

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES  
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE  
**STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES**

## 7.6 **MATCHING**

### **Council on Accreditation Standards**

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoptive Services) and S14.3 (Services for the Child) link to and support Standard 7.6 *Matching*.

### **Administrative Code**

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-42-18.1 (MEPA/IEPA); 5101:2-48-04 (AdoptOhio Responsibilities); 5101:2-48-05 (Agency Adoption Policy and Agency Recruitment Plan); 5101: 2-48-06 (Adoption Agency Staffing); 5101: 2-48-07(Listing and Withdrawing Families and Children with OAPL); 5101:2-48-11 (Approval of a Family Foster Home for Adoptive Placements); 5101:2-48-13 (Adoption Requirements Pursuant to the Multiethnic Placement Act); 5101:2-48-14 (Preparation of Child for Adoptive Placement); 5101:2-48-15 (Provision of Information to Adoptive Family); 5101:2-48-17 (Prefinalization Services); 5101:2-48-19 (Release of Adoptive Homestudy and Related Information); 5101:2-48-20 (Release of Identifying and Non-Identifying Information); and 5101:2-48-21 (Child Study Inventory) address Standard 7.6 *Matching*.

\*Items with an asterisk indicates that this Standard is based on effective practice, however, it does not currently comply with the Ohio Administrative Code.

### **I. Philosophy**

The matching process is critical not only when planning for the permanent placement of children, but also when a child enters substitute care (see Out-of-Home Standard 6.1, *Placement of Children in Out-of-Home Care*). To increase the likelihood that a successful match is made, it is crucial to match the strengths and ability of the family with the individual needs of the child. While many factors are reviewed and considered in determining the best match, consideration should be given to the children's sibling group, kinship and/or foster family relationships, and cultural and social background. CFSA's acknowledge that while ethnicity, culture and race should not be the only determinants in the matching process, recognition as to the importance race, culture and ethnicity plays in human growth and development cannot be ignored\*.

### **II. Outcome**

Children in need of permanent homes are adopted by families who meet their identified needs and can support their long-term physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and cultural growth and development.

### **III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- the number of child and family assessments that are completed and reviewed at point of entry, key decision-making points, case transfer and prior to adoption;

- number of concurrent plans developed at point of entry and modified throughout that identifies possible adoptive matches for the child;
- number of prospective applicants per year;

- number of prospective applicants qualifying per year;
- number of prospective applicants completing all necessary paperwork per year;
- number of prospective applicants completing all training requirements per year;
- number of prospective applicants approved per year;
- number of adoptive families recruited and approved;
- number of aggressive recruitment plans developed within seven days of receiving permanent custody of children;
- number of aggressive recruitment activities conducted after children have been in permanent custody for thirty days or more;
- number of children in permanent custody per year;
- number of children with adoption finalizations per year;
- median length of stay in permanent custody prior to adoption finalization.

#### IV. Standards for Implementation

For an adoptive placement, consideration should be given first to relatives, then to foster family, kinship relationships, and finally, other adoptive families who can meet the identified and anticipated needs of the child.

- 1) At the point of filing for permanent custody, determination should be made as to the interest of relatives, foster family, adoptive families of biological siblings (if applicable) and kinship relationships, in being a permanent family for the child. If none of these are interested in being a permanent family, the worker sets up a staffing to discuss permanency plan.
- 2) Once the decision has been made to file for permanent custody, a staffing is held, including, at minimum, the adoption worker, adoption supervisor, other involved professionals, the birth family worker and supervisor and the child to identify the child's needs for the Matching Tool (see Standard 7.4, *Assessment of the Child for Permanency Planning*).
- 3) After permanent custody has been received, the adoption worker reviews the child's identified needs and ensures the assessments are up-to-date.
- 4) If relative, foster and kin resources have been exhausted, the adoption worker initiates a recruitment plan to locate potential adoptive families for the child (see Standard 7.4, *Assessment of Children for Permanency Planning*).
- 5) Relevant staff (e.g., the adoption and child's worker) identify potential families to be reviewed using the child's assessment and focusing on the child's needs.
- 6) When the staff have identified potential families, the adoption worker and child's worker should have face-to-face contact with the families prior to the review panel conference in the home or at least at the CFSA's office to further assess the families' compatibility with the child and ability to meet the child's needs. If face-to-face contact is not possible, the adoption worker and child's worker

should have telephone contact with each potential family. At this time, the worker should share the child's assessment with the families both verbally and in writing.

- 7) After contact with the families, a review panel conference should be scheduled, which includes all key professionals involved with the child, to select the adoptive home. The conference should include the review of the completed child assessment and available adoptive homes to determine the likelihood of a successful placement using a matching tool that addresses the following areas of current and anticipated needs and strengths of child and family:
  - a. safety that addresses child's health, community and school, home environment, availability of adequate supervision to meet the child's needs, family's relationship with birth family and openness to gather further information;
  - b. permanency that addresses family's willingness to support the permanency plan, family is dually licensed/approved, family's willingness to maintain contact with birth family, siblings, extended family, former foster parents, and significant others;
  - c. stability and continuity, including maintaining the child's current positive psychological relationships, neighborhood, school, extra-curricular activities, faith community and birth family relationships;
  - d. family composition and dynamics, including placement with siblings, maintaining birth order, need for one or two parent home, same sex parents, supervision needs;
  - e. physical environment, including need for child's own bedroom, handicapped-accessibility, if needed;
  - f. family's experiences with partnering with CFSA, working with the birth family, caring for kinship/foster/adoptive children;
  - g. family expectations and lifestyle issues, including comfort with birth parent culture, gay and lesbian youth, spending time with the family, activity level of family, academic and career expectations, religious expectations, the need for cultural connections;
  - h. parenting styles, including the child's required level of structure and supervision, parenting roles, need for specialized parenting skills, types of discipline, family's flexibility and ability to delay gratification, temperament;
  - i. child's therapeutic needs, including family's willingness to participate in therapy and apply to daily living; family understands special educational issues and is willing to advocate on behalf of the child; family is willing to accept limited lifespan of the child, if relevant; family is able to cope with frequent clinic visits or hospitalizations; family is accepting of specific learning disabilities and behavioral challenges;
  - j. family and community support system, including extended family's attitude and support, community resources available to meet short and long-term needs.
  
- 8) The review panel should include, but not be limited to, the following key professionals:
  - a. child's primary caseworker and supervisor;
  - b. assigned adoption staff and supervisor;
  - c. out-of-home caregiver(s);
  - d. child's therapist and other involved professionals;
  - e. Guardian Ad Litem/Court Appointed Special Advocate;
  - f. child's birth parent(s), if appropriate (e.g., in the circumstance of a permanent surrender when the parent is helping to choose the adoptive family).

- 9) The CFSA should have a policy, which identifies the protocol to follow when consensus cannot be achieved among the review panel participants regarding the best adoption match for the child.
- 10) The families who were not selected as the match should be contacted within 3 working days and encouraged to consider other children.
- 11) The staff should meet with the potential adoptive family within fifteen working days following the scheduled review panel conference to present on paper and verbally the child to the family.
  - a. The staff should invite involved staff and community professionals to the meeting as determined appropriate by the CFSA.
  - b. The meeting should involve a review and discussion regarding:
    - i. child's history;
    - ii. child's assessment;
    - iii. child's attachment to the child's sibling group (when one exists);
    - iv. child's recent photographs, video tape (when available);
    - v. family's level of interest and short/long-term commitment to the child;
    - vi. family's plan to provide for the child's needs;
    - vii. potential future challenges and services needed for the child and the family ;
    - viii. plan to access needed community resources;
    - ix. availability of subsidies (negotiation should not occur at this time);
    - x. family's strengths and weaknesses and parenting philosophy.
  - c. When the match involves a transracial, cultural, or ethnic placement, the staff should refer to Standard 7.8, *Supports for Multi-Racial, Multi-Cultural, Multi-Ethnic Adoptive Families*.
- 12) Following the panel conference, the adoptive family should be provided full disclosure of the child's assessment information packet.
- 13) The adoption worker should request the family make a decision in no less than 24 hours and no more than five working days following full disclosure.
- 14) When the family indicates a desire to adopt the child, the CFSA should initiate the pre-placement visitation process (see Standard 7.11, *Placement of Children in Adoptive Homes*).
- 15) The adoption worker should have a discussion with the family upon the family's decision to adopt the child to ask if the family would want to be given the option of adopting additional children born to the child's biological parents.
- 16) The CFSA should document the adoptive family's interest in caring for siblings of their adopted child that may come into custody.

## V. Financial Implications

Costs associated with Standard 7.6, *Matching* are those estimated in the Standards within Ongoing Protective Services and Administration mentioned.