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|  | INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY | |
| | Chapter 10: Adoption and Guardianship | Effective Date: July 1, 2021 |
| Section 10: Unlicensed Relative or Kinship Adoption | Version: 4 | |

POLICY OVERVIEW

When a child cannot safely be reunified with a parent, guardian, or custodian, the first consideration for legal permanency should be with an appropriate relative or kin. This provides a familiar, safe, and nurturing environment to minimize loss and allows the child to maintain connections to other relatives, community, and culture.

PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) has established the following guidelines for an unlicensed relative or kin who wants to become a prospective adoptive parent for the purpose of adopting a child who is a DCS ward:

1. Efforts to reunite the child with either parent have not been successful;
2. The child has lived in the home for six (6) continuous months or longer;
3. The permanency plan is adoption and there is a significant emotional attachment between the child and the unlicensed relative or kin, as assessed by a counselor, therapist, or other professional specializing in attachment;
4. Completion of the Resource and Adoptive Parent Training (RAPT) pre-service training and six (6) hours of RAPT IV-Adoption training. See policy 12.05 Pre-Service Training Requirements for further guidance; and

Note: The pre-service adoption training and six (6) hours of RAPT IV- Adoption training may be waived with a written exception from the DCS Local Office Director (LOD).

5. Submission of a written adoption summary to the court detailing DCS' recommendation for adoption.

Note: A complete home study is not required for unlicensed relative or kin adoptions.

In accordance with the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994, as amended by the Interethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996 (MEPA-IEP), DCS will not delay or deny the adoptive placement of a child based on the race, color, or national origin of the adoptive resource family or the child involved. In addition, DCS will not deny the adoptive placement of a child based solely on a prospective adoptive parent's disability. If a Native American child is involved, refer to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). See policy 2.12 Indian Child Welfare Act for further guidance.

DCS requires background checks on all persons who live in a prospective adoptive home when a DCS ward is being adopted. See policies 13.07 Conducting Background Checks for Adoption and 13.08 Evaluating Background Checks for Adoption for further guidance.

DCS will ensure the prospective adoptive parent is made aware of the ability to apply for Medicaid, Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses (NRAE), adoption assistance periodic payments, and Post-Adoption Services (PAS). See policy 10.14 Indiana Adoption Assistance Program Overview for additional guidance.

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Complete the 10.B Tool: Child Social Summary. See policy 10.11 Child Social Summary for further guidance;
2. Explain the adoption process, including the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) to the unlicensed relative or kin and the child, if applicable. See policies 10.01 Planning for Adoption (Overview), 10.14 Indiana Adoption Assistance Program Overview, and 10.A Tool: Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)/Adoption Checklist for further guidance;
3. Ask the unlicensed relative or kin if they need a reasonable accommodation due to a disability and assist in planning for any identified reasonable accommodation;
4. Initiate the background check process of all individuals living in the home. See policy 13.07 Conducting Background Checks for Adoption for further guidance;
5. Conduct an agency staffing to discuss the approval of the unlicensed relative or kin as a prospective adoptive parent after the child has been in the home for six (6) months;
6. Complete a written adoption summary for the court within 60 calendar days of the date the adoption petition is filed. The adoption summary should include information outlined on the Explanation of Adoption Summary form;

Note: The adoption summary may not contain information concerning the financial circumstances of the prospective adoptive parent or any recommendation regarding a request for subsidy by the prospective adoptive parent.

7. Provide and explain the Explanation of Adoption Summary form and ensure necessary signatures are obtained;
8. Ensure the prospective adoptive parent has contact information for the Regional Adoption Consultant and the PAS brochure, which has information about accessing PAS; and
9. Upload all documentation into the case management system.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Ensure the FCM has completed all required background checks in a timely manner. See policies 13.07 Conducting Background Checks for Adoption and 13.08 Evaluating Background Checks for Adoption for further guidance;
2. Participate in the agency staffing and provide input as necessary;
3. Ensure the Explanation of Adoption Summary form has been explained and all necessary signatures have been obtained; and
4. Ensure all required information and documentation is in the child's adoption file and uploaded into the case management system. See policy 10.14 Indiana Adoption Assistance Program Overview for further guidance.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-9-2-99.2 Prospective Adoptive Parent](#)
- [IC 31-19-2-2 Adoption of minor child; petition; venue; substituting petitioner](#)
- [IC 31-19-2-7.5 Submission of information, forms, or consents for criminal history check](#)

- [IC 31-19-2-15 Information provided to current foster parent and prospective adoptive parent; explanation of information; signature](#)
- [IC 31-19-8-5 Agency report and recommendation; filing requirements; waiver of report](#)
- [IC 31-19-8-6 Contents of report](#)
- [IC 31-19-11-1.1 Prohibited discrimination and considerations for petitions for adoption filed by persons with a disability](#)
- [IC 31-19-26.5: Adoption Subsidies](#)
- [42 USC 673: Social Security Act](#)
- [42 USC 12102: Definition of disability](#)

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| RELEVANT INFORMATION |
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Definitions

Prospective Adoptive Parent:

A prospective adoptive parent is a person who has filed a petition for adoption of a child under IC 31-9-2-99.2.

Forms and Tools

- [Adoption Consultant Map](#)
- [Explanation of Adoption Summary \(SF 56527\)](#)
- [Post Adoption Services \(PAS\)](#)
- Program of Informal Adjustment– Available in the case management system
- [10.B Tool: Child Social Summary](#)
- [10.A Tool: Termination of Parental Rights \(TPR\)/ Adoption Checklist](#)

Related Policies

- [10.01 Planning for Adoption \(Overview\)](#)
- [10.11 Child Social Summary](#)
- [10.14 Indiana Adoption Assistance Program Overview.](#)
- [12.05 Pre-Service Training Requirements](#)
- [13.07 Conducting Background Checks for Adoption](#)
- [13.08 Evaluating Background Checks for Adoption](#)