placement of Children With Relatives*, which provides State-specific legislative text, at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/placement/>.

As of August 2018, only 13 States specifically have statutes providing that visits between siblings who have been separated by adoption may be included in a contact agreement (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019).

² Although the Fostering Connections Act requires States to have policies and procedures in place to ensure reasonable efforts are being made to place siblings together or help them maintain contact, that does not—in most cases—necessarily require the State legislature to pass a law.

Adoptive parents have the right to decide, however, who may have contact with their adopted child, and they can allow any amount of contact with birth family members, which can be arranged without any formal agreement. State-by-State information on this topic can be found in Information Gateway's *Postadoption Contact Agreements Between Birth and Adoptive Families* at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/cooperative/>.

In addition to the Fostering Connections Act, other recent Federal legislation has included provisions recognizing the importance of sibling connections. The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 amended title IV-E State plan provisions to require that the parents of siblings be included as persons to be notified when a child needs placement. The Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 permits a State to allow the number of children in foster care who may be cared for in a home to exceed the numerical limitation specified in law in order to allow siblings to remain together.

Defining a Sibling Relationship

The identification of siblings can be challenging, especially when children have lived in more than one family. Additionally, children's definitions of their siblings may differ from laws and agency policies, which may have restrictive definitions of siblings that require children to have a biological parent in common. Children may have more expansive definitions of who their siblings are; they may include biological siblings, step siblings, foster siblings, or other close relatives or nonrelatives with whom they live or have lived. It is also possible they have siblings they have never met. Caseworkers should ask children about who they view as their siblings and strive to help them maintain connections even when some siblings may fall outside their jurisdiction's legal definition.

Challenges to Placing Siblings Together

Placing siblings in the same home should always be the priority. There may be situations, however, where placing siblings together is not advisable due to clinical considerations arising from the trauma the children have experienced. If there is concern about placing the siblings together, caseworkers should conduct an assessment of the sibling relationship and consult with the children's therapists and previous foster parents to determine if placing the siblings in separate homes is warranted. In the event that one of the siblings poses a risk to the other due to physical, sexual, and/or verbal abuse, the caseworker should determine if the risks can be managed if the siblings are placed in the same home. If so, the worker can put a plan in place to ensure the safety of the siblings. The entire child welfare team, including the foster parents, should be made aware of this plan.

There are sometimes logistical barriers that make it difficult to place siblings together. Although the following demographic and situational factors present challenges for agencies to placing siblings together, they should not be used by caseworkers as reasons why siblings should be placed apart (Wojciak, McWey, & Waid, 2018; Wojciak & Hough, 2018):

- Large sibling group size
- Differences in the needs of siblings
- Entrance into foster care at different times
- Lack of foster homes that can accommodate a sibling group

Other difficulties that could arise include caseworkers not being able to determine sibling connections or find siblings if they have different last names, live in a different jurisdiction, or are otherwise unknown to the agency. Another potential obstacle in some jurisdictions is that a termination of parental rights could also end the legal relationship between siblings, which would make the Fostering Connections Act requirement to place siblings together when possible irrelevant in those cases (White & Jernstrom, 2014).

If siblings have to be placed in different homes, it is essential that a visitation plan be put in place to ensure consistent contact between the siblings. Potential barriers to sibling visits while in foster care including long distances; high caseloads, which can prevent caseworkers from having enough time to coordinate and supervise visits; foster parent resistance; youth resistance; adoption of one or more siblings; and other resource issues (e.g., lacking funds to reimburse foster parents for mileage, visitation rooms) (Church & Moe, 2015; Joyce, 2009).

It is essential that child welfare agencies plan for these obstacles in advance. They should routinely review their policies and practices to find ways to mitigate any barriers to placing siblings together and ensuring consistent contact between siblings who are separated. Agencies may be able to adjust their resource family recruitment and retention methods, as well as their data-collection efforts, to be better situated to have a set of families willing and able to accommodate sibling groups of various sizes and needs.

Practices to Maintain Sibling Connections

Given the importance of sibling relationships and the positive outcomes they can generate, it is crucial for child welfare professionals to place siblings together or, if that is not possible, seek ways for them to remain connected while they are in foster care, postpermanency, or after they have aged out of care. Beginning at intake and continuing throughout a case, workers should determine and assess sibling relationships from the perspective of each child (as age appropriate) to help create strategies to place siblings together. The assessment should also include information from collateral sources, such as relatives, caregivers, and teachers (Waid, 2018). During this process, caseworkers should seek information about who the child considers to be a sibling—including those who are not included in your jurisdiction's legal definition of siblings and those who may not currently be living with the child. They should also ask the child about the actual and desired frequency of contact with each sibling.

The following are practices that can help caseworkers and agencies achieve both of those goals:

- Providing training for caseworkers and caregivers on the importance of preserving sibling connections—including with those siblings who have achieved permanence, aged out of care, were informally placed with relatives, or were not removed from the home—and the impact of sibling loss on children
- Having a system in place to track the location and status of all siblings, including those currently in separate placements, have achieved permanence, aged out of care, were informally placed with relatives, or were not removed from the home
- Assigning all siblings to the same caseworker, regardless of when they enter care
- Discussing sibling issues at regular intervals with all relevant individuals (e.g., children, birth families, resource families) throughout cases and incorporating sibling connections into postpermanency plans
- Including children and youth, as well as caregivers, in discussions and case planning regarding siblings

Additionally, there are programs designed to enhance the relationships of siblings in foster care, both for siblings placed together and those placed apart. For example, Supporting Siblings in Foster Care (SIBS-FC) is a 12-session program that provides sibling pairs with opportunities to learn and practice social skills, emotional regulation, problem solving, and other skills. In a randomized clinical trial, siblings participating in SIBS-FC had significant improvements in relationship quality (Kothari et al., 2017). Caseworkers should determine if similar programs are available in their communities and if children in their caseload would benefit from them.

The remainder of this section addresses strategies for placing siblings together and helping them maintain a relationship when coplacement is not possible.

Strategies That Support Placing Siblings Together

Agency practices, along with the individual circumstances of each sibling group and the availability of suitable placements, will affect whether siblings are placed together. The following are practice strategies designed to recruit and support families who can care for sibling groups (National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment, 2017; Silverstein & Smith, 2009):

- Help families assess their capacity to care for a sibling group so they can be better prepared.
- Provide opportunities for foster and adoptive families who have cared for sibling groups to speak with families considering caring for sibling groups, either as a group or individually as a peer partner.
- Recruit families specifically to care for sibling groups through community outreach, the media, special events, faith-based organizations, photolistings, and websites.
- Have contracts with private agencies to offer a specialized foster care program designed specifically for sibling groups. For an example of this type of program, you can read about Neighbor to Family, which has several locations throughout the United States, at <http://neighbortofamily.org/>.
- If efforts are being made to recruit an adoptive family for a sibling group, list them as a group with a picture of the entire sibling group.
- Ensure families who care for sibling groups receive information and access to sufficient resources (e.g., family support groups, sibling camps, individual and family therapeutic services, respite care).
- Designate certain foster home resources for large sibling groups and offer incentives to hold them open for these placements.
- If siblings must be separated in an emergency placement, review the case within the first week to plan for how they can be placed with the same family.

Sibling Placement Decision Scenarios

Despite supportive policies or a caseworker's best efforts, several situations may lead to siblings being placed separately. This initial separation can lead to permanent separation if an agency does not make ongoing, concerted efforts to place the children together. Both policy and practice should promote ongoing efforts to reunite separated siblings. Common dilemmas regarding separated siblings include the following:

- An infant may come into care and be placed in a foster home before workers have determined that the infant has siblings already in foster care or in adoptive homes. The foster parents of the infant may then argue against the removal of the infant from their home. To avoid this dilemma, agencies should establish whether any child coming into care has siblings already in placement or who have achieved permanency. If so, strong efforts should be made to place the infant with siblings.
- In some cases of separated siblings, foster parents may want to adopt only the sibling placed with them. Workers are put in an untenable position—allowing the child to be adopted without his or her siblings or keeping the child in foster care until a family can be found who will adopt all of the siblings. To reduce the likelihood of this situation, foster parents should always be told at the time of placement that reuniting siblings is a top priority of the agency. Whatever decision is made, there should be provisions for maintaining connections with both the foster parents and siblings.
- A sibling group placement could disrupt because the foster parents cannot handle one of the sibling's behavior, but they want to continue parenting the others. The worker must decide whether to remove just the one child or the entire sibling group. An alternative would be to have a temporary specialized placement for the sibling with behavior problems if the foster parents are willing to work toward reintegrating this child into their family.

Strategies for Preserving Ties When Siblings Are Separated

When siblings cannot be placed together, facilitating regular contact is critical to maintaining their relationships. Caregivers play a crucial gatekeeping role in regulating contact between siblings, particularly after adoption or guardianship, and it is important for caseworkers to address any caregiver concerns and promote the benefits of sibling contact. Sometimes supporting and sustaining sibling visits require clinical interventions, including both sibling therapy and clinically supervised visits, to address dysfunctional patterns that have developed in their relationships.

The following are examples of practices that can help maintain or strengthen relationships among separated siblings:

- **Place siblings with kinship caregivers who have an established personal relationship.** Even when siblings cannot be placed in the same home, they are more apt to keep in close contact if they are each placed with a relative.
- **Place them nearby.** Placing siblings in the same neighborhood or school district makes it easier for them to see each other regularly.
- **Ensure regular visits occur.** Frequent visits help to preserve sibling bonds. Children's Bureau guidance on the Fostering Connections Act (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/pi1011>) designates that these visits should occur at least monthly and allows agencies to set standards for more frequent contact. Some communities may have local organizations

that can support sibling visits. For example, Project Visitation in Hawaii helps arrange monthly visits and special events for separated siblings.

- **Arrange other forms of contact.** If regular in-person meetings may not be possible or are not sufficient to meet the needs or desires of the siblings, workers should assist them in maintaining frequent contact through letters, email, social media, cards, and phone calls. Caseworkers should ensure siblings have full contact information for each other and have access to the proper technology, if needed. Although these alternative forms of communication are beneficial and can provide additional contact between in-person visits, they should not serve as a replacement for regular in-person contact, which may need to be arranged by the caseworker or caregivers.
- **Involve families in planning.** Caseworkers should partner with the adults in the siblings' families (e.g., birth, foster, adoptive, guardianship) to develop a plan for ongoing contact. This discussion should include working through any barriers to visits and how the plan will be reviewed and revised as needed.
- **Plan joint outings or camp experiences.** Siblings may be able to spend time together in a joint activity or at summer or weekend camps, including camps specifically designed for siblings in foster care (e.g., Camp to Belong [<http://camptobelong.org/>]).
- **Arrange for joint respite care.** Families caring for separated siblings may be able to provide babysitting or respite care for each other, thus giving the siblings another opportunity to spend time together.
- **Help children with emotions.** Children may experience a wide range of emotions that are caused or affected by their separation from their siblings as well as the maltreatment they experienced and their removal from home. For example, children may feel guilty if they have been removed from an abusive home while other siblings were left behind or born later. Caseworkers and other adults in the children's lives can help them express and work through these feelings. If siblings are in therapy, it may be helpful for them to see the same therapist, with appointments perhaps scheduled jointly or back to back.

Postadoption Contact

Sibling relationships should still be facilitated and encouraged in cases when they are in separate homes due to adoption or guardianship. The earlier these relationships begin, the more children can use these opportunities to work through adoption identity and other issues that may arise and the sooner they can develop truly meaningful relationships with siblings. Caseworkers should ensure prospective and current adoptive parents understand the importance of sibling contact, encourage it to be included in any postadoption contact agreements, and seek ways the agency can support this contact.

Many States have adoption registries that can help adult siblings separated by foster care or adoption reestablish contact later in life. The caseworker should ensure that all pertinent information on each sibling is entered in the registry at the time of each child's adoption.

For more information, including State statutes on postadoption contact agreements, visit Information Gateway's Open Adoption and Contact With Birth Families in Adoption web section at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/adoptive/before-adoption/openness/>.

Social Media and Child Welfare

Facebook and other social media make it much easier for siblings to both find and communicate with one another, regardless of the adults' feelings or concerns. Caseworkers can work with both children and their families to explore expectations regarding social media and ensure that children know how to safely use it. For more information about the use of social media in child welfare, including tip sheets for youth in foster care and caseworkers, visit Child Welfare Information Gateway at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/workforce/tools/socialmedia/>.

Conclusion

Maintaining and strengthening sibling bonds is a key component to child well-being and permanency outcomes. It is also central to meeting the requirements of the Fostering Connections Act. Child welfare professionals can champion these efforts by developing their knowledge about the importance of sibling connections and relevant strategies to support them as well as encouraging birth, foster, and adoptive families to take steps to promote these connections.

Additional Resources

The following Child Welfare Information Gateway web sections offer additional resources about sibling connections in foster care and adoption:

- Considering Siblings in Permanency Planning <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency/planning/siblings/>
- Sibling Groups <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/adoptive/who-are-the-children-waiting-for-families/sibling-groups/>

Other helpful resources for child welfare professionals include the following:

- *Working With Siblings in Foster Care: A Web-Based NCCWE Toolkit* (National Center for Child Welfare Excellence) <http://www.nccwe.org/toolkits/siblings/index.html>
- *Organizational Self Study on Parent-Child and Sibling Visits* (National Resource Center on Permanency and Family Connections) <http://centerforchildwelfare.org/kb/bpam/OrganizationalSelfStudyonVisiting2011.pdf>
- *Practice Principles for the Recruitment and Retention of Kinship, Foster, and Adoptive Families for Siblings* (National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment) http://adoptuskids.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/practice-principles-and-seven-step-process-for-sibling-recruitment.pdf
- *Ten Myths and Realities of Sibling Adoption* (National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment) https://www.adoptuskids.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/ten-myths-and-realities-of-sibling-adoptions.pdf
- "Positive Youth Development for Siblings in Foster Care" (webinar) (Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare) <https://cascw.umn.edu/portfolio-items/pyd/>
- "Siblings in Foster Care: Assessment Considerations for Child Welfare Professionals" (webinar) (Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare) <https://cascw.umn.edu/portfolio-items/siblings-in-foster-care-assessment-considerations-for-child-welfare-professionals-5-hr/>

Some States may have a sibling bill of rights that can guide your approach to sibling visitation and placement and that may be helpful to share with clients. The following are examples:

- Connecticut: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DCF/YAB/pdf/SiblingBillofRightsFINALpdf.pdf?la=en>
- Minnesota: https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/county_access/documents/pub/dhs-305844.pdf
- Oregon: <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ABOUTDHS/Documents/CF-0262-Posters.pdf>

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