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POLICY 1103 – Approval of Foster/Adoptive Homes

A. POLICY

Foster care is a temporary setting. When children can't return home, adoption is the priority plan. Many foster families may choose to be considered as the adoptive resource of the child or youth they have been fostering.

B. PROCEDURES

1. When a foster family expresses interest in being considered as the adoptive resource for a child or youth in their home, the caseworker and supervisor will discuss if remaining in the current foster family as the adoptive resource would be in the child's best interest using the following criteria:
 - Relationship of the child to the foster family and family to the child
 - The effect on the child of moving from the foster family
 - Ability and willingness of the foster family to accept and commit to the child
 - Length of time child has been residing with the foster family
 - Ability of the foster family to meet the child's needs in both the short and long term
 - Ability of the foster family in terms of age and health status to parent the child to the age of majority
 - Ability of the foster family to validate the child's cultural, racial and ethnic background
 - Willingness to facilitate on-going sibling contact if it is in the child's best interest and there are no safety concerns

2. If the caseworker and supervisor assess the foster family may be a possible permanent placement, the caseworker shall inform the foster family to submit a letter of intent to the caseworker and/or foster home coordinator of their desire to adopt the child placed in their home. Once the letter is received, the coordinator may refer the family to the contractor responsible for completing adoption training and home studies.

3. The contractor will contact the prospective family to explain the adoption home study process and informs them of the next available group sessions.

4. As part of the home study process, families participate in the Family Preparation Course designed to prepare them for adoption. The course includes a group session with parents who have already fostered or adopted children and are open to sharing their experiences. The course also includes information about child development, attachment and trauma, parenting techniques, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, as well as information about the lasting effects of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Prospective parents are encouraged to examine their own motivation for choosing adoption. Families also learn about adoption related issues and openness in adoption.

5. The home study will also include all the other requirements as indicated in DELACARE: Regulations for Child Placing Agencies located here:
https://education.delaware.gov/families/occl/regulations_and_exemptions
6. When the home study is completed and submitted to the caseworker, the caseworker and foster home coordinator will review the home study and the caseworker will make a referral to the Permanency Planning Committee (PPC) for Resource Review and Approval. The caseworker and coordinator will jointly present the case to the PPC. Any further action needed will be documented in the PPC resource review notes.

C. FOCUS

Caseworkers complete the Adoptive Placement Resource Referral in FOCUS

D. FORMS

None