

**CLINTON COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES
FOSTER CARE PROGRAM
POLICY REGARDING MATCHING CHILDREN AND FOSTER
PLACEMENTS (OUT-OF-HOME CARE)**

Clinton County Children Services will select foster homes for children requiring out-of-home care on the basis of the suitability of a family in meeting children's particular needs. Because it is in the best interest of children that they be placed with families who can best meet their needs, Clinton County Children Services shall consider these factors when determining foster home placements for children entering foster care. When matching children with foster caregivers, the agency will consider the immediate needs of the children and the children's permanency plans. When selecting a placement for a given child, the agency will consider all approved families equally, regardless of race, color or national origin. Preference will be given to adult relatives over non-related caregivers when determining a placement for a child. Foster parents, however, will be given priority consideration if placement with relatives is not determined to be in child's best interest and additional special needs of a particular child; the agency will consider the strengths and weaknesses of prospective parents as crucial in determining if they can meet all of the child's needs weighed in the child's best interests. It is the intent of the agency that children experience **one** placement for the duration of their out-of-home care stay. Appropriate matching is one means to ensure such placements are effective.

During the assessment process, the agency will address the following criteria in order of importance as determined and based on the needs of the particular child requiring placement:

- a. the child is placed with a family that can meet the child's needs;
- b. the child's placement history;
- c. the child is placed in the neighborhood of residence prior to removal;
- d. the child is placed in a culturally-compatible foster home;
- e. the child is placed in the school district of attendance prior to removal;
- f. the child is placed in the county of residence prior to removal;
- g. the sibling group needs;
- h. consideration of the impact of the placement on the other children in the home;
- i. the family of origin and child's desires;
- j. the foster caregiver skill level;
- k. the foster caregiver's stated preference;
- l. the proximity to needed community resources;
- m. the permanency plan of child;
- n. the socio-economic background of child and foster caregivers;
- o. the child's issues of separation and bonding.

NOTE: This list is not in priority order.

The assessment or matching determination will occur during a staffing or team meeting which may include the child, his or her birth family, the child's caseworker, casework supervisor, foster care coordinator, child's mental health therapist, guardian ad litem, and any

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other participants involved with the child. While the agency values participants' input, final decisions regarding the placement of children in custody will be at the agency's discretion.

The assessment process and any decision outcomes regarding the child's placement in out-of-home care shall be documented by the child's caseworker in regular dictation which will be recorded and filed in the child's family file at the agency.

Submitted by:

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Approved by:

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