PRE-PLACEMENT PLANNING FOR INFANTS | RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRE-PLACEMENT PLANNING | COLLABORATION IN PRE-PLACEMENT PLANNING | FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN | GUIDELINES FOR PROGRESSIVE PLACEMENT | PRE-PLACEMENT PLAN SCHEDULE | ROLE OF THE CURRENT | ROLE OF THE ADOPTIONS | DEVELOPING A PLAN TO | RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN CONTACT | PLACEMENT PRESERVATION TDM | HYPERLINKS | OTHER SOURCES | ONLINE FORMS | HARD COPY FORMS | CWS/CMS FORMS | BROCHURES | REQUIRED ACTIONS

ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY
CFS OPERATIONS MANUAL

Effective Date: December 1, 1991 **Number: C-0703**
Revised: March 27, 2008

Pre-Placement Steps for
Prospective Adoptive Placements

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Purpose

To provide guidelines for transitioning a child from a current placement to a prospective adoptive placement.

Approved

This policy was approved by Mike Ryan, Director of CFS, on March 27, 2008. *Signature on file*.

Background

Preparing the child for adoption is essential for a successful placement. The primary goal of preparing children is to help them live safely in a new, permanent family. Children who reach the point of adoptive placement have likely experienced loss, trauma, and separation. Therefore, successful transitioning will be made with each child's needs in mind and will be carried out at a pace that allows the child ample time to process the changes. Placement planning must be flexible and child specific.

It is the responsibility of the case carrying Assigned Social Worker (ASW), Adoption Senior Social Worker (SSW), Secondary Adoption SSWs (Child, Concurrent Planning, and Applicant), and any involved outside adoption agency social worker to support the child, prospective adoptive family, and the child's current caregiver throughout this process and to facilitate communication between all parties. All involved social workers will maintain regular contact with the child, applicant family, and one another during the pre-placement process. All assigned workers will collaboratively develop both a pre-placement plan for transitioning the child to the home of the prospective adoptive parent, as well as a placement plan to address the services required during the initial adjustment phase of the placement and the roles and responsibilities of all assigned social workers.

Legal Mandates

California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Adoptions Manual–Title 22, Division 2, Section 35127.3(a)(3) states the children who are accepted for adoptive planning shall be provided services pertaining to the emotional preparation for adoption, working through loss and separation, and the placement for adoption.

POLICY

Pre-Placement Planning for Infants

Infants may be excluded from the requirements set forth in this policy for pre-placement visits based on age, case specifics, and emergent placement needs. The need for pre-placement visits for infants will be discussed and agreed upon by the ASW and the Adoptions SSWs.

Responsibility for Pre-Placement Planning

The ASW, Adoptions SSWs (which may include Applicant, Concurrent Planning and/or Child Worker), outside adoption agency social worker (if applicable), prospective adoptive family, current caregiver, and child, if appropriate, will participate and share in the pre-placement planning process and scheduling of placement steps.

Collaboration in Pre-Placement Planning

All assigned workers: case carrying, adoptions, and private agency (if applicable), will meet to discuss strengths and/or needs regarding the prospective adoptive family and child being placed. Prior to developing a plan for pre-placement steps, all assigned social workers will have read the home study of the prospective adoptive family as well as pertinent information regarding the child.

Factors to Consider When Developing Placement Steps

When developing pre-placement steps, consider the following:

- Child's age level and maturity
- Child's placement history
- Current caregivers' ability to facilitate the transition and their availability during the transition period
- Availability of prospective adoptive parents
- Emotional impact on the child and the prospective adoptive family
- Scheduling issues, including the visitation plan with the birth family, school schedule, and any other ongoing appointments or services for the child
- Visitation plan with the birth family. Frequent visits by birth parents and/or relatives may need to be reduced and the visitation plan changed prior to placement to allow the child and prospective adoptive family the opportunity to adjust to the new placement. This is particularly important to consider with older children. (**Note:** Court approval is required to alter a court-ordered plan)
- Ability of others with significant relationships to child, i.e., relatives, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), mentors and siblings, to facilitate transition
- Flexibility on the part of the prospective adoptive family and the current caregivers
- Any other factors relevant to the placement
- A staffing or Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting to discuss concerns related to individuals with a relationship to the child who are not supportive of the placement

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Guidelines for Progressive Placement Steps

Pre-placement steps typically progress from brief initial contact between the child and the prospective adoptive placement to contact of increasing duration, up to and including overnight visits. (See CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards.) Pre-placement steps are child specific and will vary depending on the needs of the child, but will generally include the following:

- An introduction of the prospective adoptive family to the child through the use of pictures or a life book
- An initial meeting between the prospective adoptive parents and the child, either in the home of the child's current caregiver or in a neutral setting
- Time for the current caregiver and prospective adoptive parents to meet and discuss the child's daily routine, likes and dislikes, etc.
- Familiarization with the prospective adoptive family's home, including a tour of the home, eating a meal together, sharing of life books, and participation in other daily routines
- Day visits of varying length in the adoptive home or neutral setting
- Overnight visits

Pre-Placement Plan Schedule

After consulting and collaborating with all involved workers, the pre-placement plan schedule is written by the Child Worker or the Concurrent Planning Worker who has the lead in this process. The plan will include the following:

- Dates of visits in sequential order
- Where the visits will occur
- Length of visits
- Who will be present
- Transportation
- Number of supervised visits and who will supervise. (**Note:** All supervised visits should be supervised by an Adoptions worker)
- Emergency contact information

The pre-placement plan schedule is to be collaboratively developed between all parties. The schedule is to be reviewed and approved by an Adoptions Senior Social Services Supervisor (SSSS).

Role of the Current Caregiver

The child's current caregiver will be advised of the importance of their role in the child's transition process. If the caregiver is willing, the child's first meeting with the prospective adoptive family can occur at the caregiver's home. During the transition process, the caregiver can share with the prospective adoptive family information regarding the child's schedule, likes and dislikes, and other information which will assist in the transitioning process. The caregiver should be encouraged, whenever possible, to partner with the prospective adoptive family to ensure a successful transition for the child. When a caregiver has had the child in their care for a significant period of time, the social workers involved in the transition need to be sensitive to the grief and loss issues of the caregiver. If the current caregiver is resistant to facilitating the transition, one of the assigned SSWs is to be present during each pre-placement step to monitor and guide the process.

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Role of the Adoptions SSW During Supervised Pre-Placement Visits

Visits will be supervised by an Adoptions worker (Child, Concurrent Planning, Applicant or private agency). The assigned SSW who is supervising pre-placement visits is responsible for the following:

- Assessing the process of pre-placement planning and transitioning
- Assessing the development of the relationship between the child and the prospective adoptive family
- Assessing the level of cooperation of the child's current caregiver
- Adjusting, changing or halting the process as deemed necessary
- Facilitating communication between workers, caregivers, prospective adoptive parents, and any involved outside agency personnel

Developing a Plan to Support the Placement

Once the decision has been made to proceed with the placement of the child into the home of the prospective adoptive parent, all assigned social workers will meet and work as a team to develop a plan to support the child's placement. The Child Worker will take the lead role in developing the plan.

Areas to address in the support plan include:

- Services and support needed by child and/or family
- Roles and responsibilities of each assigned social worker, including any private agency social worker
- Recommended services, including therapy, in-home counseling, educational services, childcare, caretaker support, and wraparound
- Any Medi-Cal and foster care assistance issues, including ensuring assistance is in place
- Need for additional visits beyond the minimum mandated contact requirement, particularly during the initial adjustment period

Responsibility to Maintain Contact With the Child and Prospective Adoptive Family

The Child Worker will visit the family and child after placement. The number of visits will vary depending on the progress of the placement. A minimum of one visit is to be made to the home within the first 30 days of placement. Visits will be coordinated with the ASW and are not intended to replace the mandated monthly contact by the ASW.

The Applicant Worker will maintain contact with the prospective adoptive family during the pre-placement and adjustment period. A minimum of one visit should be made to the home within the first 30 days of placement. This visit should be coordinated with the ASW and are not intended to replace the mandated monthly contact by the ASW.

The Concurrent Planning Worker will see the child in placement and make a joint home visit to the prospective adoptive family with the newly assigned social worker after the case is transferred to a continuing court program.

The ASW has primary responsibility for monitoring the placement. Monthly contact visits will occur in the home of the prospective adoptive family in order to observe, assess, and support the progress of the placement.

The Child Worker with secondary assignment, the Applicant Worker, and the private agency social worker, if applicable, will remain available for consultation with the ASW for adoption-related issues and to address any necessary changes to the placement plan.

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Placement Preservation TDM If at any time the placement is at risk of disrupting, a TDM should be scheduled with the prospective adoptive family and child, if appropriate. Refer to Children and Family Services (CFS) Policy and Procedure (P&P) Team Decision Making (D-0308) (Attachment 1) for instructions.

REFERENCES

Hyperlinks Users accessing this document by computer may create a direct connection to the following references by clicking on them.

- CFS P& Adoption Matching Procedure (C-0701)
- CFS P&P Team Decision Making (D-0308)
- CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards

Other Sources None.

REQUIRED FORMS

Online Forms Required forms listed below may be printed out and completed, or completed online, and may be accessed by clicking on the link provided.

Form Name	Form Number
None.	

Hard Copy Forms Forms listed below can be completed in hard copy (including multi-copy NCR forms). ***For reference purposes only,*** links are provided to view these hard copy forms, where available.

Form Name	Form Number
None.	

CWS/CMS Forms The following required forms may **only** be obtained in CWS/CMS. ***For reference purposes only,*** links are provided to view these CWS/CMS forms, where available.

Form Name	Form Number
None.	

Brochures Brochures to distribute in conjunction with this procedure include:

Brochure Name	Brochure Number
None.	

PROCEDURE

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Required Actions	The following actions must be completed when all parties agree to move forward with placement. (Infants may be excluded from these requirements based on age, case specifics, and emergent placement needs.)	
Staff Responsible	**Step**	**Required Action**
All Assigned SSWs	**1.**	Collaboratively plan pre-placement steps for child including development of placement plan.
	2.	Throughout pre-placement process, maintain communication with each other.
Child Worker	**3.**	Prepare a pre-placement plan schedule and placement plan and submit to SSSS for review.
SSSS	**4.**	Review and approve pre-placement plan and placement plan.
Child Worker	**5.**	Provide approved pre-placement plan schedule and placement plan to all parties.
All Assigned SSWs	**6.**	Implement pre-placement steps as described in plan.
Child Worker	**7.**	Based on observations, feedback, etc., modify pre-placement plan as needed.
	8.	After receiving input from all parties, evaluate success of plan and determine if placement may proceed.
All Assigned SSWs	**9.**	When decision is made to place child, implement placement plan.
Child Worker/ CP Worker	**10.**	Ensure all required placement paperwork is completed at time of placement.
All Assigned SSWs	**11.**	Maintain communication with all assigned social workers during adjustment period.
	12.	Review and modify placement plan as needed to support placement.

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