

Arizona Department of Child Safety

Adoption Selection Process

The Adoption Selection Process includes the following parts and the forms listed.

Part 1: Preparation for selection of an adoptive family

Child Information (CSO-1045A/CSO-1045A)

Family Response to the Child Information (CSO-1045B)

Part 2: Adoptive Family Selection Meeting

Family Selection Meeting Cover (CSO-1045C)

Family Selection Meeting Worksheet (CSO-1045D)

Part 3: Meeting with the Family about the Child

Part 4: Transition

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Part 1: Preparation for selection of an adoptive family

To prepare for the selection of the adoptive family:

1. Determine the needs of the child.
 - a. Review the child's file and make copies of these documents for later use.
 - Family History form (CSO-1067A);
 - Child's medical records;
 - Child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP);
 - Child's psychological evaluations;
 - Child and Family Team summaries;
 - Parents' psychological evaluations (confidential);
 - Parents' medical records (confidential); and
 - Child's birth certificate.
 - b. Complete the *Child Information* form (CSO-1045A).
 - Visit with the child and the current caregiver;
 - Discuss the questions on the form; and
 - Obtain current photos of the child.
 - c. Contact all previous Child Safety Specialists who may have information about the child.
 - Include additional information in the *Child Information* form (CSO-1045A).
 - Ask for their opinion about specific characteristics a family should have to best meet the needs of the child.
 - d. Consider the child's siblings and how this will impact in the placement decision with relation to the following:
 - Does the child have a sibling(s) in out-of-home placement?
 - If so, have reasonable efforts been made to place the child in the same home with his/her sibling(s)?
 - Have the sibling(s) adoptive parents been contacted and asked about the adoption of this child?
 - Has placement with siblings been ruled out? If so, why?
 - Has the court made findings about sibling placement?
 - If the child cannot be placed with sibling(s), document the reason it would be contrary to the safety and well-being of any of the siblings, and who made the decision.
 - If siblings are not placed together, what visitation or other ongoing contact is occurring between siblings? Is this level of visitation and ongoing contact expected to continue after adoptive placement and finalization?
 - If no visitation or ongoing contact is occurring, document the reason that such visitation and contact is contrary to the safety and well-being of any of the siblings.
 - Is there a possibility of sibling contact in the future?

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- If there is a sibling who has a DDD Support Coordinator, consult and coordinate with the DDD Support Coordinator in order to attempt to keep siblings together.
- e. Review efforts to identify relatives or significant others .
- Have all relatives and significant others been identified, contacted and ruled out as placement options?
 - Review the Notice to Relative or Person Having a Significant Relationship with the Child (CSO-1103A) and the Response by Relative or Person Having a Significant Relationship with the Child (CSO-1104A).
 - What is the child's relationship with the child's grandparents or other members of the child's extended family including a person or foster parent who has a significant relationship with the child?
 - Is the child having visitation and ongoing contact with the grandparent or other members of the child's extended family? If not, why?
 - Is this level of visitation and ongoing contact expected to continue after adoptive placement and finalization? If not, why?
 - Is the grandparent or other members of the child's extended family or current or former foster parents or other significant others available to support the child and the adoptive family?
- f. Contact any relatives or kin who may have information about the child.
- Enter additional information on the Child Information form (CSO-1045A).
 - Ask them for their opinion about specific characteristics a family should have to best meet the needs of the child.
- g. If applicable, document how the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) policies, specifically placement preferences, are being followed. Follow procedures in Placement Preferences for an Indian Child.
- What is the child's current and expected ongoing relationship and connection to his/her tribe?
 - How does the child view his/her relationship with the tribe?
 - Is the tribe an available resource in maintaining the child's cultural identity and tribal connection or a support to the child and the adoptive family?
- h. Determine the wishes of the child and the child's parents, if appropriate. Note: A child age twelve years or older must give consent to his/her adoption.
- What are the wishes of the child about adoptive placement?
 - What are the wishes of the child's birth parents unless the parent's rights have been terminated or the court has established a permanency goal of severance and adoption?
 - Is there any plan to enter into a Communication Agreement between the child, birth parent and adoptive family?
2. Identify potential families for adoption.
- a. Request family certification studies from the Central Adoption Registry.

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- If a specific family is known, being considered and it is known that they are on the Registry, request a home study to be included for that family.
 - The Adoption Registry Specialist forwards copies of families' home studies for review. This should include the original certification study and any extensions or amendments.
- b. Review all the studies received. Utilize the Child Information form (CSO-1045A) to best understand the prioritized needs of the child.
- Set aside personal preferences and biases and focus on the specific identified needs of the child.
 - Review the Child Desired section of the home study to determine if the family is open to the specific characteristics of this child.
 - Are tribal requirements met, if applicable?
- c. Select the families that can best meet the safety, social, emotional, physical and mental health needs of the child to present at the Adoptive Family Selection meeting.
- There is no specific number of families that can be considered, but the selection may be narrowed to those that may clearly be able to meet the needs of the child.
 - Limit the families only on their ability to meet the child's needs.
 - Continue with an Adoptive Family Selection meeting even if there is only one family to be considered.
 - Other families may be considered as suggested by a licensing agency if the certification worker thinks another family can best meet the child's needs; however, there is no obligation to consider other families. Request a copy of that family's certification study be sent from the Central Adoption Registry for consideration.
- d. Contact the adoption agency representative for each family.
- Provide the agency representative a copy of the [Child Information](#) (CSO-1045A) to share with the family so the family can determine if they are interested in being considered for this child.
 - Ask the family to complete the *Family Response to the [Child Information](#)* (CSO-1045B). This will provide additional information about how the family can meet this child's needs. A family may still be considered without the form.
- e. Schedule the Adoptive Family Selection meeting and invite the following persons to participate as the *selection/decision making team*. Provide them with the Child Information (CSO-1045A) and Family Response (CSO-1045B), and the family home studies.
- Adoption/Child Safety Specialist;
 - Adoption/Child Safety Specialist's Supervisor;
 - Guardian Ad Litem/Child's Attorney;
 - CASA;
 - Tribal representative (if applicable);
 - Therapist and/or CFT facilitator;
 - DDD Support Coordinator (if applicable);

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- Youth (*see 'h' below before deciding*); and
 - Other persons considered appropriate by the Adoption/Child Safety Specialist and Supervisor.
- f. Invite the following persons to provide information about the child and families and be the **resource team** in the selection process:
- Adoption certification workers and/or the agency representative;
 - Out-of-home care provider;
 - Previous Child Safety Specialist (if applicable);
 - Previous Child Safety Specialist Supervisor (if applicable);
 - DDD Support Coordinator for sibling (if applicable); and
 - Other significant persons as considered appropriate by the Child Safety Specialist and Supervisor.
- g. The Adoption/Child Safety Specialist should discuss the child's involvement with those who know him/her best and determine how to involve the child.
- Discuss the characteristics of a family the child wants.
 - Discuss what the child considers to be most important about a family.
 - Discuss the types of families who are being considered rather than the specific families.
 - Assess and determine if the child should participate in the meeting. Consider the child's maturity and stability to cope with the information that will be presented at the meeting.
 - After a selection is made by the team and the family has decided they want to go forward, discuss the family with the child.

Part 2: Adoptive Family Selection Meeting

1. Have the following documents available at the meeting:
 - Child Information (*CSO-1045A*);
 - Family home studies;
 - Family Response to the Child Information (*CSO-1045B*);
 - Family Selection Meeting Worksheet (*CSO-1045D*); and
 - Family Selection Meeting Cover (*CSO-1045C*).
2. Have the participants introduce themselves.
3. Explain the meeting process and include the following points:
 - The **Child Information** form (*CSO-1045A*) will be used to guide the discussion of the child's needs.
 - The family home studies and **Family Response to the Child Information** (*CSO-1045B*) will be used to guide the discussion of the prospective adoptive families and their ability to meet the child's needs.
 - The resource team will be asked to present their information about the child or the family and then be excused.
 - The discussion will center on the ability of a family to meet the child's needs.

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- The *selection/decision making team* is expected to set aside personal biases and values in the discussion about the families.
 - Expectations for confidentiality for all parties present.
4. Review the *Child Information* form (*CSO-1045A*) and answer questions about the child.
 - Allow participants to add information they feel is important to know about the child.
 - The description of the child and his/her needs be thorough and accurate and that characteristics are not “over-sold” or under revealed.
 - Present what the youth has described about what he/she is looking for in a family.
 - Present the wishes of the child's birth parents unless the parent's rights have been terminated or the court has established a permanency goal of severance and adoption.
 5. Explain the *Family Selection Meeting Worksheet (CSO-1045D)*.
 - Explain that the worksheet:
 - Is used to assess how each family can meet the needs of the child and identify which needs are the highest priorities for this child.
 - Is to be used to direct the discussion, but is not expected to determine the best family for this child.
 - The selection of the family will be determined by the assessment of the participants about how each family is uniquely qualified to meet this child's priority needs.
 6. Review the policy above for some of the factors to be considered in selecting an adoptive home.
 7. Have the Adoption Certification Specialists present the families. They should:
 - Be specific about what is unique about the family and why the family is a good match for this child or sibling group. Present information from the *Family Response to the Child Information (CSO-1045B)* if available.
 - Discuss:
 - The family's ability to meet the child's needs identified in the Child Information form (CSO-1045A) as well as the child's safety, social, emotional, physical and mental health needs and the ability to financially provide for the child.
 - Any established relationship between the child and the prospective adoptive family.
 - The availability of relatives, the child's current or former foster parents or other significant persons to provide support to the prospective adoptive family and child.
 - The marital status, length and stability of the marital relationship of the prospective adoptive parents.
 - Allow the *selection/decision making team* to ask the adoption certification specialist questions about the families.
 8. Discuss as a group the attributes or potential challenges for each family and their ability to best meet the child's needs identified in the *Child Information (CSO-1045A)* as well as the child's safety, social, emotional, physical and mental health needs.

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9. Use the *Family Selection Meeting Worksheet (CSO-1045D)* to record information about the families. The team will use that information to consider how each family can meet each of the identified needs of the child. The information includes:
 - The family's ability to meet the needs is assessed as high, moderate or low.
 - List the family attributes identified that led to that assessment.
 - The tool should help guide the team in determining which families are identified as being able to best meet the needs that are the highest priority for the child.
10. After discussing each family and the family's abilities to meet the needs of the child, the *selection/decision making team* will decide and select by consensus which family appears best suited to meet the child's needs.
11. The *selection/decision making team* will document which family is selected and why on the *Family Selection Meeting Cover* form (*CSO-1045C*).
 - If there were other families who could also meet the child's needs, indicate a second or third choice.
 - In the event the first family decides not to have the child placed with them, the second family may be contacted or additional family studies may be requested and another Adoptive Family Selection meeting held.
12. If the *selection/decision making team* is unable to achieve consensus in determining which is the best family for this child, the team may:
 - Request to interview the potential families by asking the adoption certification workers to arrange a meeting. Attempts should be made to arrange these interviews within five working days;
 - Request additional home studies from the Central Adoption Registry and schedule another Adoptive Family Selection meeting; or
 - Refer the child for Child Specific Recruitment.
13. All Adoption Certification Specialists will be notified within one working day of the outcome of the Adoptive Family Selection meeting, which family was selected and how the decision was reached.
14. The Adoption Certification Specialist for the selected family will contact the family, notify them of their selection and assist in scheduling a meeting to have complete information about the child presented to them.
15. The Adoption Certification Specialists for the families that were not selected will contact the families within three working days of the Adoptive Family Selection meeting and notify them that they were not selected.

Part 3: Meeting with the Family about the Child

The child/youth is not included in this meeting for therapeutic reasons.

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1. The following persons should be invited to this meeting, however, it is only necessary for the current Adoption/Child Safety Specialist, agency Adoption Certification Specialist and the family to be present:
 - The selected family;
 - Adoption/Child Safety Specialist and Supervisor;
 - Adoption certification Specialist ;
 - Guardian Ad Litem;
 - Foster parent/out-of-home care provider;
 - CASA;
 - Tribal representative (if applicable);
 - Therapist and/or CFT facilitator;
 - Previous Child Safety Specialist, if applicable; and
 - Previous supervisor, if applicable.

2. Bring the following documentation to the meeting. The parent's information and placement's information MUST be redacted.
 - Child Information;
 - The Family History form;
 - Therapy and/or CFT notes;
 - Information about the birth parents; and
 - Picture of the child and videotape if available.
 - A copy of:
 - The child's medical records;
 - The child's psychological evaluations;
 - The child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

3. Review all of the child's information with the family.

4. Discuss how the child is currently doing as well as his/her history.
 - The foster parent/out-of-home care provider, if present, can give an update on this.
 - If the foster parent/out-of-home care provider is not present, set up a meeting with the new family to review daily routines and needs.

5. Discuss the child/children's legal status at this time. If the child is not legally free for adoption, discuss the legal risk and the projected course with the family.
 - Status of the termination of parental rights. Include if the parents are contesting the severance.
 - Parents' involvement.
 - Visits between child and parents.
 - Projected time-frame for completing the severance.
 - Kinship relationships that should be maintained, include who and expectations.

6. Allow time for questions and answers.

7. Discuss the following Adoption Subsidy issues:
 - Adoption Subsidy eligibility and if it is likely this child is eligible.

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- Adoption Subsidy expectations of the family, include rates or amounts.
 - Ask if the family is able to adopt without Adoption Subsidy.
 - Need for Adoption Subsidy maintenance.
 - Explain what is included and what is not. If this is a licensed foster home, it is important to explain the difference between foster care reimbursement and Adoption Subsidy.
 - Address specific questions.
 - Give the potential adoptive family the Adoption Subsidy pamphlet.
8. Discuss whether there are any reasons the adoptive family should become licensed as foster parents.
9. Discuss the transition process. (Refer to Development of an Adoptive Placement Transition Plan) Note: The Adoptive Placement Transition Plan will be influenced by the child's relationship with the identified adoptive family. A child who has an established relationship with the identified adoptive family will most likely have a less intensive Transition Plan.
- Plan a meeting to develop the transition plan.
 - Discuss how to introduce the new family to the child.
 - Discuss expectations about how the transition between homes should occur.
 - Focus and base the plan on the needs of the child as identified in the preparation section.
10. Discuss transfer of services.
- Document who is responsible for each service.
 - When the transition can take place.
 - Transfer of services between counties or states may take longer, but need to be carefully coordinated to prevent a delay in transitioning the child.
 - Determine if there is a preference for where the adoption will finalize so steps can be taken for preparing after the transition.
11. Allow the family at least 24 hours following the meeting to make a decision about placement of the child.
- Recommend that the family review all the documents provided and contact the placement and/or other parties, before making a decision.

Note: If the family does not accept placement, the family must return all of the information regarding the child.

Part 4: Transition

1. Develop a Transition Plan which will vary on a case-by-case basis.
 - The Adoption/Child Safety Specialist, adoptive family, current out-of-home care provider and others develop the plan as appropriate.

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- Should be child focused and based on the needs of the child as identified in the preparation section.
 - Include when and where the first visit will occur.
 - Discuss how many visits are anticipated.
 - Discuss overnight visits and how to decide when the child is ready.
 - Discuss what will determine when the child is ready to move to the new home.
 - Provide written copies of transition plan to the adoptive family and out-of-home care provider.
2. Prepare the child for the upcoming move. (Refer to Guidelines for Preparing a Child for Adoptive Placement.)
 - How the child is prepared will depend on the age and circumstances of the child.
 - The appropriate person to prepare the child will depend on the individual child and may be presented by the child's Adoption/Child Safety Specialist, out-of-home care provider, therapist, or someone else close to the child.
 - It is important that all team members know the plan and communicate the same information to the child.
 - Present pictures of the new family to the child prior to the child meeting the adoptive parents.
 3. Schedule the first visit between the adoptive parents and the child.
 - The first visit should occur at the child's residence.
 - The Adoption/Child Safety Specialist must be present during the first visit. The previous Child Safety Specialist may also be invited to the first visit if he/she has a more significant relationship with the child.
 - During the first visit, schedule the next two to three visits between the child and the adoptive parents.
 4. During the transition period.
 - The Adoption/Child Safety Specialist must communicate with the current out-of-home care provider and the adoptive parents as often as necessary to gauge how the child is doing.
 - Discuss with the current out-of-home care provider and the adoptive parents how the child is adapting and ways to help the child.
 - Discuss future visits and the anticipated date that the child will be moved.
 5. Arrange services (therapist, psychiatrist, speech, therapist, etc.) for the child during the transition.
 - Ensure that services are coordinated and arrangements are made for the child to attend appointments.
 - Determine who will be taking the child to appointments during each step of the transition.
 - Maintain services with the same providers, if possible, but at least until the child is settled in the new home and new services are arranged as necessary.
 - Transfer all services prior to the final move date for the child, if applicable.

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6. Have a case conference when child is ready to move to the new home.
 - Include the adoptive family, current out-of-home care provider and all service providers.
 - Discuss all of the people involved with the child such as the CASA, GAL, doctors, dentists, therapists and any family.
 - Discuss the child's services and appointments.
 - Confirm all services are in place.
 - Discuss final details.
7. Arrange for the child to move to the new home.
 - If a child is **legally free for adoption**, the child can be placed with the certified adoptive family. Provide the placement with a Notice to Provider and copy of the CMDP card.
 - If a child is **not legally free for adoption** and being placed in a certified adoptive home, a Motion for Change of Physical Custody (CPC) must be filed by the Adoption/Child Safety Specialist.
 - The CPC should be filed while the child is having visits with the prospective adoptive family.
 - The Adoption/Child Safety Specialist does not need to complete a home study since the prospective adoptive parents have already been certified to adopt.
 - If the child is **not legally free for adoption** and the adoptive parents are also licensed to provide foster care, a CPC **does not** have to be filed.
8. Ensure that the previous out-of-home care provider gives the new family a complete placement packet including all of the forms and documents listed on the Placement Packet Checklist Information for Out-of-Home Caregivers, FC-120.
9. Review the information with the adoptive family.
 - Discuss the child's services and appointments.
 - Explain foster care billing, if applicable.
 - Answer any questions.
10. Have the adoptive parents sign the *Adoptive Placement Agreement, CSO-1055A* once the child is placed for adoption in their home.
 - The Adoptive Placement Agreement must be placed in the case file.