

DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT
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ADOPTION DATA

DCF ADOPTION POLICY

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When a child is placed by the court into the custody of the Secretary of the Department for Children and Families, DCF Child Welfare Case Management Providers (CWCMPs) work with the child, child's family and their network of supports to address and resolve concerns about safety so the child can safely return home. Most children and youth in care return home.

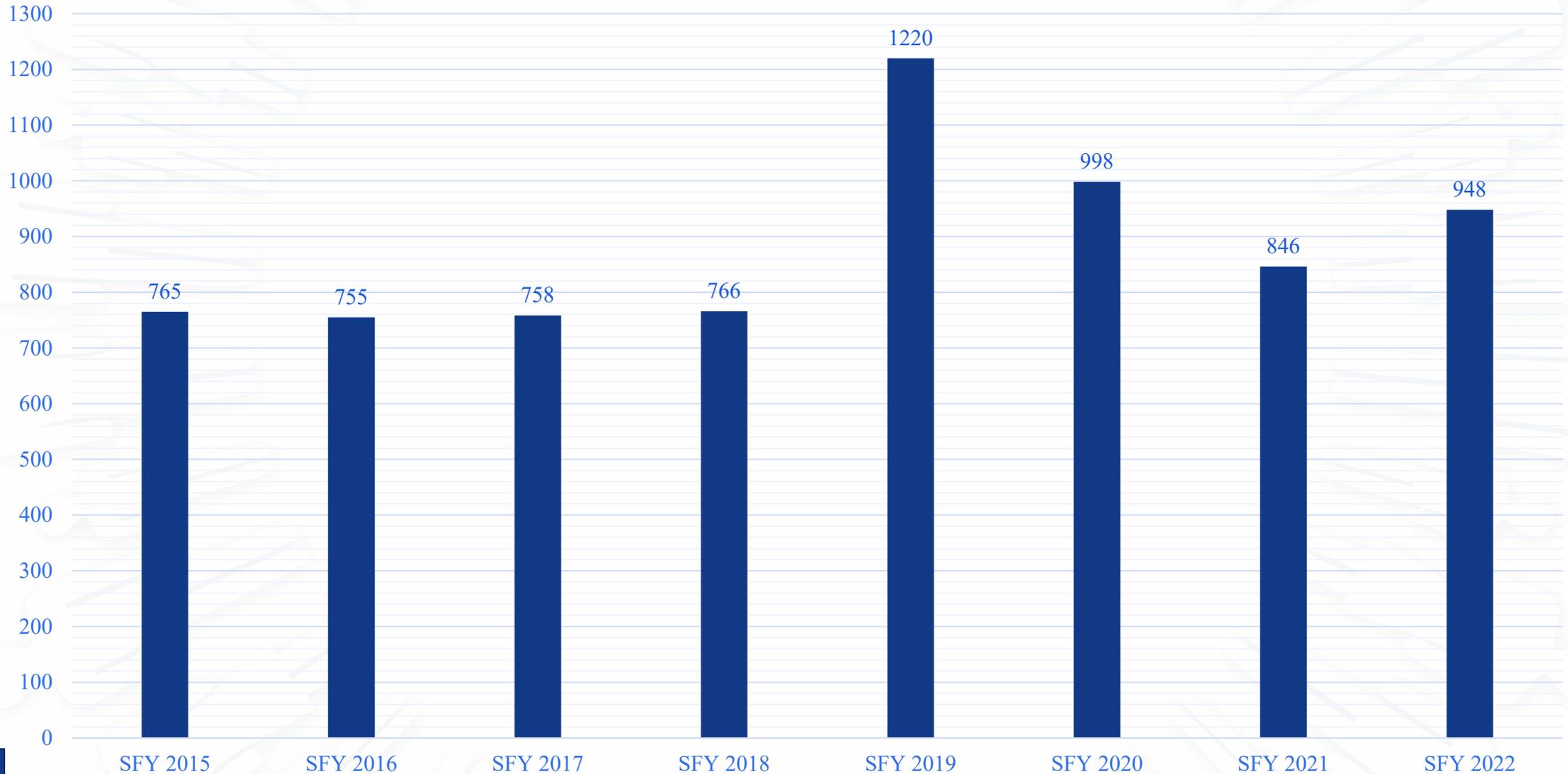
When it is not possible for a child to go back to the family, parental rights may be voluntarily relinquished or terminated by the court. The child is then available for adoption. Once all reunification efforts have been exhausted, relative and foster families are often approached about adoption of the child/youth in their care.

Adoptions increased in SFY2019 averaging just over 1,000 annually the past 4 years.

- The average age of a child at the time of the finalized adoption is 7 years with two-thirds of children adopted age 8 or younger (65%).
- The average length of time in care is 39 months and over half of children (59%) are adopted as part of a sibling group. \

Practice enhancements such as rapid permanency review tools, addition of non-case carrying adoption accelerator positions within the case management providers' agency and development of the BIS waiver exception process have supported efficiencies in processes.

Finalized Adoption Across Years



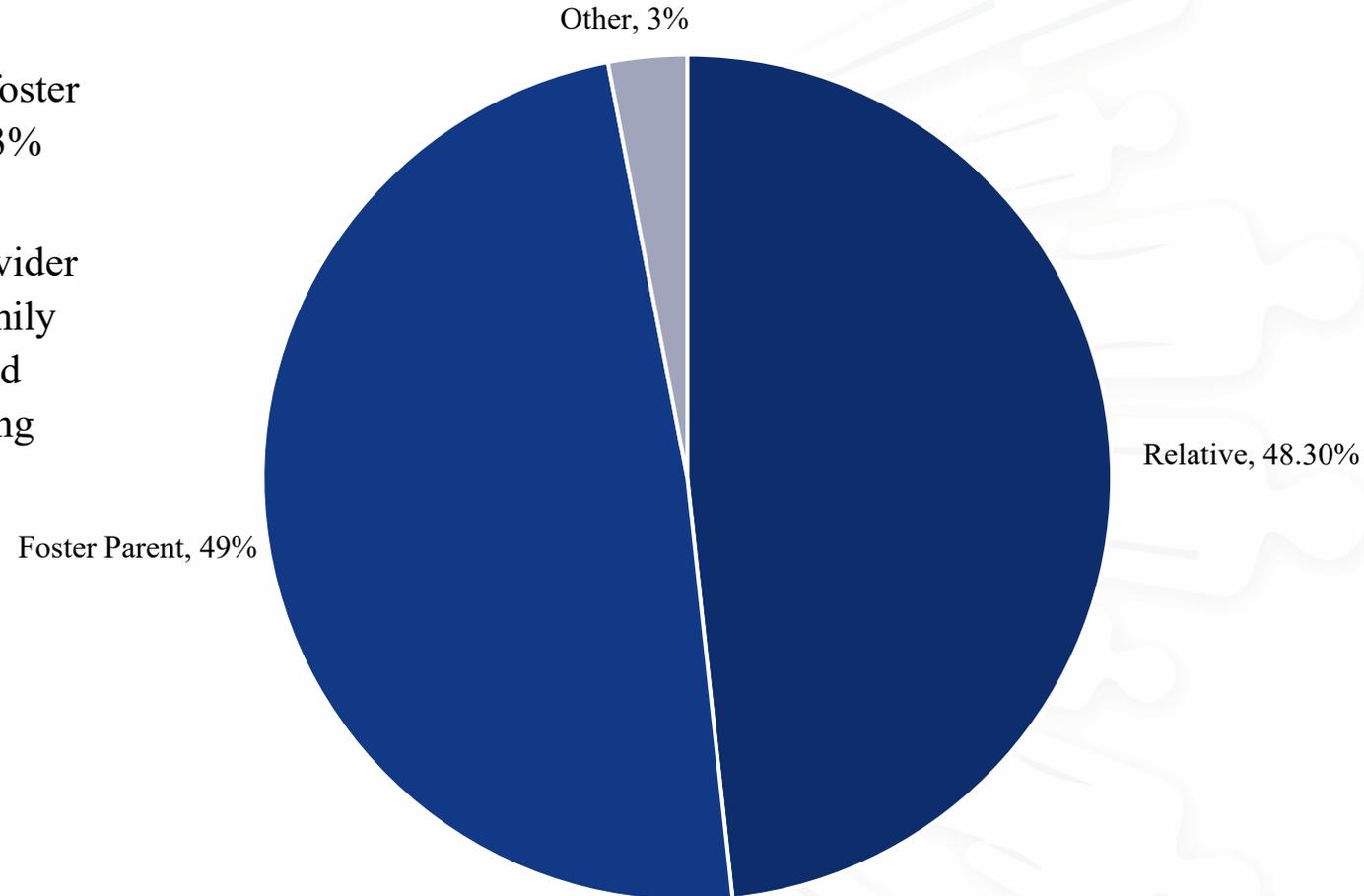
DCF ADOPTION POLICY

In SFY 22, Nearly all adoptions are finalized with a relative or foster parent and in SFY 22, 48.7 % were with a foster family and 48.3% were with a relative.

Prospective adoptive parents who are the current placement provider for the child to be adopted, their child placing agency (CPA) family worker assists them in completing the necessary items to proceed with an adoption including preparation of the best interest staffing packet of information.

These tasks include:

- Completion of or updates to their home study/assessment
 - (requirements set out in the Kansas Adoption and Relinquishment Act),
- Background checks and
- Gathering needed supporting documents.



SFY22 ADOPTIVE RELATIONSHIP BY AGE OF CHILDREN ADOPTED



AGE in Years	# by Foster	%	# by Other	%	# by Relative	%	Total
0-3	154	57.9%	5	1.9%	107	40.2%	266
4-7	132	48.0%	7	2.5%	136	49.5%	275
8-11	87	45.8%	7	3.7%	97	51.1%	190
12-16	82	39.8%	9	4.4%	114	55.3%	206
>16	7	63.6%	0	0.0%	4	36.4%	11
Grand Total	462	48.7%	28	3.0%	458	48.3%	948

BEST INTEREST STAFFING

BEST INTEREST STAFFING

Once the child is legally free for adoption and a prospective adoptive parent is identified, a Best Interest Staffing (BIS) is considered for scheduling to select the adoptive family that can best meet the needs of the child. DCF PPS PPM set forth policies related to the BIS process, participants and review as requested (Handouts PPM 5339-5341).

Per DCF policy, a formal convening of a Best Interest Staffing may be waived when the following criteria are met:

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.

BEST INTEREST STAFFING

If the above BIS waiver criteria are met, per policy the case management provider is to send notice and information (such as a child's social history and the family's Home Study/Assessment) to all required BIS participants per policy to ask if there is any objection to waiving the BIS.

If any participant objects within seven (7) days of that notice, a formal BIS is scheduled. If there is no objection, the process to adoption proceeds.

BEST INTEREST STAFFING

When any BIS is scheduled, the case manager sends packets including, but not limited to, the Adoptive Family Home Study/Assessment for each potential adoptive family or individual being considered to all required BIS participants.

Information on each prospective adoptive family is presented and considered and a consensus reached on the family who can best meet the child's needs. DCF policy was updated in October 2019 to reflect the consensus process of selection.

Participants include:

- Youth, age 14 and older,
- the child's current and former Case Manager/Support Worker,
- Guardian ad litem;
- therapist or service provider;
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA),
- Court Services Officer,
- other supports such as teachers or coaches, etc.

BEST INTEREST STAFFING

Within 5 days of the BIS decision, notice of the decision is sent to the families.

Families not selected at a BIS may request a BIS decision review in writing within 5 days of the notification of their non-selection.

A designated independent reviewer within the case management agency completes the review. 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 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.

BIS RELATED ACTIVITY

There were 21 review requests in SFY2019 and 27 in SFY2020.

Table 2: BIS Related Activity SFY21	BIS Considered and Waived	BIS Considered and Held	(Of BIS held) BIS Reviews Requested
Area 1 (SFM)	30	52	2
Area 2 (SFM)	57	103	9
Area 3 NE & 6 JO/DG (KVC)	83	39	0
Area 4 SE (TFI)	105	105	1
Area 5 KC (CoC)	39	51	0
Area 7 Sg Co. (SFM)	66	70	3
Area 8 Surrounding Wichita (TFI)	49	5	0
State	429 (50.2%)	425 (49.8%)	15

SIBLING SPLIT PROCESS

SIBLINGS

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.

ADOPTION POLICY

**RELATIVE (INCLUDING SIBLINGS)/
NON-RELATED KIN (NRKIN)**

ADOPTION A-Z

Termination of Parental Rights Hearing
K.S.A. 38-2266, 38-2267, 38-2268



OR

Judge denies PRT motion: Reunification efforts continue

Judge terminates parental rights (based upon relinquishment or on statutory grounds for PRT)

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

ADOPTION A-Z

Journal Entries (JE) sent to Child Welfare Case Management Provider (CWCMP)



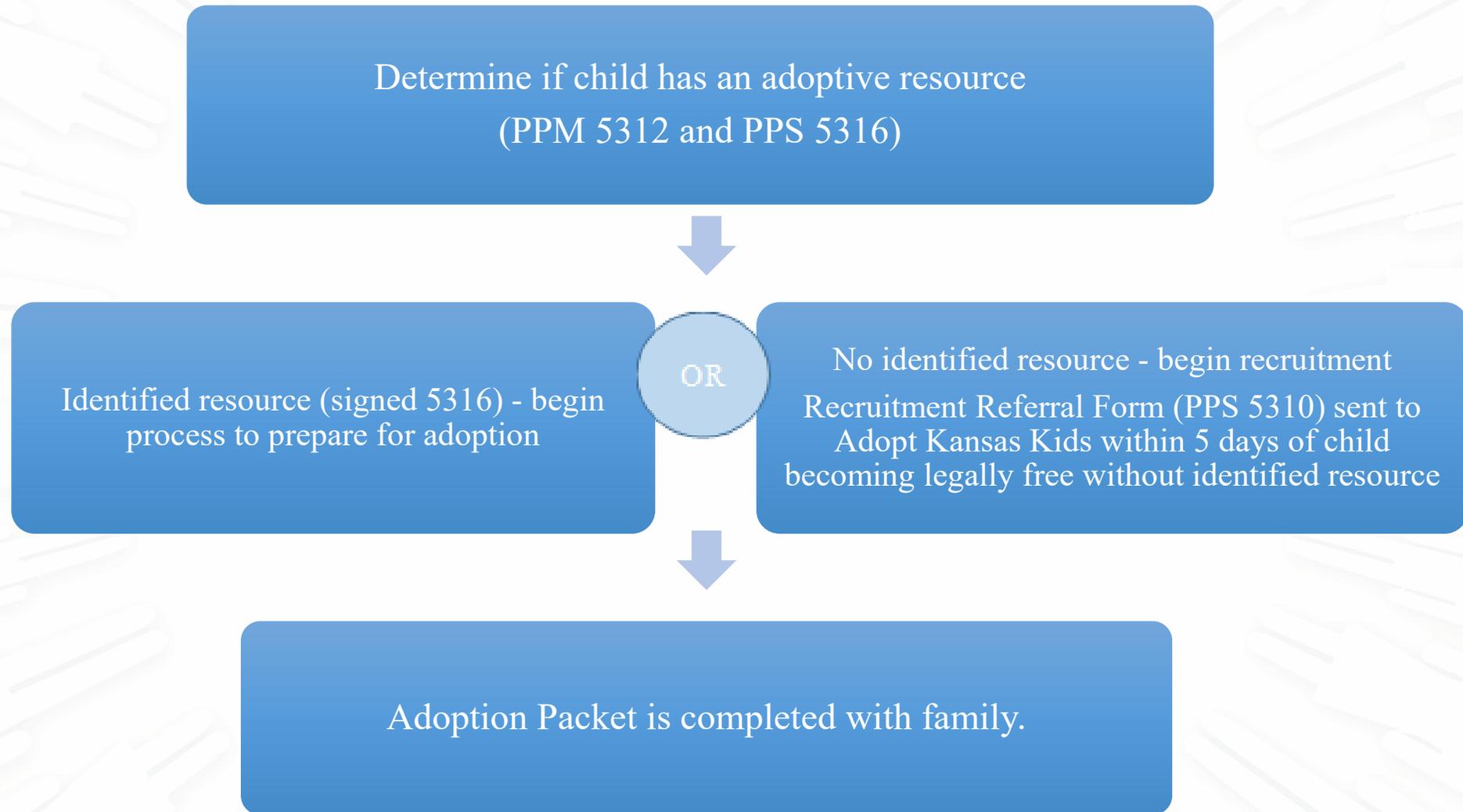
JE sent to DCF



Parent may appeal PRT
K.S.A. 38-2273



If no appeal, or appeal is unsuccessful,
Child becomes legally free
(PRT of both parents completed and/or approval of relinquishments)



CWCMP or sponsoring CPA completes Family Assessment
(Assessment valid for 1 year prior to filing of adoption)
(PPS5318)



Best Interest Staffing (BIS) held or waived per DCF policy
(PPM 5339-5341)



BIS team makes recommendation for adoptive family and
submit to CWCMP Program director for approval

Information required at BIS:

- Family Home Assessment
- Child's updated Social History
- Child's Individual Recruitment Plan, if applicable
- Child's Sibling Split, if applicable
- Background Checks
- PS-MAPP/DT certification

Once approved, both selected and not selected families are notified within 1 day. Non-selected family may request an internal review within 10 days of the decision.



Review request is held by CWCMP with-in 10 days of receiving request.



CWCMP will identify an independent reviewer within their agency. Review results will be shared with the family requesting the review.



Adoptive family selected - proceed with adoption process Kansas Adoption and Relinquishment Act K.S.A. 59-2111 et seq.

OR

No adoptive family selected - return to recruitment process

Child's file is read by family
Pre-placement visit planned and completed if adoptive resource is unknown to child/ren

Adoption Assistance Referral sent to DCF Adoption Subsidy Specialist (PPS 6110)

Adoption Assistance addressed between DCF and Adoptive parents

Adoption Placement Agreement (APA) (PPS 5343) signed

Request for DCF's Consent to Adopt (Provide items noted on Checklist: Appendix 5R)

DCF signs consent to adopt (within 30 day of receipt of all required information)

Adoption packet sent to Adoptive Family and Family's Attorney

Adoption Finalized

QUESTIONS?
