7. Selecting the Adoptive Placement

A. Types of Committees Used to Select the Adoptive Resource

There are different types of adoption committees. The child’s caseworker, in consultation with their supervisor, selects the appropriate adoption committee to staff the child for adoption. All adoption committees are responsible for selecting the adoptive placement most likely to meet the child’s needs for permanency, safety and well-being. The committee’s priority is always the best interests of the child.

Local or district adoption committees

- Local or district adoption committees are responsible for selecting the non-current caregiver adoptive resource for a child:
  1. Under the age of six years, with minimum special needs, being placed alone.
  2. Any non-current caregiver relatives if the relative family is the only resource.

- The adoption committee is composed of three members who are uninvolved with the case. These individuals are selected by the district Child Welfare program manager or designee and members uninvolved in the case.

- Current caregiver committees are held at the local or district level (except when the foster parent is an employee or partner agency employee, see section 5, Adoptive Placement Options E. Child Welfare and Partner Agencies Employee Adoptions and Exceptions to the Conflict of Interest DHS Policy for more information). See Section 5 Adoptive Placement Options C, Current Caregiver Considerations and Procedures for Adoption in chapter V for more information about foster parents adopting children in their care.

Central Office adoption committees

- A Central Office adoption committee is used to select an adoptive family for a child:
  1. Over the age of six years.
  2. Part of a sibling group being placed together. – AND/OR –
  3. Who has significant special needs.

- A Central Office Sensitive Issue Adoption Committee is scheduled for a child when:
  1. A current caregiver is being considered along with a relative family.
2. More than one relative family is being considered.
3. A current caregiver is being considered along with other general applicants.
4. A DHS-CAF employee or partner agency is being considered.
5. The local office or district committee believes the adoption committee decision may be brought into a political arena or attract media attention.

**Permanency/adoption council committees**

- These committees may make adoption selections when the local office refers a case meeting the criteria of the local office committee.

- These committees are composed of DHS management and staff approved by the Permanency/Adoption Councils.

- These committees are sometimes called regional committees or subcouncils.

An Adoption Committee chart is included in the Appendix.
B. Selecting the Appropriate Adoption Committee

Procedure

- After consulting with the supervisor, refer the child and the selected prospective adoptive families to the appropriate adoption committee. When selecting the appropriate committee, use the following criteria:

1. The local or district adoption committee is responsible for selecting the adoptive resource when a child is:
   a. Under the age of six.
   b. With minimum special needs and being adopted alone.
   c. When only one relative family who is not a current caregiver is being considered for the child or a sibling group. On occasion, the local office may also delegate this placement selection to a central office adoption committee.

2. Central office committees are responsible for selecting the adoptive resource when a child:
   a. Is age six years and over;
   b. Is part of a sibling group being adopted together; or
   c. Has high special needs.

3. Central office sensitive issue adoption committees are responsible for selecting the adoptive resource when:
   a. More than one relative family is being considered for the child;
   b. A current caregiver is being considered along with a relative family for a child;
   c. A current caregiver is being considered along with other general applicants;
   d. A DHS-CAF employee or partner agency is being considered for the child;
   e. The local office or district committee believes the adoption committee decision may be brought into a political arena or attract media attention.

The Supervisor’s Role

- Provide consultation on the appropriate adoption committee for each child being placed for adoption.
Forms and References

Legal References

Oregon Revised Statutes

- ORS 418.280 – 418.285

Child Welfare Policy

- I-G.1.3.1, Child Welfare and Partner Agencies Employee Adoption Home Studies
  http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-g131.pdf
- I-G.1.5, Adoption Placement Selection
  http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/ig15.htm
- I-A.3.2, Confidentiality of Client Information
  http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a32.htm
C. Adoption Committee Responsibilities and Process

The best adoptive placement decisions are always made as the result of a collaborative process. The committee process provides objective, multilateral decision-making for adoptive placements.

Conflict of interest for adoption committee members – information for the worker

- Committee members may not have had previous casework or supervisory responsibility for the child being presented at an adoption committee for which the committee member is scheduled.

- In order to maintain objectivity, no committee member should have a personal or professional relationship with any family being considered, nor should a committee member previously have been the family’s foster care certifier or adoption worker.

- Committee members with a conflict of interest must immediately notify the child’s caseworker and the committee chair, and find an alternate committee member for that committee.

- If a committee member is not certain if a conflict of interest exists, as soon as possible the member discusses the issue with the supervisor, child welfare program manager, or adoption placement specialist in the Adoption Services Unit.

Confidentiality

- Everyone attending an adoption committee must follow Oregon statute and DHS administrative rules, OAR 413-010-000 through 413-010-0075, Confidentiality of Client Information.

- Release of Adoption Home Study Reports I-A.3.3 describes the conditions when home studies selected for adoption committee may be released. See Procedure in Chapter 5, 7-F Disclosure of Information To and About Prospective Adoptive Families and 7-G Release of Adoption Home Studies for more information on releasing information about the prospective adoptive family.
The adoption committee meeting

- Information about the child is presented first.
  
  1. The child’s caseworker presents information on the child. Any additional individuals invited by the child’s caseworker are invited to present at this time. The child’s attorney, CASA and tribe are to be invited as applicable.
  
  2. Individuals who are community partners attending the committee to help present the child will be excused from the committee meeting prior to the presentations of the prospective adoptive families once the child’s presentation is completed.

- Information about each adoptive family is presented.
  
  1. Each adoption worker presents information about his or her adoptive family.
  
  2. The adoption worker, with the prior knowledge of the committee chair, may invite a consultant with regard to a particular family, such as a medical expert. The consultant will be present only to give their expertise in regard to a particular family. The chair will then excuse the consultant for the remainder of the committee meeting.
  
  3. Prospective adoptive parents and legal or personal advocates for a family under consideration may not attend the committee. However, they may give their input to the committee through written communication.

Adoption committee discussion and decision

- After evaluating the in-depth, detailed information that was presented about the child and the prospective adoptive families, the adoption committee carefully reviews and discusses each potential adoptive family and how they will best meet the needs of the child.

- Committee members record their notes individually and evaluate each adoptive family.

- Discussion occurs in the presence of the child’s caseworker and the adoption workers.

- Adoption committee members vote and select an adoptive family when an appropriate “match” appears to exist.

- In some instances, the adoption committee may identify a back-up family in the event that the selected family does not follow through with the placement.

- If the adoption committee does not select an adoptive family, the adoption committee makes recommendations to the child’s caseworker on how to proceed.
• Adoption committee members may make recommendations regarding transition of the child to the adoptive home, preparation of the family, or preparation of the child for the adoptive placement.

After adoption committee
The caseworker notifies the child’s attorney and CASA that the committee has selected a family for the child after the committee.

The Supervisor’s Role
• Provide consultation to the caseworker on the appropriate adoption committee to use for each child being placed for adoption.
• Ensure that the caseworker is adequately prepared to present the child at adoption committee.

Forms and References

Legal References

Oregon Revised Statutes
• ORS 418.280 – 418.285

DHS Policy
• I-G.1.5, Adoption Placement Selection
  [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/ig15.htm](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/ig15.htm)
• I-A.3.2, Confidentiality of Client Information
  [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a32.htm](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a32.htm)
• I-A.3.3  Release of Adoption Home Study Reports
  [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a33.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a33.pdf)
D. Preparation for Local, District or Central Office Adoption Committee

The adoption committee selects the adoptive placement most likely to meet the child’s needs for permanency, safety and well-being. The committee’s priority is always the best interests of the child.

Preparation for adoption committee

Procedure for the child’s caseworker

- Prior to adoption committee:
  1. Ensure that the case file has all appropriate records related to the child, such as medical, school, mental health, Head Start, etc.
  2. Determine, in consultation with the supervisor, the child and family factors that must be considered to select the appropriate adoption committee. See the procedure “Scheduling Adoption Committee” for more information on how to schedule the committee.
  3. After selecting prospective adoptive families to go to committee, or when a single relative resource is identified, send the adoption workers the following information:
     a. CF 0421, “Adoption Child Summary,” identifying information removed.
     b. Relevant psychological evaluations for the child, identifying information removed.
     c. Therapist’s reports, with identifying information removed.
     d. Other important information to help the family thoroughly understand the child’s needs with identifying information removed.
     e. Refer to 7-F Disclosure of Information to and about Adoptive Families procedure for more detail on information that can be shared.

- Maintain contact with the adoption workers. Ongoing checks with the adoption workers and/or families are important right up until the committee date to ensure their continued availability for the child.

- Bring to the adoption committee meeting a copy of the following:
  2. CF 963, “Required Information Checklist for Adoption Workers,” with all necessary attachments including:
a. CF 421, “Adoption Child Summary,” updated within the year.
   b. Current copies of psychological or therapists’ reports.
   c. CF 246, “Genetic and Medical History of Child and Biological Family.”


**NOTE**: The local adoption committee may be canceled if the child’s caseworker cannot be in attendance or if the committee members do not receive the information packet at least seven days prior to the scheduled committee staffing.

**Forms**

- CF 963 Required Information Checklist for Adoption Workers
  Download only
- CF 421 Adoption Child Summary
  [http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0421.doc](http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0421.doc)
- CF 246 Genetic and Medical History of Child and Biological Family
  [http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0246.doc](http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0246.doc)
E. Disclosure of Information To and About Adoptive Families

In order to make an informed decision, prospective adoptive parents need to have all available background information about a child. The child’s caseworker and the family’s adoption worker need to work together to be absolutely certain that accurate, up-to-date, information about the child is given to the adoptive parents prior to placement.

Sharing information with prospective adoptive families

Procedure for the child’s caseworker prior to adoption committee

- When considering an adoptive family for adoption committee, provide as much information as possible about the child to the family’s adoption worker. The information should be accurate and balanced, including both positive and challenging aspects of the child. The adoption worker uses this information to inform the potential adoptive family about the child.

- Remove identifying information from the following documents prior to sending them to the adoption worker. This includes all last names, foster parent addresses and phone numbers, Social Security Numbers, names of schools and treatment providers, and other information that can be used to identify the child.

  1. The adoption child summary (CF 421).
  2. CDRC evaluations.
  3. Psychological evaluations.
  4. Health information.
  6. Other documentation (such as a video tape of the child, if available) that will help the adoption worker and the adoptive family understand the child’s needs.

- Clarify what information is unavailable or incomplete.

- When general applicant families who do not know the child are being considered, the worker or foster parent is not to provide families being considered any visits or contact with the child prior to the adoption committee. The exception to this is if a general applicant family knows the child and is already having contact with the child, such as a teacher who has contact with the child. In such cases, the worker should discuss with the foster parent and the general applicant the need to refrain from increasing the level of contact with the child, as this resource may not be the resource selected by the adoption committee.
The caseworker’s role when foster parents share information about the child

The child’s foster parents may share information about the child with families that the agency is considering for presentation at adoption committee. The caseworker takes the following actions when this occurs.

**Procedure**

- Decide how to include the foster parents in the information sharing process, which varies from case to case and at different stages in the selection process.

- Talk with the foster parents about the child’s case plan for adoption and how the foster parents can help provide valued information about the child to the adoption worker and adoptive family.

- Foster parents may talk with adoption workers and prospective families selected to be presented at the adoption committee.

- Foster parents may also talk with the family selected by the adoption committee prior to the beginning of the transition with the child.

- The caseworker should participate in conference calls with the adoption worker, foster parents and/or adoptive family to be knowledgeable about what information the foster parent does share with the prospective adoptive family and to ensure that information is shared appropriately.

- Foster parents may talk with the family when transition begins – this is a critical part of the transition.

**Confidentiality of adoptive family information**

Adoption home studies of families may be shared with specific people at certain times in the adoption selection process.

**Procedure**

- CASAs, children’s attorneys and the tribe are allowed to read the adoption home studies of families selected to go to adoption committee. Information in home studies must be redacted if the adoptive family has not signed a release of information. Please see Appendix 5.33 for more information on redacting home studies.
A public or private agency may also receive an adoption home study of a DHS family. Refer to section 7 F of this chapter for more information about releasing adoption home studies.

Other than the above, do not share information about adoptive families with people not directly involved in the selection process.

Do not allow foster parents and therapists to read an adoptive family’s home study. Do not share personal information about the families with foster parents and therapists.

Sharing information about the child after an adoptive family has been selected

Procedure

After an adoption committee has selected a family, provide the adoption worker of the selected family:

1. A copy of the child’s case file.
2. A copy of all of the documents listed on the CF 963, “Required Information for Adoption Workers and Adoptive Parents.”
   a. In the case of a current caregiver adoption, provide the information on the CF 963 to the current caregiver before the adoption placement designation by Central Office. The current caregiver must sign the CF 963 upon receipt of the information.
3. The Child’s Life Story Book or contents with narrative and photos.

The Supervisor’s Role

Talk with the caseworker about notifying the CASA, child’s attorney and tribe about the adoption committee date. Be available for consultation regarding the sharing with these parties the home studies of families selected to go to adoption committee.

Provide consultation and direction to the caseworker regarding the need to contact an assistant attorney general for advice if the caseworker receives a court order to release a home study in circumstances other than described in this procedure.
Chapter V - Adoption, Guardianship, and Other Permanency Plans

- Provide assistance and guidance to the worker redacting the home studies.
- Assure that the caseworker has supplied the family with the child’s complete Life Story Book or the contents to be assembled by the family.
- Assure that the caseworker has provided the adoption worker of the family with the 963 materials for disclosure of the child information.

Forms and References

Legal References

Oregon Revised Statutes

- ORS 7.211, Separate records in adoption cases; accessibility of records limited
- ORS 419B.035, Confidentiality of records
- ORS 419A.255, Maintenance; disclosure; providing transcript; exceptions to confidentiality

Child Welfare Policy

- I-A.3.1, Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality
  [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a31.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a31.pdf)
- I-A.3.2, Confidentiality of Client Information
  [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a32.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a32.pdf)
- I-A.3.3, Release of Adoption Home Study Reports
  [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a33.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a33.pdf)
- I-G.1.5, Adoption Placement Selection
  [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-g15.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-g15.pdf)

Forms

- CF963, Required Information for Adoption Workers and Adoptive Parents
  Download only
- CF 421, Adoption Child Summary – Narrative
  [http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0421.doc](http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0421.doc)
F. Release of Adoption Home Studies

Adoption home studies contain very personal and sensitive information about the adoptive family. Adoption home studies are released only in limited situations and to a limited number of participants in the process. Adoptive applicants may sign an Authorization of Use and Disclosure of Information DHS 2099 form to have their adoption home study released to a private or public agency, CASA, child’s tribe and/or child’s attorney. Even without a release of information signed by the adoptive family, there are a limited number of situations in which parts of the study will be released.

DHS receives adoption home studies from other public and private adoption agencies. The procedure also applies to the release of these other agencies’ adoption home studies for families selected to be presented to an adoption committee.

Consider these principles when carrying out the procedure to release adoption home studies:

- Children’s needs are primary when considering adoptive families.

- When the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) applies to a child, the child’s tribe is invited to participate in the selection of the adoptive family. The level of tribal involvement in the selection process will vary from case to case. Tribes that choose to be involved in the selection process need information about the prospective adoptive families.

- DHS, court appointed special advocates (CASAs), children’s tribes, and children’s attorneys work to assure that children who have adoption as their permanency plan are placed into adoptive families who can meet their needs for permanency, safety, attachment, and well-being. DHS values the information contributed about the child by CASAs, children’s tribes, and children’s attorneys during the process of selecting an adoptive family.

- Prospective adoptive families provide sensitive, personal information to their adoption workers as they prepare adoption home studies. This information and the adoption home studies are confidential and should be released only as described in policy and procedure.

There are three levels of release of adoption home studies.

- If the adoptive family has signed a release of information authorizing the release of the study, the adoptive home study can be released without redaction.

- If the adoptive family has not signed a release, confidential information protected by federal or state law and information that would reveal the family’s identity must be redacted prior to release of the study.
Release and review of adoption home study reports

Procedure

An adoption home study report may be released only to:

- A child’s local office, CASA director, child’s tribe, and a child’s attorney as provided in this procedure.

- A public or private adoption agency:
  1. When the private agency is considering the family who is the subject of the home study for adoption of a child in the custody of a public child welfare agency or under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court, regardless of whether the child is under the supervision of the public agency or a private agency providing supervision on behalf of the public agency. The private or public agency submits a written request for the adoption home study to the DHS adoption worker or supervisor. The adoption worker or supervisor must have an authorization (Authorization for Use and Disclosure of Information DHS 2099) signed by the applicants who are the subject of the adoption home study for disclosure of the adoption home study.

  2. DHS will not provide an adoption home study to a private agency for the purpose of adoption of a child who is not under supervision on behalf of a public child welfare agency or who is not under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court.

  3. The caseworker will redact information as outlined below before releasing the adoption home study to a private or public adoption agency if DHS does not have a signed release from the adoptive family.
Requests by the family who is the subject of an adoption home study

An adoptive family who is the subject of the home study may review the adoption home study for accuracy. They must make their request to review in writing to the adoption worker or supervisor.

Procedure

- Upon written request of the family, prepare a copy of the adoption home study with third party information removed and make that copy of the adoption home study available to the family within a reasonable time for the family to review. Third party information is information provided to DHS by persons other than immediate household members of the prospective adoptive family and includes information from references, employers, adult children of the prospective adoptive parents, and information from health and mental health professionals.

- Redact information electronically, with a black pen or with white-out to conceal any information that is not released to a family. Retain the original redacted version of the adoption home study. If a black pen or white-out is used to conceal information, make a copy to present to the family so that the information is fully concealed.

- Be available to the family during or after the reading of the adoption home study to answer questions and receive feedback. If the adoption worker is not the person receiving feedback from the family, ensure the feedback is given to the adoption worker.

- Do not provide a copy of the DHS adoption home study to the family.

Redaction of adoption home study prior to release

When the adoptive family has not signed a release, there are two levels of information to consider when redacting an adoption home study.

- Redact information that is confidential by federal or state law. Information that must be redacted includes:
  1. Protected health information.
  4. Criminal record check information.
  5. Social Security numbers.
• Redact information from the adoption home study to ensure that the prospective adoptive family cannot be identified as a result of the release of the adoption home study. Information to redact includes:

1. The identity of references for the prospective adoptive family.
2. Information obtained from adult children of the prospective adoptive family.
3. Names of schools, businesses, or other places or things that could help identify a person named in the report or who provided third party information for the report.
5. Last names of persons.
6. Addresses.
7. Personal identification numbers.
8. Telephone numbers.
9. Personal information that would likely embarrass members of the prospective adoptive family if the identity of the family became known.
10. Other information that could be used to identify a person, such as a job title, nickname, ceremonial title, a well known achievement or subject of notoriety.

• Redaction may be done electronically, with thick black pen or with white-out to conceal any information that is not released to a family. Retain the original redacted version of the adoption home study. If black pen or white-out is used to conceal information, make a copy to present to the family so that the information is actually concealed.

Circumstances in which release of an adoption home study may be inappropriate and a summary should be used

In very infrequent circumstances, protection of confidential information cannot be achieved through redaction. In these situations, the interest in protecting information in the adoption home study outweighs the benefits of a release of a redacted report, and a summary of the study will be used. Situations may include when the identity of the adoptive family could not be protected by redaction. Only the Adoptions manager or designee can authorize the use of a summary for release.

• When a situation exists where a summary of the study is needed, request authorization from the DHS Central Office Adoptions manager or designee.

• The Adoptions manager or designee will inform the field office staff requesting the review of the decision.
Process for release of adoption home study to CASA, child’s tribe, and child’s attorney prior to an adoption committee

To provide an appropriately prepared adoption home study to a child’s local CASA program director, child’s tribe, and child’s attorney:

• Inform the child’s CASA or local CASA program director, the child’s tribe, and the child’s attorney, that DHS has selected adoption home studies to submit to an adoption committee. The information will be provided as soon as practicable after selection, but not later than 10 business days before the scheduled adoption committee.

• If the child’s CASA, child’s tribe, or child’s attorney want copies of the adoption home studies of the families to be considered at the adoption committee, the request must be made to the child’s worker or supervisor as soon as possible, but no later than seven business days prior to the scheduled adoption committee.

• Inform the adoption worker of the request from the CASA, child’s attorney and tribe for the home study. If the adoption worker is a DHS worker, you may ask the DHS adoption worker to perform the redaction of the home study as outlined in this procedure.

• Make the appropriately prepared studies available to the child’s CASA through the local CASA program director, to the child’s tribe or the child’s attorney no later than three business days prior to the scheduled adoption committee.

• Should another adoption home study be subsequently selected to submit to the adoption committee, notify the child’s CASA, child’s tribe, and child’s attorney as soon as possible that an additional adoption home study has been selected and provide a redacted copy or summary as quickly as possible and prior to the committee meeting.

• The adoption home study is released to the local CASA program director, not to the CASA assigned to the case.

Release of adoption home studies in circumstances other than described in this procedure

There are no provisions for release of adoption home studies beyond I-A.3.3, Release of Adoption Home Study Reports and this procedure. If a request other than that outlined in this procedure is received, staff with the supervisor and, if needed, the AAG and Adoptions manager.
The Supervisor’s Role

- Ensure that the worker is aware of the conditions under which an adoption home study may be released if there is a request for an adoption home study.
- Ensure that the worker follows the timelines for release of adoption home studies prior to the scheduled committee.
- Ensure that the adoption home study is redacted according to DHS procedure and policy.
- Ensure that the adoption home study is released only as allowed by DHS procedure and policy.
- Staff with the worker if there are requests for release of the adoption home study outside DHS procedure and policy. Consult with the AAG if there is a court order to release an adoption home study outside the scope of DHS policy and procedure.

Forms and References

Legal References

- ORS 419A.170 regarding the CASA as a party and advocate for the child.

Policies

- I-A.3.3, Release of Adoption Home Study Reports
  [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a33.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a33.pdf)

Forms

- DHS 2099, Authorization for Use and Disclosure of Information
  [http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/DE2099.doc](http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/DE2099.doc)
G. Scheduling Adoption Committee

Determine in consultation with the supervisor the type of adoption committee to be scheduled after considering the relevant family and child factors discussed in Chapter V, Selecting the Appropriate Adoption Committee procedure.

- Ensure that the Adoption Services Unit has all required documents including:
  1. CF 0421, “Adoption Child Summary.” This must be less than one year old or be updated within the last year.
  2. Birth certificate (original).
  3. Original ICWA correspondence.
  4. Copies of any psychological evaluations, Child Development and Rehabilitation Center evaluations, therapists reports and other information that documents the child’s special needs.
  5. CF 246, “Genetic and Medical History of Child and Biological Family.”
  6. Copies of adoptive family home studies and study updates, if applicable. Home studies must be completed or updated within the last year, including the criminal history background check.

- Select the appropriate committee. For a local committee, e-mail the local child welfare office adoption committee coordinator to schedule a local or district adoption committee. For a Central Office Adoption Committee, email the Adoptions Unit adoption committee coordinator. Include in the e-mail:
  1. Full name and age(s) of the child/children.
  2. Name and telephone number of each adoption worker and the name of the local child welfare office or private agency that each adoption worker represents.
  3. First and last names for each family being presented and the family’s relationship to the child(ren), if any.
  4. Name of the person invited to committee to present information about the child.

- If a local committee is scheduled, check with the local committee coordinator to determine if the caseworker or the coordinator notifies the adoption workers for the families who will be presented at committee of the location, time, and date of the committee. Notify or verify that notification has occurred. If a Central Office Adoption Committee is scheduled, the Adoptions Unit adoption committee coordinator will coordinate and confirm this information.

- Contact the child’s attorney, tribe and CASA to inform them of the date, time, and location of the committee.
• Invite other people who may contribute to an informed decision. This may include:
  1. Child’s foster parent if they are not being presented.
  2. Child’s therapist.
  3. Involved birth family member, mentor, other professionals involved with the child or a consultant knowledgeable about the child.

• Inform presenters that they may be present during the presentation of the child and will be excused for the remaining portion of the committee. Notify them of the times they are scheduled to present.

• Give the schedule and guest list to the committee chair.

• Provide written information to be presented at the committee to the correct resource at least 7 days prior to the committee date:
  1. For a Central Office Adoption Committee, the Adoptions Unit adoption committee coordinator.
  2. For local office committees, the child’s caseworker or the local office adoption committee coordinator.

• Information packets include the following information:
  1. CF 421, “Adoption Child Summary.”
  2. Copies of any child psychological evaluations, CDRC evaluations, early intervention reports, therapy progress reports and other documentation describing the child, his or her special needs, and placement related recommendations.
  3. Copies of approved adoption home studies, including identification of who will supervise the adoption placement.
  4. CF 250, “Adoption Selection Report,” (include in chair’s packet only).
  5. Copy of child’s recruitment bulletin, when applicable.

Forms

• CF 246, Genetic and Medical History of Child and Biological Family
  [http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0246.doc](http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0246.doc)

• CF 421, Adoption Child Summary
  [http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0421.doc](http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0421.doc)

• CF 250, Adoption Selection Report
  [http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0250.doc](http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0250.doc)
H. The Role of the Adoption Worker

The adoption worker has an important role in the adoption placement selection process. It is the responsibility of the adoption worker to represent adoptive families to the adoption committee and the child’s caseworker. Most often, the adoption worker worked with the family through the adoption certification process and has been the writer of the family’s adoption home study. They should know the family intricately, being able to attest to the family’s interests, desire and ability to parent and meet a particular child’s special needs. If the adoption worker did not author the home study it is imperative that they become very familiar with the family so they can adequately present the family at committee.

Disclosure and discussion of information with the family

The adoption worker also has the responsibility of assisting the family in gathering and processing information about the child. The adoption worker provides guidance and support to the family as they assess their capacity to meet the child’s needs.

Procedure

Prior to committee:

- Schedule to meet with the family to present information regarding the child.
- Obtain from the child’s caseworker information that will assist the family in understanding the needs of the child. This would include a copy of the child summary, mental/physical health evaluations, early intervention evaluations, CDRC evaluations, and any other documentation that portrays the child’s strengths, interests, desires, and challenges.
- Ensure that all identifying information has been redacted. Last name, address, name of school, name of foster parent, foster parent address and phone number, etc. must be removed before information can be given to the prospective adoptive family.
- Interview the child’s foster parent and therapist, if given permission by child’s caseworker.
- Encourage the family to do their own research about the information to gain the best understanding.
- Encourage the family to research and identify resources available to them to meet the child’s needs.
- Inform the family that they may have a conference call with the child’s current caregiver, and caseworker. Include yourself in the conference call.
Dialogue with the family regarding the child’s current and projected long term needs and how they see themselves addressing those needs. Specifically address their plans for day care, after school plans, work schedules, and respite care.

Assist family in forming realistic expectations regarding the child’s transition and integration into their household.

Explore how immediate and extended family members will adjust to the child.

Discuss safety issues with the family.

Discuss with the family their willingness to maintain future contact of the child with birth parents, siblings and extended birth family members.

Explore any questions that the family may have and follow up according with the child’s caseworker.

Ask the family to prepare a photo album of themselves and their home to be shared with the committee. If they are selected, this album will also be shared with the child. The album should be child friendly and therefore focused on the child. Pages can be added later after the child is transitioned.

Explain to the family the role and purpose of the adoption committee. Help the family understand that adoptive placement decisions are based on the best interest and needs of the child. While they may be an exceptional family, they may not be the family selected for a particular child. If they are not determined to be the most appropriate family for a particular child, help the family understand this is not a negative reflection upon their home, rather not in the best interests of the child.

Adoption worker presentation at committee

Committees are scheduled for 3 hours, allowing approximately 20 minutes each for the presentation of the adoptive families. Presentations should be candid, objective and informative.

Some adoption workers like to give committee members a family profile sheet with a list of the strengths of the family as being a match for the child and a list of the concerns. This may serve as a helpful tool. A sample of this adoptive family profile is in Appendix 5.30.
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Procedure

- Be as informed as possible regarding the child’s needs. Maintain the perspective that the child’s best interest is paramount. While the information to be presented is regarding the adoptive family it should be done in the context of the child’s needs.

- Avoid restating what is in the home study or other materials about the family. Focus on updated information that is not included in the home study.

- Provide a balanced presentation. Explain how the family would be capable, or not, of meeting the child’s specific needs. Talk about their strengths as they relate to the child, what they have done to prepare and educate themselves for the child, and ways that they have demonstrated a strong interest in that child.

- Discuss the type of discipline the family anticipates needing to use and how family will deal with behavioral problems, etc.

- Discuss what the family has done to explore local resources on behalf of the child in the event they are selected for adoptive placement.

- Discuss how the family would integrate the child into their family as a member, especially if there are children in the home.

- Anticipate areas where the committee may have questions and be prepared to address. Such areas may include prior allegations of abuse or neglect, bankruptcy, multiple marriages, history of being abused as a child, criminal history, and resolution of infertility. It is acceptable for the adoption worker to state that a particular area is not known. This is preferable to speculating.

- Be clear about the family’s support system and their plan for dealing with the inevitable crises that arise in families.

- Avoid presenting families as being the best match because they are of a specific religion. Do discuss their involvement in their spiritual community, how they hope to involve the child spiritually, what their specific values are, and how they see their religion or spiritual beliefs impacting their discipline and parenting.

If it is suggested that a general applicant family meet the child prior to the committee selection, this is poor practice and should not be accepted. It is acceptable to show the family a photo of the child.

Remember that age, race, color, national origin, and geography cannot be the reasons for making, or not making, an adoptive placement. Energy level, language needs, and transition considerations may be relevant. They need to be relevant for the committee to consider them.
• Distribute the family’s album.

• Let the committee know what level of contact if any has occurred between the families and the current caregiver or the child.

• Remain until the committee has concluded to learn the committee’s decision.

Follow up for the adoption worker after adoption committee

Procedure

• Do not share information about the other families presented at committee. This information is confidential.

• Notify the family of the committee’s decision.

• If the family was selected:

  1. Inform them of any additional information about the child that may not have already been shared.
  2. Coordinate with the child’s caseworker regarding the development of the transition plan.

• If the family was not selected as the first choice but was selected as the backup family:

  1. Verify that they wish to be available for placement consideration if that becomes necessary.
  2. If appropriate, share feedback to family from the committee regarding the family’s strengths and/or areas that may warrant attention.

• If the family was not selected:

  1. Share feedback from the committee with the family to help them see their strengths and areas that they may want to address.
  2. If appropriate, share feedback from the committee regarding the family’s strengths and/or areas that may warrant attention.

• If the family is a current caregiver or a relative presented who was present at committee along with families, the family meets the criteria for being able to request a review of the committee’s decision. If the family chooses to request a review they should be provided the policy information about how to request a review and the timeline information. Refer to section Chapter 5, Adoption Committee Review Process for additional information.
I. Adoption Committee Review Process

All relative, current caregiver, and general applicant adoption committee decisions are final and do not qualify for a contested case hearing through the department. However, there are two avenues through which an adoption committee decision can be reviewed.

Adoption committee decisions, including the current caregiver decision-making process, (preliminary and final recommendations) may be reviewed by the assistant director – CAF or their designee at the assistant director’s discretion and initiative. The receipt of the request for review must occur within seven calendar days after the decision of the adoption committee, measured from the date of the committee meeting, but not counting the date of the adoption committee.

Administrative rule also allows for review of adoption committee decisions for specific committees, requested by a limited number of individuals. The following procedures outline this review process.

Scope of the review

When a review is requested by someone other than the assistant director – CAF or their designee, the review is limited to the selection process and the decisions made by the adoption committee.

The following are people who may request a review

- The child’s caseworker, with approval of the caseworker’s supervisor and district manager or designee.
- The child.
- The child’s attorney.
- A relative who was considered but not selected at an adoption committee, if the relative was considered along with an unrelated current caregiver or one of two non-current caregiver relatives.
- The court appointed special advocate (CASA) for the child.
- A current caregiver who was considered, but not selected at the committee.
- A person who was considered, but not selected who alleges that placement of the child was denied or delayed because of the location of the individual.
People who may not request a review

- A general applicant who is considered but not selected by an adoption committee;
- Any person other than those listed above in this procedure.

Cases on which a review may be requested

- The caseworker assesses that placement in the selected home will not meet the individual needs of the child.
- The adoption committee’s choice was between a relative and an unrelated current caregiver as defined in policy I-G.1.1, Current Caregiver Adoption Planning.
- The adoption committee’s choice was between two non-current caregiver relatives;
- The adoption committee’s choice was between a current caregiver and a general applicant. – OR –
- The adoption committee considered the current caregiver alone but did not select the current caregiver.

A child’s caseworker is the only DHS employee, other than the assistant director – CAF or designee who may request a review of the adoption committee

Procedure

- When the caseworker does not agree with the adoption committee decision, the worker staffs the case with their supervisor and district manager or designee.
- With the approval of the supervisor and the district manager or designee, the caseworker is the only DHS staff person who can request a review.
- If the district manager or their designee agrees that further review should occur, she or he requests a review of the decision by the assistant director – CAF or their designee. The district manager may direct the child’s caseworker to write a letter outlining their concerns and send it to the manager of the Adoptions Unit.
• The request must be submitted to the Adoptions Services manager or designee within seven calendar days after the date of the committee, with a cc: to the assistant adoptions manager and the adoption placement specialist.

• A request to review an adoption committee’s decision must be submitted to the Adoptions Services manager or designee and be received within seven calendar days after the date of the committee. Since the timeline is so short, fax or email is recommended. If sending email, cc the assistant adoptions managers and the adoption placement specialist.

• If the assistant director receives a request for a review, he or she or their designee decides whether to review the decision of the adoption committee within seven calendar days after the deadline of receipt of the request for review.

• The caseworker provides information, as requested, to Central Office to assist in the determination as to whether there will be a review of the adoption committee.

• Be prepared to respond to the following, as requested by the Central Office Adoptions Unit.
  1. The committee process, to include any concerns regarding the facilitation, management, and professionalism of the committee.
  2. The caseworker’s preparation prior to the committee.
  3. The caseworker’s ability and the adoption workers’ ability to provide needed information to the committee, including case history, the diligent relative search, the legal case, the child’s needs, the appropriateness of the families, safety concerns, the child’s attachment, recruitment, visits, openness, disclosure and adoption assistance.

**Who receives notice of the review**

After deciding whether to review the committee decision, the assistant director or designee gives notice to the requestor, the child’s caseworker, the caseworker’s supervisor, the district Child Welfare program manager, the adoption workers who presented at the adoption committee, and the adoption committee chair.

If the assistant director gives notice of intent to review, he or she will determine the best method of reviewing the case. This may include a committee process or review by an individual. The caseworker should be prepared to participate in the review process.
Procedure

- Present information about the child and case if the review is conducted by a committee.
- Provide any additional information to Central Office Adoptions Unit when requested.
- Invite the CASA, child’s attorney and tribe to the review committee if one is convened. The CASA, child’s attorney, and tribe may be available by phone or in person. The CASA, child’s attorney, and tribe may also send a letter to the review committee through the caseworker if they would prefer to not attend or are not available to participate on the committee.

The assistant director’s decision is final

The decision upon review by the assistant director or designee is final, and does not qualify for a contested case hearing through the department. Additional review may be available through the court system.

Notwithstanding the above information about requesting a review, if the time to request a review as described above has expired and there is no request for review pending pursuant to the above, and the deadline set by statute for a person entitled to seek judicial review of an agency decision entered according to the above regarding a review has not expired, then the assistant director may withdraw and reconsider the decision.

- The assistant director may conduct a review of all relevant files and information, and issue a decision affirming or changing the decision and, where appropriate, direct a legal risk placement or adoptive placement. – OR –

- The assistant director may appoint a person to conduct a review of all relevant files and information, and make a recommendation to the assistant director to affirm or change the decision and, where appropriate, recommend a legal risk placement or adoptive placement. After receiving the recommendation(s), the assistant director may issue a decision affirming or changing the decision and, where appropriate, direct a legal risk placement or adoptive placement.

- The assistant director’s decision does not qualify for a contested case hearing.
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Notification of the decision

The Central Office Adoptions Unit notifies the person who requested the review of the decision as soon as possible by letter. In addition, the caseworker may be asked to personally deliver the letter and be available for communication with the requestor. The requester who receives notification from local office staff also receives a copy in the mail.

When the request is from the CASA or child’s attorney, the requestor may receive the decision by letter through fax or mail. The chair and involved local office staff receive a copy of the letter to the requestor by fax.

The Supervisor’s Role

- When the caseworker wants to request a review of the adoption committee process, review the process with the caseworker and district manager or designee. If appropriate, approve the request.

- Provide information when an Adoptions Unit staff member has questions for the supervisor regarding the case.

- Assure that the child’s caseworker provides adequate documentation and information to the review committee.

- Assist the caseworker as needed to provide additional information when there are questions to be addressed during the review process.

Forms and References

Legal References

- ORS 183

DHS Policy

- I-G.1.5, Adoption Placement Selection
  [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-g15.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-g15.pdf)

- I-G.1.1  Current Caregiver Adoption Planning
  [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-g11.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-g11.pdf)