The SSW seeks a placement for a child in the most family-like, least restrictive setting, with the child’s siblings whenever possible, that is in closest proximity to the family’s home. The placement should promote continued contact with the child’s family, friends, community, and other primary connections, including religious connections. The SSW consults with the FSOS and uses the placement decision making matrix as a guide to document legitimate reasons for not placing siblings together at the initial placement. One of the conditions must be met to justify separating siblings. The SSW documents the reasons for not placing siblings together in the case record along with the matrix. Efforts will be made to reunite siblings in the same resource home who are separated during initial placement, unless exceptional reasons exist that prevent reunification.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| YES | NO | POINTS of CONSIDERATION for PLACEMENT |
|  |  | There is an appropriate parent available to take custody of their own child. |
|  |  | There is an appropriate relative available to take custody of their own relative. |
|  |  | One or more sibling has a serious medical problem. |
|  |  | Separation has been requested by one of the siblings. |
|  |  | Reunification of siblings will disrupt a placement in which one of the siblings has formed significant attachment with the caregiver. |
|  |  | The case history includes sibling on sibling perpetration that is serious in nature, including serious violence or sexual abuse. |
|  |  | An adoptive parent is unable to care for an additional sibling. |
|  |  | After exhausting all efforts, there is no relative, DCBS resource home, or PCC resource home willing to accept the sibling group. |

Parents and relatives taking custody of related children can be encouraged to take the entire sibling group. For the purposes of placement consideration and consideration for receipt of the relative placement support benefit, a relative includes:

* A child’s natural or adoptive parent;
* A blood relative of the child including a relative of the half-blood;
* Legally adopted or natural children of the adoptive parent and other relatives of such parents;
* The alleged parent or a relative of the alleged parent may be determined a blood relative through the administrative establishment of paternity; or
* A relative by marriage of any persons listed in bullet points 2-4 above even if the marriage has ended.  This is true as long as the marriage ended after the child’s birth.

The standard does not require a degree of relatedness, i.e. within a first or second cousin, only that the relative relationship of any degree can be reasonably established.

Comments: