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**ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY  
CFS OPERATIONS MANUAL**

**Effective Date:** September 19, 2007

**Number:** C-0707

## **Adoption Recruitment Guidelines**

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**Purpose** To provide guidelines for child specific adoption recruitment events and on how to proceed when a family is identified through recruitment for a specific dependent child.

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**Approved** This policy was approved by Mike Ryan, Director of CFS, on September 19, 2007.

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**Background** Orange County Social Services Agency's (SSA) Children's and Family Services' (CFS) Adoption Program operates under the tenet that every child deserves a loving, safe, permanent family. The Adoption Program is committed to recruiting adoptive families who meet the needs of its dependent children.

The Adoption Program conducts various adoption recruitment events and also participates in adoption recruitment events that are initiated by outside agencies, companies, churches, etc. The protocol for participation varies depending on the type of event, the Adoption Program's level of participation, and additional factors. The Adoption Program also utilizes the media in an effort to locate appropriate adoptive families for its dependent children. Use of media includes, but is not limited to, print, radio, video, and screened Adoption websites. The Adoption Program is open to participating in new events that are determined to be appropriate.

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- Legal Mandates**
- [California Department of Social Services Adoptions Manual, Title 22, Division 2](#), Sections 35011, 35015, 35017, 35019, and 35197
  - Welfare and Institutions Code, Sections [10850](#), and [16013](#)
  - [Family Code Sections 8708, 8709, 8710, and 8711](#)
  - [Penal Code Section 11167.5](#)

- [Multiethnic Placement Act \(MEPA\), 1996](#)
  - [Civil Rights Act, 1964](#)
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## **POLICY**

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### **Agency Authorization For Events**

When CFS staff is contacted by an outside person requesting participation in an adoption recruitment event or program, authorization must be obtained. The level of authorization depends on the following:

- The Adoption Program's level of participation in the event
- The cost involved
- If dependent children will be directly participating
- Dependent children's level of participation

The Adoption Program Manager will authorize participation in all recruitment events and will determine if any other levels of authorization, e.g., SSA Deputy Director or Court, are required.

### **Court Authorization**

The assigned Senior Social Worker (SSW) must complete an Ex Parte Application and Order to request authorization to utilize the media in an effort to locate appropriate adoptive families for identified dependent children. The ex parte requests approval for participation in future media events so the assigned SSW does not have to request Court authorization each time the child participates in an adoption recruitment event.

### **Parental Consent**

When adoption is the case plan goal, approval from birth parent is not necessary regardless of the child's legal status. Court authorization must be obtained; however, if the child has ongoing contact with the birth parent(s) and/or relatives, non-relative extended family members (NREFMs), etc.

The adoption SSW will inform parents of the adoption recruitment event, explain the purpose, and answer any questions they may have regarding the event and the child's participation.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is defined as the controlled dissemination of case record information to protect the rights of families against identification, exploitation, and embarrassment, as guaranteed by state and federal laws and regulations.

Client confidentiality will be maintained at all times pursuant to relevant laws, regulations, and codes, including but not limited to WIC § 10850, 11478, 17006.5, and 18300, Penal Code § 11167.5, and Juvenile Court Policy regarding Confidentiality of Release of Information. In an effort to maintain confidentiality, the Adoption Program staff will remain aware of laws and regulations and provide specific safeguards when recruiting adoptive families and when its dependent children participate in adoption recruitment events.

Information provided on dependent children participating in adoption recruitment events includes general, non-identifying information only.

Examples of information that may **not** be shared includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Child's last name
- Address
- Date of birth
- Social security number
- Relative's names
- School
- Medical history/diagnoses
- Psychological history/diagnoses
- Legal status
- Family history
- Case history
- Sibling information

Questions and/or concerns regarding confidentiality and any recruiting event are to be brought to the attention of the Adoptions SSSS and the Adoptions Program Manager prior to the event, or immediately upon discovery of any violations.

**Media Inquiries** The SSW is to advise the Adoption SSSS and the Adoption Program Manager of all media inquiries. Refer to Administrative Policy and Procedure (P&P) Media/Press Contacts (D 3), for further information.

**Distribution of Information** All articles, flyers or brochures submitted for SSA internal recruitment (such as TEAM Talk, SSA Newsletters, etc.), unsecured internet, and/or external media recruitment (such as any TV, radio, publications, or websites) must be reviewed and

approved by an Adoptions SSSS, TEAM Supervisor, or any Program Manager.

Identifying information, such as the child's last name, placement, medical, developmental, psychological, academic, legal status, and birth family are prohibited disclosures and should never be included in any release of information.

All information provided for distribution must be limited to the child's favorable characteristics and personal interests only. Detailed information on the child will be provided, as appropriate, through the adoption matching process.

Families with approved home studies may receive additional child-specific information during the recruitment and matching process.

**MEPA  
Requirements**

The Adoption Program participates in many activities and events in an effort to recruit adoptive families for its dependent children.

Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA), 1996, requires diligent recruitment efforts of potential adoptive applicants that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children for whom homes are needed. MEPA prohibits use of the child's or the prospective adoptive parent's race, color, or national origin to delay or deny the child's placement; prohibits denying any individual the opportunity to become a foster parent or adoptive parent on the basis of their or the child's race, color, or national origin; and it requires diligent efforts to expand the number of racially and ethnically diverse foster and adoptive parents.

**Eligibility For  
Adoption  
Recruitment  
Events**

All children for whom adoption is the case plan goal are eligible to participate in adoption recruitment events; however, determination of which event is appropriate varies and these decisions are made by the Adoption Program's Matching Coordinator with the assistance of the assigned SSW. Selection for various adoption recruitment events may be based on the following:

- Child's legal status
- Length of time waiting for an adoptive placement
- Child's readiness for adoption

Case staffings may be necessary if the Matching Coordinator or assigned SSW has concerns regarding participation in the event or if further information is needed.

**Preparing a Child for a Recruitment Event**

Prior to the adoption recruitment event, the assigned SSW will:

- Meet with the child to discuss the details of the event
- Answer questions
- Obtain permission from the child, if it's been determined that the child is of an age and/or developmental level to understand the concept of adoption and recruitment

In addition, the assigned SSW may need to discuss the child's preparation and participation in the adoption recruitment event with collaterals and/or service providers, e.g., counselors.

**Caregiver**

The following will be discussed with the child's caregiver prior to the recruitment event:

- Transportation
- Supervision during the event
- Confidentiality
- Media issues
- The child's current level of functioning, any recent behavioral or emotional issues or changes
- Any concerns that would impact the child's participation in the recruitment event
- Event details, i.e., date, time, location, etc.

**Supervision During Events**

At adoption recruitment events, the adoption recruiter, Adoption SSSS or Adoption SSW must be present with the child **at all times**.

**Post-Event**

After the event, the SSW will discuss the event with the child, including such topics as:

- Child's feelings regarding event
- Interested families
- Child's interest in participating in similar future events

**Identification of A Family Through Recruitment**

If, as a result of a recruitment event, a family expresses interest in adoption, they are to be instructed to contact the Adoptions Matching Coordinator. The Matching Coordinator will serve as the family's initial point of contact and will provide information on the adoption process. If the family expresses interest in a specific child, the Matching Coordinator may speak in general terms about the child, but may not provide specific identifying information.

**Matching**

The Matching Coordinator will discuss any possible matches with the appropriate SSWs.

If the Matching Coordinator determines the identified family is not a match for the specific child they expressed an interest in, but they are interested in adopting, the family will be assessed and matched per CFS P&P [Adoption Matching \(C-0701\)](#).

If the Matching Coordinator determines the identified family is a good match for the child they expressed interest in, they will be referred for a child specific home study, per CFS P&P [Adoption Full Assessment \(C-0102\)](#).

**REFERENCES****Hyperlinks**

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

- CFS P&P [Adoption Matching \(C-0701\)](#)
- SSA Administration P&P [Media/Press Contacts \(D 3\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Foster Home Licensing \(K-0604\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Confidentiality: SSA Records \(F-0105\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Adoption Case Record Confidentiality \(C-0302\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Adoption Full Assessment \(C-0102\)](#)

**Other Sources**

Other printed references include the following:

- Orange County Juvenile Court Policy: Confidentiality and Release of Information, dated January 28, 1997

**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.

<b>Form Name</b>	<b>Form Number</b>
<a href="#">Media Contact Form</a>	None

**Hard Copy Forms**

Forms listed below must 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 that should be distributed in conjunction with this procedure include:

**Brochure Name**

**Brochure Number**

None.

**PROCEDURE**

**Required Actions**

The following actions must be completed when a family is identified for a specific dependent child:

<b>Staff Responsible</b>	<b>Step</b>	<b>Required Action</b>
<b>Adoption SSW Adoption Recruiter</b>	1.	Refer all media contacts to Adoption Recruiter.
	2.	Contact media to determine nature of the request.
	3.	Advise Adoption SSSS of request.
<b>Adoption SSSS Adoption Program Manager</b>	4.	Inform Adoption Program Manager (PM) and CFS Media Relations, via email, of media request and request approval to participate.
	5.	Approve or deny Adoption SSSS request.
	6.	Confer with CFS Media Relations to determine if further approval of CFS management is required prior to approving participation.

7. If PM approved, email Adoption SSSS and Recruiter to inform.
8. If further CFS management approvals are required, email appropriate CFS Deputy Director.
- Recruiter** 9. Determine criteria for participation in event.
10. Email Adoption SSWs to ask for possible participants.
- SSW** 11. Refer eligible participants to recruiter for event.  
Submit ex parte to court, if not already on file.
- Recruiter** 12. Select appropriate participants from those submitted by Adoption SSWs.
13. Make all necessary arrangements for event.
14. Ensure children who participate have approved ex partes on file.
- SSW** 15. Prepare child, caregiver, and parents, if appropriate, for event.
- Recruiter** 16. Contact media to inform of approval for event, advise of confidentiality limitations, and request any available materials for prescreening of content.
17. Coordinate child's participation at event, including transportation.
18. Notify media, caregivers, and SSW of any changes in schedule or cancellation of event.
19. Attend event and monitor media contact with children.
20. Intervene, redirect or terminate media contact as necessary.
21. After the event, follow up with post event arrangements, i.e., receiving a copy of any tapes, determining air time, etc.

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|   | <b>22.</b> | Review and seek required approvals for all recruitment materials.  |
| <b>Adoptions<br/>SSSS, TEAM<br/>SSSS, or PM</b> | <b>23.</b> | Review and approve or deny all recruitment materials for distribution, including print materials, newsletters, unsecured internet, and TV or radio ads.  |
|   | <b>24.</b> | Notify Recruiter of approval or denial of materials.   |
| <b>Recruiter</b>                                | <b>25.</b> | Monitor all media and website content on a monthly basis for accuracy and compliance with confidentiality. If any noncompliance is found, immediately notify media representative, Adoption PM, Adoption SSSS, and SSW of children.    |
| <b>SSW</b>                                      | <b>26.</b> | Contact caregiver; child (if age appropriate), birth parents (if parental rights have not been terminated), and Court via an ex parte of any breeches of confidentiality or any other situation which may be harmful or inappropriate. |
| <b>Recruiter</b>                                | <b>27.</b> | Complete Media Contact Form per SSA Administrative P&P Media/Press Contacts.   |
|   | <b>28.</b> | After the event, if a family calls in to express an interest in a specific child, refer interested party to CFS Matching Coordinator for follow-up.  |
| <b>CFS Matching<br/>Coordinator</b>             | <b>29.</b> | Determine if child is still available.   |
|   | <b>30.</b> | Determine if child is a possible match for interested family.  |
|   | <b>31.</b> | Provide family with general information regarding child they are interested in as well as information regarding adoptive process.  |