

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

Distribution: X and Z

**POLICY GUIDE 2001.18**

**CASE ASSIGNMENT AND PLACEMENT OF SIBLING GROUPS**

**COOK COUNTY - ONLY**

**DATE:** December 1, 2001  
**TO:** Rules and Procedure Bookholders and Direct Service Staff  
**FROM:** Jess McDonald  
**SUBJECT:** Case Assignment and Placement of Sibling Groups  
**EFFECTIVE DATE:** December 1, 2001

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy Guide is to reissue a revised Policy Guide 2000.16 which was issued on November 21, 2000 with an effective date of December 1, 2000. Policy Guide 2000.16 addressed how sibling cases in Cook County are assigned to purchase of service (POS) agencies and the requirements of agencies to place siblings together from the point of assignment. The protocol was developed in partnership with Cook County Purchase of Service staff to assist agency compliance with the Aristotle P. Consent Decree. This revised Policy Guide adds a requirement to submit documentation of the sibling visitation plan to the DCFS Division of POS Monitoring when siblings cannot be placed together.

**II. PRIMARY USERS**

The primary users of these procedures are placement staff of the Department and Purchase of Service agencies.

**III. KEY WORDS**

Case Assignment Placement Unit (CAPU), sibling placements, Secondary Match System.

**IV. BACKGROUND**

In compliance with the Aristotle P. Consent Decree, the Department and case management agencies must make all reasonable efforts to place siblings together. Additional information on Sibling Placements may be found in DCFS **Rule and Procedure 301.70.**



## V. REQUIREMENTS

Purchase of Service Agencies are expected to provide immediate placement for traditional cases at the time of assignment, which may require the agency to recruit and develop emergency and traditional foster homes with the capacity for sibling groups.

### a) Sibling Groups of Three or Fewer

For new cases of three or fewer siblings, assignments will be based on the geographic process described in the Cook County Case Assignment Protocol. The assigned agency will be expected to identify one placement to accommodate all siblings. The assignment process will follow this order:

- 1) The assigned agency must be able to verify the ability to place the sibling group together within one hour of notification by the Case Assignment Placement Unit (CAPU).
- 2) If the agency is unable to place the sibling group together, the case will be re-rotated to another agency. The case will be rotated to a maximum of three agencies.
- 3) If the third agency is unable to place the sibling group together, the Case Assignment Placement Unit (CAPU) will refer the case to a Department contracted sibling program.
- 4) If the contracted sibling program is unable to accept the case, the assignment will remain with the initial agency.
- 5) If the assigned agency is unable to provide a placement for all siblings together, the case must be posted on the Secondary Match System within **five** days of assignment. It is the responsibility of the assigned agency to conduct a diligent search for a foster home for all siblings within 30 days of assignment, in compliance with DCFS Rule 301.70, and provide sibling contact and visitation in compliance with DCFS Rules 301.220 and 301.230.

When a placement is identified with another agency, case management responsibility will be transferred to the licensing agency unless the transfer is clinically contraindicated as determined by the Office of the Executive Deputy Director.

- 6) If the assigned agency is unable to locate a placement for all siblings within **30** days, documentation of the diligent search and/or documentation of clinical reasons that prevent placement together must be submitted to the DCFS-Division of POS Monitoring. Sufficient documentation may include one or more of the following:

- A) Print-out of the child profile screen and broadcast results from the Secondary Match System;
- B) Copies of Payment-Placement Authorization form (CFS 906);
- C) Copies of approved and/or submitted Level of Care;
- D) Copies of approved and/or submitted PRT;
- E) Psychological evaluation;
- F) SACY safety plans;
- G) Clinical staffing notes signed by a supervisor; and/or
- H) Completed 30-day comprehensive assessment.

If the assigned agency is unable to provide sufficient documentation or demonstrate reasonable efforts within 30 days of assignment, the agency will maintain case management but will receive a contract deduction for inability to place.

- 7) If after a diligent search, the agency is unable to place the sibling group together, documentation of the sibling visitation plan must be submitted to the DCFS-Division of POS Monitoring. Documentation should minimally include:

- A) Copies of the Client Service Plan- Visiting Plan (**CFS-497, Part IIA**).
- B) Copies of completed DCFS Visiting Records (**CFS-502**), and/or Sibling Visitation Forms (**CFS-315**).

**b) Sibling Groups of Four or More**

**1) Referrals to Department Contracted Sibling Programs**

New cases of four or more siblings should be considered for identified Department contracted sibling programs. CAPU will determine if the case meets the program eligibility requirements and will contact the designated intake liaison. If the agency accepts the case, the case will be assigned to the appropriate contract and worker. If the agency is unable to accept the case or if the case does not fit within the program requirements, the case will be rotated per the rules of the Cook County Case Assignment Protocol.

## 2) Rotated Assignments

### A) Protective Custody- Immediate Placement

New cases of four or more siblings that are not appropriate for a Department contracted sibling program will be rotated per the rules of the Cook County Case Assignment Protocol. The assigned agency will be notified of assignment by CAPU staff, and will be expected to immediately identify placement for the siblings. Agencies will then take the following steps to place the children:

- i) Agencies must make efforts to identify a single placement for the entire sibling group, both within their own agency and other public and private Cook County providers.
- ii) If the agency is unable to immediately identify a single placement within their own system or through another provider, the agency must place the children in an appropriate emergency placement, and post the case on the Secondary Match System within **five** days of assignment.

It is the responsibility of the assigned agency to conduct a diligent search for a foster home for all siblings within 30 days of assignment, in compliance with DCFS Rule 301.70, and provide sibling contact and visitation in compliance with DCFS Rules 301.220 and 301.230.

- iii) When a placement is identified with another agency, case management responsibility will be transferred to the licensing agency unless the transfer is clinically contraindicated as determined by the Office of the Executive Deputy Director.
- iv) If the assigned agency is unable to locate a placement for all siblings within 30 days, documentation of the diligent search and/or documentation of clinical reasons that prevent placement together must be submitted to the DCFS-Division of POS Monitoring.
- v) If the assigned agency is unable to provide sufficient documentation or demonstrate reasonable efforts within 30 days of assignment, the agency will maintain case management but will receive a contract deduction for inability to place.

## **B) Non-PC Cases- Disrupted Intact Cases**

The assignment of new child cases that were formerly served as intact family cases will follow the rules of the Cook County Case Assignment Protocol.

For cases in which protective custody has not been taken, and a court date is set for Temporary Custody (TC), the screening worker must submit all case opening information to CAPU prior to the TC hearing. The expectations of the assigned placement agency are as follows:

- 1) The assigned placement agency is expected to identify an appropriate placement prior to TC and to attend the TC hearing, but becomes responsible at the point TC is granted.
- 2) Because the child(ren) do not require immediate placement, the assigned placement agency will be given twenty-four (24) hours to identify a single placement for the entire sibling group.
- 3) If the assigned agency cannot identify a single placement, within their own or another agency's system, CAPU will reassign the case and the first agency will receive a contract deduction for inability to place.
- 4) When a placement is identified at another agency, case management responsibility will be transferred to the licensing agency, unless the transfer is clinically contraindicated as determined by the Office of the Executive Deputy Director.

## **c) Add-on Sibling Assignment**

### **1) Case Consolidation with a Single Agency**

When a new sibling case is opened, the case will be assigned per the rules of the Cook County Case Assignment Protocol.

- i) If only one agency is responsible for all sibling cases, the new child case will be assigned to the same agency. The agency must make all reasonable efforts to place the new child with a/all siblings.

- ii) If the sibling is placed apart, the assigned agency will provide for contact and visitation between the siblings in accordance with DCFS Rules 301.220 and 301.230.
- iii) If the assigned agency is unable to place the new child with a/all siblings within 30 days, documentation of the diligent search and/or documentation of clinical reasons that prevent placement together must be submitted to the DCFS-Division of POS Monitoring.
- iv) If the assigned agency is unable to provide sufficient documentation or demonstrate reasonable efforts within 30 days of assignment to place the new child with a/all siblings, the agency will maintain case management but will receive a contract deduction for inability to place.

## **2) Case Consolidation with Multiple Agencies**

- A) If multiple agency's share case responsibility of open sibling cases, the new sibling case will be assigned per the rules of the Cook County Case Assignment Protocol.

When the identified agency is contacted by CAPU with the new child case, the agency will be expected to pursue placement of the new child with at least one sibling.

- B) The initial agency must determine if they can place the new child with all/a sibling within one hour of assignment by CAPU. If a placement with a sibling is not possible, CAPU will contact the other agency(s) involved with the family in the following order:
  - i) most siblings in any placement type.
  - ii) most siblings in traditional (non-specialized) foster or home of relative.
  - iii) any sibling in traditional (non-specialized) foster or home of relative.
  - iv) sibling in any foster care placement type.

**NOTE:** Children in non-foster care living arrangements, as verified by a current CFS 906 and in CYCIS, will not be considered when evaluating sibling placement together (i.e. Runaway, Detention, Department of Corrections, Institution, Group Home, Independent Living, Health Care Facility, Hospital, College, Armed Services Duty, or Emergency Shelters).

- C) Each agency will be given one hour to respond to CAPU prior to CAPU contacting the next agency. If no involved agency is able to place the add-on child with a sibling, the assignment to the initial agency will stand.
- D) The assigned agency must contact the sibling's agencies(s) to plan a consolidated placement.
- E) If the sibling is placed apart, the assigned agency will provide for contact and visitation between the siblings in accordance with DCFS Rules 301.220 and 301.230.
- F) If the assigned agency is unable to place the new child with a/all siblings within 30 days, documentation of the diligent search and/or documentation of clinical reasons that prevent placement together must be submitted to the DCFS-Division of POS Monitoring.
- G) If the assigned agency is unable to provide sufficient documentation or demonstrate reasonable efforts within 30 days of assignment to place the new child with a/all siblings, the agency will maintain case management but will receive a contract deduction for inability to place.

## **VI. COMPLIANCE**

The Department will closely monitor compliance with this and all other sibling protocols. Non-compliance with the Aristotle P. Consent Decree may result in Department imposed Corrective Action up to and including intake hold.

## **VII. QUESTIONS**

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact Melissa Ludington at 312-814-6800.

## **VIII. FILING INSTRUCTIONS**

Remove Policy Guide 2000.16 filed behind Rule **Section 301.70, Sibling Placement**, and replace it with this revised Policy Guide.

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