

LEGAL AUTHORITY

Federal Law Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (An amendment to the federal Social Security Act).

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-110publ351/pdf/PLAW-110publ351.pdf>

SEC. 206. SIBLING PLACEMENT. Section 471(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)), as amended by sections 101(a), 103, and 204(b) of this Act, is amended— (1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (29); (2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (30) and inserting “; and”; and (3) by adding at the end the following: “(31) provides that reasonable efforts shall be made— “(A) to place siblings removed from their home in the same foster care, kinship guardianship, or adoptive placement, unless the State documents that such a joint placement would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings; and “(B) in the case of siblings removed from their home who are not so jointly placed, to provide for frequent visitation or other ongoing interaction between the siblings, unless that State documents that frequent visitation or other ongoing interaction would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings.”.

MDHHS POLICIES

FOM 722-06I

<https://dhhs.michigan.gov/OLMWEB/EX/FO/Public/FOM/722-06I.pdf#pagemode=bookmarks>

Two areas I would highlight within this policy in addition to the great overall information are:

- For American Indian or Alaskan native children, siblings are defined by the American Indian or Alaskan native child's tribal code or custom.
- A sibling relationship continues after termination of parental rights.

FOM 722-03 page 5

<https://dhhs.michigan.gov/OLMWEB/EX/FO/Public/FOM/722-03.pdf#pagemode=bookmarks>

All siblings in out-of-home placement **must** be placed together, unless: • One of the siblings has exceptional needs that can be met only in a specialized program or facility. • Such placement is harmful to one or more of the siblings. • The size of the sibling group makes one placement impractical, despite diligent efforts to place the siblings within the same home.

Ongoing Efforts to Place Siblings Together

Caseworkers must make ongoing efforts to place siblings together unless the placement would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings. Efforts to place siblings together must continue until case closure. A reassessment of the sibling split placement is required each quarter and must include the efforts and progress made to place all siblings together. The reassessment must be documented in MiSACWIS in the case service plan under supporting information. Note: Termination of parental rights does not dissolve a child's

relationship to his/her siblings. Efforts to place siblings who are in out-of-home care together must continue as described above after termination of parental rights.

Sibling Placement after Adoption

Although not required, best practice suggests efforts be made to identify biological siblings who may have been adopted by reviewing prior case records and documenting known information regarding biological siblings in the child's foster care case file. Placement and visitation are not required but are encouraged when the adoptive parent is interested in placement or visitation.

FOM 722-03 page 17

Sibling Placements Child safety must be the first consideration when making all placement decisions. If a child has a history of being physically and/or sexually assaultive toward his/her siblings, that is a potential reason for separating siblings in placement. Consideration can be given to placing siblings together, if the child has not posed a direct risk to his/her siblings, or to reuniting siblings once the child's behavior stabilizes and appropriate safety plans can be put into place; see FOM 722-03E, Placement Exception Requests and Approvals

SIBLING RESOURCES

The Importance of Sibling Connections

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/siblingissues/siblingissues.pdf>

Placing Siblings Together - Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9uoqOWHosg>