

NOTICE OF RULE MAKING

Pursuant to A.C.A. § 9-28-103, the Director, Division of Children and Family Services, issues proposed changes to the Division's:

- **POLICY VI-C: Maintaining Family Ties in Out-of-Home Placements**
 - To update policy per Act 1017 of the 90th General Assembly, Regular Session regarding placing siblings separately in out-of-home placements, requirements for regular and consistent contact between separated siblings, and 90 day case reviews of separated siblings
 - To include information regarding supervised parent-child visits and the potential role of foster parents in parent-child visits
 - To revise policy for general formatting and organizational purposes to more clearly outline requirements regarding contact between children in out-of-home placements and their parents, siblings, other family members, and fictive kin

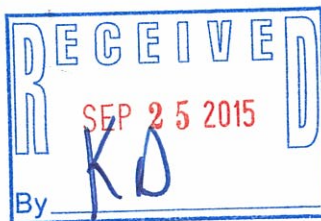
- **POLICY VII-I: Division Contact with Children in Out-of-Home Placements**
 - To update policy to more clearly articulate expectations regarding caseworker visits with children in out-of-home placements including:
 - Noting the federally required monthly visit by a Family Service Worker (FSW) or FSW Supervisor
 - Encouraging additional visits and/or contact by other DCFS support staff or volunteers even though such contact will not meet the federal requirement for the monthly visit

- **POLICY VII-J: Division Contact with Biological Parents, Legal Custodians, and Legal Guardians Involved in Out-of-Home Placement Cases** (*new*)
 - To establish policy specific to contact with biological parents, legal custodians, and legal guardians involved in out-of-home placement including frequency and goals of home visits.

The proposed changes are available for review at the Division of Children and Family Services, Policy Unit, 5th floor Donaghey Plaza South, 7th and Main Streets, Little Rock, AR. 72203-1437. All comments must be submitted in writing to the Policy Unit no later than October 26, 2015. All the proposed changes may be viewed in their entirety at

<https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net/CW/Notice%20of%20Rule%20Making/Forms/AllItems.aspx>.

If you need this material in a different format, such as large print, contact our Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator at 501- 682-8830 (Voice) or 501- 682-1442 (TDD). The Arkansas Department of Human Services is in compliance with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act and operates, manages and delivers services without regard to age, religion, disability, political affiliation, veteran status, sex, race, color or national origin.



Cecile Blucker ^{by} *BD*

 Cecile Blucker
 Director, Division of Children and Family Services

 9-25-15

 Date

BUREAU OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Children and Family Services
AMENDING ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

TITLE: Revised Rules

- **POLICY VI-C: Maintaining Family Ties in Out-of-Home Placements**
- **POLICY VII-I: Division Contact with Children in Out-of-Home Placements**

New Rule

- **POLICY VII-J: Division Contact with Biological Parents, Legal Custodians, and Legal Guardians Involved in Out-of-Home Placement Cases**

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE: January 4, 2016

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: A.C.A. 9-28-103

NECESSITY AND FUNCTION: Revised Rule

- **POLICY VI-C: Maintaining Family Ties in Out-of-Home Placements**
 - To update policy per Act 1017 of the 90th General Assembly, Regular Session regarding placing siblings separately in out-of-home placements, requirements for regular and consistent contact between separated siblings, and 90 day case reviews of separated siblings
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 - To establish policy specific to contact with biological parents, legal custodians, and legal guardians involved in out-of-home placement including frequency and goals of home visits.

PAGES FILED:

 ^{by B.D.} 9-25-15

Signature

Name: Cecile Blucker

Title: Director

Section: Division of Children and Family Services

Department of Human Services

PROMULGATION DATES: September 26, 2015 – October 26, 2015

CONTACT PERSON: Christin Harper
DHS-DCFS Policy Unit
Phone: (501) 682-8541
Fax: (501) 683-4854
Email: christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.gov



**Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services**

700 Main Street, Donaghey Plaza South, 5th Floor

P.O. Box 1437, Slot S560

Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437

Telephone (501) 682-8008 TDD (501) 682-1442 FAX (501) 682-6968

September 25, 2015

Donna K. Davis
Subcommittee on Administrative Rules and Regulations
Arkansas Legislative Council
One Capitol Mall, 5th Floor
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: Initial Filing - Regular Promulgation

Dear Ms. Davis:

Please place the Division of Children & Family Services on the Legislative Administrative Rules & Regulations Subcommittee agenda for review of the Rules as listed on the Questionnaire. The public comment period is from September 26, 2015 to October 26, 2015, with an effective date of January 4, 2016.

Enclosed are copies of the Questionnaire, Summary of Changes, Financial Impact Statement and Rule.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Christin Harper, Policy & Professional Development Administrator, Division of Children and Family Services, P.O. Box 1437, (Slot S570), Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437; phone 682-8541; email christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.gov or fax 683-4854.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Cecile Blucker" with a small "by" and "BD" written above the name.

Cecile Blucker

Director, Division of Children and Family Services



Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Children and Family Services

700 Main Street, Donaghey Plaza South, 5th Floor

P.O. Box 1437, Slot S560

Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437

Telephone (501) 682-8008 TDD (501) 682-1442 FAX (501) 682-6968

September 25, 2015

Varnaria Vickers-Smith, Legislative Analyst
Senate Interim Children and Youth Committee and the
House Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs Committee
Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research
One Capital Mall, 5th Floor, Room R-516
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: Initial Filing - Regular Promulgation

Dear Ms. Vickers-Smith:

Please place the Division of Children & Family Services on the Children & Youth Committee agenda for review of the Rules as listed on the Questionnaire. The public comment period is from September 26, 2015 to October 26, 2015, with an effective date of January 4, 2016.

Enclosed are copies of the Questionnaire, Summary of Changes, Financial Impact Statement and Rule.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Christin Harper, Policy & Professional Development Administrator, Division of Children and Family Services, P.O. Box 1437, (Slot S570), Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437; phone 682-8541; email christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.gov or fax 682-6968.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Cecile Blucker in cursive, with the initials "C.B." written to the right.

Cecile Blucker

Director, Division of Children and Family Services

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FILING PROPOSED RULES AND REGULATIONS
WITH THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND JOINT INTERIM COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT/AGENCY Department of Human Services
DIVISION Division of Children and Family Services
DIVISION DIRECTOR Cecile Blucker
CONTACT PERSON Christin Harper, Policy & Professional Development Administrator
ADDRESS P. O. Box 1437, Slot S570, Little Rock, AR 72203-1437
PHONE NO. (501)682-8541 FAX NO. (501) 683-4854 E-MAIL christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.g
NAME OF PRESENTER AT COMMITTEE MEETING Christin Harper
PRESENTER E-MAIL christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.gov

INSTRUCTIONS

- A. Please make copies of this form for future use.
- B. Please answer each question completely using layman terms. You may use additional sheets, if necessary.
- C. If you have a method of indexing your rules, please give the proposed citation after "Short Title of the Rule" below.
- D. Submit two (2) copies of this questionnaire and financial impact statement attached to the front of two (2) copies of the proposed rule and required documents. Mail or deliver to:

Donna K. Davis
Administrative Rules Review Section
Arkansas Legislative Council
Bureau of Legislative Research
One Capitol Mall, 5th Floor
Little Rock, AR 72201

1. What is the short title of this rule? Updates to Policies and Procedures Regarding Division Contact with Families and Children Involved in Out-of-Home Placement Cases

2. What is the subject of the proposed rule? To update policies and procedures regarding Division contact with families and children involved in out-of-home placement cases per Act 1017 of the 90th General Assembly, Regular Session as well as child welfare best practices.

3. Is this rule required to comply with a federal statute, rule, or regulation? Yes No

If yes, please provide the federal rule, regulation, and/or statute citation. _____

4. Was this rule filed under the emergency provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act? Yes No

If yes, what is the effective date of the emergency rule? _____

When does the emergency rule expire? _____

Will this emergency rule be promulgated under the permanent provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act?

Yes

No

5. Is this a new rule? Yes No

If yes, please provide a brief summary explaining the regulation. _____

Does this repeal an existing rule? Yes No

If yes, a copy of the repealed rule is to be included with your completed questionnaire. If it is being replaced with a new rule, please provide a summary of the rule giving an explanation of what the rule does. _____

Is this an amendment to an existing rule?

Yes No

If yes, please attach a mark-up showing the changes in the existing rule and a summary of the substantive changes. **Note: The summary should explain what the amendment does, and the mark-up copy should be clearly labeled "mark-up."**

6. Cite the state law that grants the authority for this proposed rule? If codified, please give the Arkansas Code citation. A.C.A. § 9-28-103

7. What is the purpose of this proposed rule? Why is it necessary?

Revised Rule

- POLICY VI-C: Maintaining Family Ties in Out-of-Home Placements
 - o To update policy per Act 1017 of the 90th General Assembly, Regular Session regarding placing siblings separately in out-of-home placements, requirements for regular and consistent contact between separated siblings, and 90 day case reviews of separated siblings
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- POLICY VII-I: Division Contact with Children in Out-of-Home Placements
 - o To update policy to more clearly articulate expectations regarding caseworker visits with children in out-of-home placements including:
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New Rule

- POLICY VII-J: Division Contact with Biological Parents, Legal Custodians, and Legal Guardians Involved Out-of-Home Placement Cases
 - o To establish policy specific to contact with biological parents, legal custodians, and legal guardians involved in out-of-home placement including frequency and goals of home visits.

8. Please provide the address where this rule is publicly accessible in electronic form via the Internet as required by Arkansas Code § 25-19-108(b).

AR Secretary of State Website

DHS/DCFS CHRIS public:

<https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net/CW/Notice%20of%20Rule%20Making/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

9. Will a public hearing be held on this proposed rule? Yes No

If yes, please complete the following:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

10. When does the public comment period expire for permanent promulgation? (Must provide a date.)

October 26, 2015

11. What is the proposed effective date of this proposed rule? (Must provide a date.)

January 4, 2016

12. Do you expect this rule to be controversial? Yes No

If yes, please
explain.

13. Please give the names of persons, groups, or organizations that you expect to comment on these rules? Please provide their position (for or against) if known.

We do not know of any specific groups of persons who would comment.

FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS COMPLETELY

DEPARTMENT Department of Human Services
DIVISION Division of Children and Family Services
PERSON COMPLETING THIS STATEMENT Cecile Blucker
TELEPHONE NO. (501)682-6248 **FAX NO.** (501) 682-6968 **EMAIL:** cecile.blucker@dhs.arkansas.gov

To comply with Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e), please complete the following Financial Impact Statement and file two copies with the questionnaire and proposed rules.

SHORT TITLE OF THIS RULE Updates to Policies and Procedures Regarding Division Contact with Families and Children Involved in Out-of-Home Placement Cases

1. Does this proposed, amended, or repealed rule have a financial impact? Yes No
2. Is the rule based on the best reasonably obtainable scientific, technical, economic, or other evidence and information available concerning the need for, consequences of, and alternatives to the rule? Yes No
3. In consideration of the alternatives to this rule, was this rule determined by the agency to be the least costly rule considered? Yes No

If an agency is proposing a more costly rule, please state the following:

(a) How the additional benefits of the more costly rule justify its additional cost;

(b) The reason for adoption of the more costly rule;

(c) Whether the more costly rule is based on the interests of public health, safety, or welfare, and if so, please explain; and;

(d) Whether the reason is within the scope of the agency's statutory authority; and if so, please explain.

4. If the purpose of this rule is to implement a federal rule or regulation, please state the following:

(a) What is the cost to implement the federal rule or regulation?

Current Fiscal Year

Next Fiscal Year

General Revenue _____
Federal Funds _____
Cash Funds _____

General Revenue _____
Federal Funds _____
Cash Funds _____

Special _____
Revenue _____
Other (Identify) _____

Special Revenue _____
Other (Identify) _____

Total 0.00

Total 0.00

(b) What is the additional cost of the state rule?

Current Fiscal Year

Next Fiscal Year

General Revenue _____
Federal Funds _____
Cash Funds _____
Special Revenue _____
Other (Identify) _____

General Revenue _____
Federal Funds _____
Cash Funds _____
Special Revenue _____
Other (Identify) _____

Total 0.00

Total 0.00

5. What is the total estimated cost by fiscal year to any private individual, entity and business subject to the proposed, amended, or repealed rule? Identify the entity(ies) subject to the proposed rule and explain how they are affected.

Current Fiscal Year

Next Fiscal Year

\$ 0.00

\$ 0.00

6. What is the total estimated cost by fiscal year to state, county, and municipal government to implement this rule? Is this the cost of the program or grant? Please explain how the government is affected.

Current Fiscal Year

Next Fiscal Year

\$ 0.00

\$ 0.00

7. With respect to the agency's answers to Questions #5 and #6 above, is there a new or increased cost or obligation of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) per year to a private individual, private entity, private business, state government, county government, municipal government, or to two (2) or more of those entities combined?

Yes No

If YES, the agency is required by Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e)(4) to file written findings at the time of filing the financial impact statement. The written findings shall be filed simultaneously with the financial impact statement and shall include, without limitation, the following:

(1) a statement of the rule's basis and purpose;

(2) the problem the agency seeks to address with the proposed rule, including a statement of whether a rule is required by statute;

(3) a description of the factual evidence that:

(a) justifies the agency's need for the proposed rule; and

- (b) describes how the benefits of the rule meet the relevant statutory objectives and justify the rule's costs;
- (4) a list of less costly alternatives to the proposed rule and the reasons why the alternatives do not adequately address the problem to be solved by the proposed rule;
 - (5) a list of alternatives to the proposed rule that were suggested as a result of public comment and the reasons why the alternatives do not adequately address the problem to be solved by the proposed rule;
 - (6) a statement of whether existing rules have created or contributed to the problem the agency seeks to address with the proposed rule and, if existing rules have created or contributed to the problem, an explanation of why amendment or repeal of the rule creating or contributing to the problem is not a sufficient response; and
 - (7) an agency plan for review of the rule no less than every ten (10) years to determine whether, based upon the evidence, there remains a need for the rule including, without limitation, whether:
 - (a) the rule is achieving the statutory objectives;
 - (b) the benefits of the rule continue to justify its costs; and
 - (c) the rule can be amended or repealed to reduce costs while continuing to achieve the statutory objectives.

DCFS SUMMARY OF CHANGES FOR SEPTEMBER 2015 PROMULGATION

SUMMARY OF DCFS REGULAR PROMULGATION

The purpose of this regular promulgation is to make revisions to the Division's:

- **POLICY VI-C: Maintaining Family Ties in Out-of-Home Placements**
 - To update policy per Act 1017 of the 90th General Assembly, Regular Session regarding placing siblings separately in out-of-home placements, requirements for regular and consistent contact between separated siblings, and 90 day case reviews of separated siblings
 - To include information regarding supervised parent-child visits and the potential role of foster parents in parent-child visits
 - To revise policy for general formatting and organizational purposes to more clearly outline requirements regarding contact between children in out-of-home placements and their parents, siblings, other family members, and fictive kin

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 - Noting the federally required monthly visit by a Family Service Worker (FSW) or FSW Supervisor
 - Encouraging additional visits and/or contact by other DCFS support staff or volunteers even though such contact will not meet the federal requirement for the monthly visit

- **POLICY VII-J: Division Contact with Biological Parents, Legal Custodians, and Legal Guardians Involved in Out-of-Home Placement Cases (*new*)**
 - To establish policy specific to contact with biological parents, legal custodians, and legal guardians involved in out-of-home placement including frequency and goals of home visits.

POLICY VI-C: MAINTAINING FAMILY TIES IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS

01097/20165

~~Removal from the home and subsequent out-of-home placement are traumatic events for children. One way this trauma may be minimized is by maintaining family ties in out-of-home placements. Moreover, t~~The Division believes that strengths of families and supporting these strengths contribute to life-long permanent relationships for children. This belief is supported by research demonstrating that children who ~~are able to~~ maintain positive family ties while in out-of-home placement achieve better short- and long-term outcomes. ~~If court orders differ from the requirements outlined in this policy and related procedures regarding visits and contact with family members, the Division will comply with court orders accordingly. Therefore, families and children shall have reasonable opportunities for personal visits, communication by telephone, and involvement in life events such as teacher conferences, school and community events.~~

Contact with Parents

~~In order to maintain and strengthen the parent-child relationship, visits and other forms of contact with parents and their children in out-of-home placements are essential. A plan for visits wishall be developed between a children in out-of-home placement and the family and siblings, whether or not the siblings are in out-of-home placementtheir parents, to include non-custodial and putative parents as appropriate. Visits between parents, including noncustodial and putative parents, and their children will occur at least weekly based upon the child's best interest. M, though more frequent visits and other forms of contact are encouraged, as appropriate. A positive drug or alcohol screen in and of itself will not result in the postponement and/or withholding of visits between a parent and child in DHS custody unless:~~

- ~~A. The parent is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at the time of the scheduled visit and has observable behavior indicating impairment of parenting capacity; or,~~
- ~~B. A court order specifies that a parent's positive screen will result in the withholding of parent-child visits.~~

~~Visits may be supervised or unsupervised depending on the dynamics of the case. Any Division staff member as well as approved student interns and volunteers may supervise visits. However, the appropriate supervisor will individualize each assignment to supervise visits. When making the assignment the supervisor will consider the family's history, current level of functioning, and any other applicable factors as well as the skill set of the individual selected to supervise the visit. The case plan will indicate whether visits between parents and their children in out-of-home placements will be supervised.~~

~~The preferred location for visits is the parent's home or, if that is not possible, in the most home-like setting possible. Office visits are a last resort. Office visits are a last resort.~~

~~While children are in out-of-home placements, the Division, in conjunction with foster parents and placement providers, will update parents regarding their children's lives including providing information regarding, without limitation, status of physical, behavioral, and emotional health, progress in school, involvement in extracurricular activities, and achievements. Parents will be invited to participate in their children's school, faith-based, and extracurricular activities as appropriate.~~

~~The specific plan for visits between a child in out-of-home placement and his or her parents as appropriate, will be included in the case plan. As the family prepares for reunification, the frequency and/or length of visits will increase while the level of supervision will decrease accordingly. The case plan will be updated as needed to reflect changes regarding visits and other contact.~~

~~Foster parents may communicate directly with biological parents when appropriate and in the child's best interest to give updates on the child's progress, inform them of the child's school and extracurricular activities, and share photos. In addition, since foster parents can model positive parenting skills that may help the~~

biological parents to achieve reunification, foster parents may consider hosting parent-child visits, if appropriate and acceptable to all individuals involved. Foster parents are also encouraged to consider supporting the parent-child relationship in other ways such as helping the child write letters to his or her parents, creating Life Books with the children to then share with the biological parents, and presenting a positive view of the child's parents to the child to the extent possible.

When assessing the appropriateness of foster parents communicating directly with biological parents, holding parent-child visits in the foster parent home, and/or transporting the child to parent-child visits, the Division will ensure the foster parents thoroughly understand all court orders related to parent-child contact and consider:

- A. Various family dynamics;
- B. Progress of the case at that point in time; and,
- C. Experience and other skills sets of the foster family.

Foster families will neither host nor provide transportation to parent-child visits:

- A. During the first placement they have as foster parents;
- B. During the first month of any open foster care case regardless of the number of times they have served as foster parents.

After the first month of an open foster care case, the point at which foster parents may then provide such services, if desired by the foster parents, will be assessed on a case by case basis for each foster care placement. The Division will assist the foster parents and biological parents in establishing appropriate expectations and boundaries regarding communication and interaction (e.g., frequency and specific times the biological parent may call and/or visit the foster home). Any direct interaction between the biological parents and foster parents in no way relieves the Division of its duty to ensure the biological parents remain current on all aspects of their case and their children.

The specific plan for visits between a child in out-of-home placement and his or her parents as appropriate, will be included in the case plan. As the family prepares for reunification, the frequency and/or length of visits will increase while the level of supervision will decrease accordingly. The case plan will be updated as needed to reflect changes regarding visits and other contact. All visits and other contact between parents and their children in foster care will comply with court orders.

As the family prepares for reunification, the frequency and/or length of visits will increase while the level of supervision will decrease, accordingly. Siblings include those individuals who would be considered a sibling under state/tribal law if it were not for the disruption in parental rights, such as a termination of parental rights or death of a parent. The preferred location for the visits is the parent's home or, if that is not possible, in the most home-like setting possible. Office visits are a last resort.

Contact with Siblings

Sibling relationships are emotionally powerful and critically important not only in childhood, but over the course of a lifetime with. Moreover, s-given that sibling relationships likely to be the longest relationships most people experience. Siblings include those individuals who would be considered a sibling under state/tribal law if it were not for the disruption in parental rights, such as a termination of parental rights or death of a parent.

For children in out-of-home placements, sibling relationships can provide a significant source of continuity, stability, and comfort while in foster care. As such, when it is in the best interest of each of the children and barring extenuating circumstances, siblings are entitled to be placed together in out-of-home and adoptive placements and remain actively involved in each other's lives.

~~Siblings shall live together in the same foster home. When it is in the best interest of each of the children, the Department shall attempt to place siblings together while they are in a foster care and adoptive placement. Siblings may be placed separately only if:~~

~~A. Allegations of abuse between siblings are under investigation and/or have been founded;~~

~~1) An assessment must be conducted by a mental health professional within five days of placing siblings in different placements due to the abuse allegations between the siblings that are under investigation and/or have been founded.~~

~~a) The siblings may continue in the separated placements if the assessment by the mental health professional supports continuing the separated placements because placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the children as related to the abuse allegations and/or investigation findings;~~

~~B. An assessment by a mental health professional determines that placement of the siblings together would be detrimental to their health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the children or youth; best interest or,~~

~~C. It is otherwise not possible at the time of initial placement if the Division presents evidence to the court that there are no available placements that can take the entire sibling group.~~

~~If children must be separated, the Division will attempt to place them in close proximity to siblings in order to facilitate regular and meaningful contact. The Division will ensure the reasons for the separation of siblings into different foster homes or other approved placements are regularly reassessed and targeted recruitment efforts continue to reunite the siblings. The reasons for the separation must be provided in a written recommendation from appropriate DCFS staff. For siblings who must be separated, the case plan must include when siblings will be reassessed to determine if they can be reunited at a later point in time. and, if the reassessment determines reunification is appropriate, the plan for placing siblings together reunification will be documented in the case plan as well.~~

~~In an effort to maintain sibling connections for those siblings who are placed separately strengthen the regular assessment of reasons for which siblings are placed separately, the siblings' cases will be reviewed by the court at least once every 90 days to determine whether there have been reasonable efforts to reunite the siblings and to allow regular and meaningful contact with the siblings as outlined below. The 90 day court reviews of separated siblings do not require the presence of the children in the court unless otherwise court ordered. If the court approves a paper review, the 90 day court reviews of separated siblings may be satisfied by such a review and a hearing is not required. The Division will ensure that the reasons for the separation of siblings, or infants with minor mothers, into different foster homes are regularly reassessed and targeted recruitment efforts continue to reunite the siblings.~~

~~In addition, siblings who must be placed separately will have regular and consistent and meaningful contact at least weekly when possible. While face-to-face visits in home-like settings or other family-child friendly locations are preferred and encouraged, other forms of communication such as phone calls, emails, and Skype or FaceTime (or similar program) conversations are permissible, as age and developmentally appropriate, to meet the weekly contact requirement. However, siblings who are placed separately will have at least bi-weekly face-to-face visits unless a the Division FSW Supervisor-Director grants a visit waiver. The plan for sibling visits and other contact will be outlined in the case plan. Visits or other forms of contact with siblings will not be withheld by DCFS or any placement provider- as a behavioral consequence unless there are documented safety concerns for one or more of the siblings.~~

~~Siblings also have the right to remain actively involved in each other's lives. Aside from regularly scheduled visits, the Division, foster parents, and other placement providers will work together to allow siblings to share celebrations including birthdays, holidays, graduations, and other meaningful milestones when possible. The Division, foster parents, and other placement providers will also collaborate to ensure siblings attend each other's extracurricular events such as athletic events, musical performances, and faith-based events when reasonable and practical.~~

The Division will ensure siblings are included in one another's case plan staffing decisions and permanency planning decisions as age and developmentally appropriate. Siblings will also be notified when another sibling has a change in placement or exits foster care as age and developmentally appropriate. When a sibling leaves foster care, that sibling will be allowed, as appropriate, to maintain contact with a sibling who remains in an out-of-home placement. The Division will also strive to help children in foster care maintain relationships with their siblings who are not in out-of-home placements or who have been adopted or placed in permanent custody or guardianship.

Contact with Other Relatives and Fictive Kin

In an effort to ensure foster care supports the permanency and well-being of the children in Children in DHS custody, ~~the children~~ may have an opportunity to visit or have other forms of contact with grandparents, ~~or~~ great-grandparents, other relatives, and fictive kin provided the visits are in the best interest of the children. It is the responsibility of the Division to explore the willingness and appropriateness of identified relatives and fictive kin interested in being involved in the lives of children in out-of-home placements.

All visits and other contact between children in out-of-home placements and other relatives and/or fictive kin will comply with court orders.

Contact After Termination of Parental Rights

If it is in the child's best interest, visits ~~between siblings and~~ with relatives may continue after Termination of Parental Rights (TPR), ~~if visitation was established prior to TPR. -Vvisitation~~ after TPR will continue until an adoptive ~~on~~ placement is made or the ~~o~~Out-of-Home placement case is closed. ~~-The Division will encourage adoptive parents to consider allowing contact between biological relatives and fictive kin with their adopted children, as appropriate.~~ Continuation of visits with relatives does not include the parents for whom the agency has obtained TPR.

PROCEDURE VI-C1: Parent-Child Contact~~Maintaining Family Ties~~ for Children in ~~in~~ Out-of-Home Placements

0109/20165

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. ~~Within five working days of placement, assess and determine the frequency and length of parent-child visits, to include non-custodial and putative parents as appropriate, in order to develop a visit plan to recommend to the court, for visit and siblings, if applicable, within five working days of placement.~~
- ~~B.A. Arrange for parental visits to occur no less than weekly with the frequency increasing, as the family is prepared for reunification.~~
- ~~C. Obtain approval from the County FSW Supervisor for any deviations from required frequency of visitation.~~
- ~~D. Request that deviations due to staff shortages be approved by the Area Director.~~
- E. ~~Place siblings together in the same foster home. A foster home shall have no more than five unrelated children in care. The foster home may care for up to eight children if they are all related to each other. A foster home shall not have more than eight children in their home, including their own children. This includes placement or respite care. For example:

0 children of the foster parent and 8 children that are related (to each other)

1 child of the foster parent and 7 children that are related (to each other)

2 children of the foster parent and 6 children that are related (to each other)

3 children of the foster parent and 5 children that are related (to each other) or unrelated~~
- F. ~~Place infants with minor mothers in the same foster home.~~
- G. ~~Separate siblings, or infants with minor mothers, by placement only if an assessment determines that placement of the siblings together would be detrimental to their best interest or is otherwise not possible at the time of initial placement. Include in the case plan Provide a written recommendation indicating the reasons for the separation as well as the steps that will be taken to reunify the siblings in a single placement (if appropriate) and file in the case record. Considerations to separate siblings may include:

1) Allegations of abuse between siblings are under investigation and/or have been founded.

2) Written determination by a Mental Health Professional that placement of the siblings together would be detrimental to their best interest.~~
- ~~3) B. There are not sufficient resources to allow the sibling group to be placed together.
1) If approved, request appropriate visit waiver in CHRIS.~~
- C. ~~Arrange for sibling visits with parents as outlined in the case plan to include assisting with transportation, supervision of visits, and/or other logistics, as needed.
1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants (PAs), interns, and/or volunteers to assist with transports to and supervision of visits, as appropriate.
2) The FSW will make sure any PAs, interns, and/or volunteers supervising parent-child visits:
a) Know the history and other applicable dynamics of the case; and,
b) Understand what they are to observe and/or assist with while providing said supervision.~~
- D. ~~Prepare children for visits with their parents.~~
- E. ~~Supervise visits as needed. Ask Program Assistants, interns, and/or volunteers, as applicable, for information he/she obtained while assisting with parent-child visits and/or review PA CHRIS contact entries, as applicable.~~

- F. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of parent-child visits.
- ~~H.G. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding parent-child visits. ation or other forms of contact with siblings to occur no less than every two weeks at least weekly, when siblings are placed separately.~~
- ~~I. Document efforts to reunify siblings, or infants with minor mothers, placed separately.~~
- ~~J. Arrange visitation between the child and grandparent, or great-grandparent, relatives and/or fictive kin if and as appropriate.~~
- ~~K. Document sibling and relative visits that occur after TPR in CHRIS contacts screen.~~

~~The Director's designated Administrator~~The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- ~~A. Review and approve the plan for visits and other contact with parents, siblings, and other relatives or fictive kin~~ceive requests to place siblings, or infants with minor mothers separately.
- ~~B. Assist with parent-child visit logistics if needed.~~
- ~~A.C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff who may supervise visits to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.~~

~~The Program Assistant~~ will:

- ~~A. Assist with transports to and/or supervision of parent-child visits as assigned.~~
- ~~B. Share information gathered from transports to and supervision of parent-child visits with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.~~

PROCEDURE VI-C2: Sibling Contact for Children in Out-of-Home Placements

0109/20165

The Family Service Worker will:

- ~~A. Include in the case plan- the reasons for the separation, if applicable, as well as the steps that will be taken to reunify the siblings in a single placement, (if appropriate).~~
 - ~~1) Arrange for an assessment by a mental health professional within five days to determine if placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the siblings as needed.~~
 - ~~— Considerations to separate siblings may include:~~
 - ~~4) Allegations of abuse between siblings are under investigation and/or have been founded.~~
 - ~~5) Written determination by a Mental Health Professional that placement of the siblings together would be detrimental to their best interest.~~
 - ~~— There are not sufficient resources to allow the sibling group to be placed together.~~
- ~~B. Within five working days of placement, assess and determine the frequency and length of sibling visits in order to develop a visit plan to recommend to the court.~~
- ~~C. Obtain approval from the FSW Supervisor for any deviations from required frequency of visits.~~
 - ~~1) If approved, request appropriate visit waiver in CHRIS.~~
- ~~D. Arrange for visits with siblings as outlined in the case plan as well as participation in sibling celebrations and attendance of sibling extracurricular events, to include assisting with transportation and/or other logistics, as needed.~~
 - ~~1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants, interns, foster parents, and/or volunteers to assist with transports to and supervision of visits, as appropriate.~~
 - ~~2) Encourage foster parents to assist with siblings participating in one another's various celebrations and extracurricular activities.~~
- ~~E. Prepare children for visits with their siblings.~~
- ~~F. Ensure supervision of visits if needed.~~
- ~~G. Document sibling visits and participation in sibling celebrations and extracurricular activities in CHRIS contact screens.~~

- H. Ask Program Assistant for information he/she obtained while assisting with sibling visits and other contact and/or review PA CHRIS contact entries, as applicable.
- I. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of sibling visits and other contacts.
- I. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding sibling visits and other contacts.
- 6) Document efforts to reunify siblings placed separately in CHRIS contacts screen.:
- J.
- K. Document sibling and relative visits that occur after TPR in CHRIS contacts screen.
- L. Prepare the packet for the 90 Day Court Review to include:
 - 1) 90 Day Case Review Cover Sheet
 - 2) The case plan participants and visitation plan sections of the case plan
 - 3) The Family Visit Log for the preceding 90 days listing only the sibling visits and/or parent visits that include all siblings as well (i.e., exclude visits involving only parents and one child)
 - 4) Printed CHRIS contact screens for the past 90 days regarding sibling visits, other sibling contact, and efforts to reunify siblings
- M. Submit the 90 Day Case Review Packet to the FSW Supervisor for review.
- N. Submit the 90 Day Case Review Packet to the local OCC attorney.

The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the plan for visits and other contact with siblings.
- B. Assist with sibling visit logistics if needed.
- C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff, interns, and/or volunteers, as applicable, involved with siblings visits to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.
- D. Review the 90 Day Court Review Packet and request any necessary changes.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Assist with transports to and/or supervision of sibling visits as assigned.
- B. Share information gathered from transports to and supervision of sibling visits with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.

PROCEDURE VI-C3: Other Relative and Fictive Kin Parent-Child Contact in Out-of-Home Placement

0109/20165

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Assess and determine the frequency and length of contact with other relatives and fictive kin to recommend to the court.
- B. Arrange for contact with other relatives or fictive kin as outlined in the case plan to include assisting with transportation and/or other logistics, as needed.
 - 1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants, interns, and/or volunteers to assist with transports to and supervision of visits, as appropriate.
- C. Prepare children for visits with other relatives and fictive kin.
- D. Ensure supervision of visits as needed.
- E. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of contact with other relatives and fictive kin.
- F. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding contact with other relatives and fictive kin.

The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the plan for contact with other relatives and fictive kin.
- B. Assist with logistics of contact with other relatives and fictive kin if needed.
- C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff who may supervise visits with other relatives and fictive kin to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Assist with logistics of contact with relatives and fictive kin as assigned.
- B. Share information gathered from interaction with children, other relatives, and fictive kin with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.

MARKKUP

POLICY VI-C: MAINTAINING FAMILY TIES IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS

01/2016

Removal from the home and subsequent out-of-home placement are traumatic events for children. One way this trauma may be minimized is by maintaining family ties in out-of-home placements. Moreover, the Division believes that strengths of families and supporting these strengths contribute to life-long permanent relationships for children. This belief is supported by research demonstrating that children who maintain positive family ties while in out-of-home placement achieve better short- and long-term outcomes. If court orders differ from the requirements outlined in this policy and related procedures regarding visits and contact with family members, the Division will comply with court orders accordingly.

Contact with Parents

In order to maintain and strengthen the parent-child relationship, visits and other forms of contact with parents and their children in out-of-home placements are essential. Visits between parents, including noncustodial and putative parents, and their children will occur at least weekly based upon the child's best interest. More frequent visits are encouraged, as appropriate. A positive drug or alcohol screen in and of itself will not result in the postponement and/or withholding of visits between a parent and child in DHS custody unless:

- A. The parent is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at the time of the scheduled visit and has observable behavior indicating impairment of parenting capacity; or,
- B. A court order specifies that a parent's positive screen will result in the withholding of parent-child visits.

Visits may be supervised or unsupervised depending on the dynamics of the case. Any Division staff member as well as approved student interns and volunteers may supervise visits. However, the appropriate supervisor will individualize each assignment to supervise visits. When making the assignment the supervisor will consider the family's history, current level of functioning, and any other applicable factors as well as the skill set of the individual selected to supervise the visit.

The preferred location for visits is the parent's home or, if that is not possible, in the most home-like setting possible. Office visits are a last resort.

While children are in out-of-home placements, the Division, in conjunction with foster parents and placement providers, will update parents regarding their children's lives including providing information regarding, without limitation, status of physical, behavioral, and emotional health, progress in school, involvement in extracurricular activities, and achievements. Parents will be invited to participate in their children's school, faith-based, and extracurricular activities as appropriate.

The specific plan for visits between a child in out-of-home placement and his or her parents as appropriate, will be included in the case plan. As the family prepares for reunification, the frequency and/or length of visits will increase while the level of supervision will decrease accordingly. The case plan will be updated as needed to reflect changes regarding visits and other contact.

Foster parents may communicate directly with biological parents when appropriate and in the child's best interest to give updates on the child's progress, inform them of the child's school and extracurricular activities, and share photos. In addition, since foster parents can model positive parenting skills that may help the biological parents to achieve reunification, foster parents may consider hosting parent-child visits, if appropriate and acceptable to all individuals involved. Foster parents are also encouraged to consider supporting the parent-child relationship in other ways such as helping the child write letters to his or her parents, creating Life Books with the children to then share with the biological parents, and presenting a positive view of the child's parents to the child to the extent possible.

When assessing the appropriateness of foster parents communicating directly with biological parents, holding parent-child visits in the foster parent home, and/or transporting the child to parent-child visits, the Division will ensure the foster parents thoroughly understand all court orders related to parent-child contact and consider:

- A. Various family dynamics;
- B. Progress of the case at that point in time; and,
- C. Experience and other skills sets of the foster family.

Foster families will neither host nor provide transportation to parent-child visits:

- A. During the first placement they have as foster parents;
- B. During the first month of any open foster care case regardless of the number of times they have served as foster parents.

After the first month of an open foster care case, the point at which foster parents may then provide such services, if desired by the foster parents, will be assessed on a case by case basis for each foster care placement. The Division will assist the foster parents and biological parents in establishing appropriate expectations and boundaries regarding communication and interaction (e.g., frequency and specific times the biological parent may call and/or visit the foster home). Any direct interaction between the biological parents and foster parents in no way relieves the Division of its duty to ensure the biological parents remain current on all aspects of their case and their children.

Contact with Siblings

Sibling relationships are emotionally powerful and critically important not only in childhood, but over the course of a lifetime with sibling relationships likely to be the longest relationships most people experience. Siblings include those individuals who would be considered a sibling under state/tribal law if it were not for the disruption in parental rights, such as a termination of parental rights or death of a parent.

For children in out-of-home placements, sibling relationships can provide a significant source of continuity, stability, and comfort while in foster care. As such, when it is in the best interest of each of the children and barring extenuating circumstances, siblings are entitled to be placed together in out-of-home placements.

Siblings may be placed separately only if:

- A. Allegations of abuse between siblings are under investigation and/or have been founded;
 - 1) An assessment must be conducted by a mental health professional within five days of placing siblings in different placements due to the abuse allegations between the siblings that are under investigation and/or have been founded.
 - a) The siblings may continue in the separated placements if the assessment by the mental health professional supports continuing the separated placements because placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the children as related to the abuse allegations and/or investigation findings;
- B. An assessment by a mental health professional determines that placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the children; or,
- C. The Division presents evidence to the court that there are no available placements that can take the entire sibling group.

If children must be separated, the Division will attempt to place them in close proximity in order to facilitate regular and meaningful contact. The Division will ensure the reasons for the separation of siblings into different foster homes or other approved placements are regularly reassessed and targeted recruitment efforts continue to reunite the siblings. The case plan must include when siblings will be reassessed to determine if they can be reunited at a later point in time. If the reassessment determines reunification is appropriate, the plan for placing siblings together will be documented in the case plan as well.

In an effort to maintain sibling connections for those siblings who are placed separately, the siblings' case will be reviewed by the court at least once every 90 days to determine whether there have been reasonable efforts to reunite the siblings and to allow regular and meaningful contact with the siblings. If the court approves a paper review, the 90 day court reviews of separated siblings may be satisfied by such a review and a hearing is not required.

In addition, siblings who must be placed separately will have consistent and meaningful contact at least weekly when possible. While face-to-face visits in home-like settings or other family-friendly locations are preferred and encouraged, other forms of communication such as phone calls, emails, and Skype or FaceTime (or similar program) conversations are permissible, as age and developmentally appropriate, to meet the weekly contact requirement. However, siblings who are placed separately will have at least bi-weekly face-to-face visits unless a the FSW Supervisor grants a visit waiver. The plan for sibling visits and other contact will be outlined in the case plan. Visits or other forms of contact with siblings will not be withheld by DCFS or any placement provider as a behavioral consequence unless there are documented safety concerns for one or more of the siblings.

Siblings also have the right to remain actively involved in each other's lives. Aside from regularly scheduled visits, the Division, foster parents, and other placement providers will work together to allow siblings to share celebrations including birthdays, holidays, graduations, and other meaningful milestones when possible. The Division, foster parents, and other placement providers will also collaborate to ensure siblings attend each other's extracurricular events such as athletic events, musical performances, and faith-based events when reasonable and practical.

The Division will ensure siblings are included in one another's case plan staffing decisions and permanency planning decisions as age and developmentally appropriate. Siblings will also be notified when another sibling has a change in placement or exits foster care as age and developmentally appropriate. When a sibling leaves foster care, that sibling will be allowed, as appropriate, to maintain contact with a sibling who remains in an out-of-home placement. The Division will also strive to help children in foster care maintain relationships with their siblings who are not in out-of-home placements or who have been adopted or placed in permanent custody or guardianship.

Contact with Other Relatives and Fictive Kin

In an effort to ensure foster care supports the permanency and well-being of the children in DHS custody, children may have an opportunity to visit or have other forms of contact with grandparents, great-grandparents, other relatives, and fictive kin provided the visits are in the best interest of the children. It is the responsibility of the Division to explore the willingness and appropriateness of identified relatives and fictive kin interested in being involved in the lives of children in out-of-home placements.

Contact After Termination of Parental Rights

If it is in the child's best interest, visits with relatives may continue after Termination of Parental Rights (TPR). Visits after TPR will continue until an adoptive placement is made or the out-of-home placement case is closed. The Division will encourage adoptive parents to consider allowing contact between biological relatives and fictive kin with their adopted children, as appropriate. Continuation of visits with relatives does not include the parents for whom the agency has obtained TPR.

PROCEDURE VI-C1: Parent-Child Contact for Children in Out-of-Home Placements

01/2016

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Within five working days of placement, assess and determine the frequency and length of parent-child visits, to include non-custodial and putative parents as appropriate, in order to develop a visit plan to recommend to the court.
- B. Obtain approval from FSW Supervisor for any deviations from required frequency of visits
 - 1) If approved, request appropriate visit waiver in CHRIS.
- C. Arrange for visits with parents as outlined in the case plan to include assisting with transportation, supervision of visits, and/or other logistics, as needed.
 - 1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants (PAs), interns, and/or volunteers to assist with transports to and supervision of visits, as appropriate.
 - 2) The FSW will make sure any PAs, interns, and/or volunteers supervising parent-child visits:
 - a) Know the history and other applicable dynamics of the case; and,
 - b) Understand what they are to observe and/or assist with while providing said supervision.
- D. Prepare children for visits with their parents.
- E. Ask Program Assistants, interns, and/or volunteers, as applicable, for information he/she obtained while assisting with parent-child visits and/or review PA CHRIS contact entries, as applicable.
- F. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of parent-child visits.
- G. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding parent-child visits.

The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the plan for visits and other contact with parents.
- B. Assist with parent-child visit logistics if needed.
- C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff who may supervise visits to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Assist with transports to and/or supervision of parent-child visits as assigned.
- B. Share information gathered from transports to and supervision of parent-child visits with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.

PROCEDURE VI-C2: Sibling Contact for Children in Out-of-Home Placements

01/2016

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Include in the case plan the reasons for the separation, if applicable, as well as the steps that will be taken to reunify the siblings in a single placement, if appropriate.
 - 1) Arrange for an assessment by a mental health professional within five days to determine if placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the siblings as needed.
- B. Within five working days of placement, assess and determine the frequency and length of sibling visits in order to develop a visit plan to recommend to the court.
- C. Obtain approval from the FSW Supervisor for any deviations from required frequency of visits.
 - 1) If approved, request appropriate visit waiver in CHRIS.

- D. Arrange for visits with siblings as outlined in the case plan as well as participation in sibling celebrations and attendance of sibling extracurricular events, to include assisting with transportation and/or other logistics, as needed.
 - 1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants, interns, foster parents, and/or volunteers to assist with transports to and supervision of visits, as appropriate.
 - 2) Encourage foster parents to assist with siblings participating in one another's various celebrations and extracurricular activities.
- E. Prepare children for visits with their siblings.
- F. Ensure supervision of visits if needed.
- G. Document sibling visits and participation in sibling celebrations and extracurricular activities in CHRIS contact screens.
- H. Ask Program Assistant for information he/she obtained while assisting with sibling visits and other contact and/or review PA CHRIS contact entries, as applicable.
- I. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of sibling visits and other contacts.
- I. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding sibling visits and other contacts.
- J. Document efforts to reunify siblings placed separately in CHRIS contacts screen.
- K. Document sibling visits that occur after TPR in CHRIS contacts screen.
- L. Prepare the packet for the 90 Day Court Review to include:
 - 1) 90 Day Case Review Cover Sheet
 - 2) The case plan participants and visitation plan sections of the case plan
 - 3) The Family Visit Log for the preceding 90 days listing only the sibling visits and/or parent visits that include all siblings as well (i.e., exclude visits involving only parents and one child)
 - 4) Printed CHRIS contact screens for the past 90 days regarding sibling visits, other sibling contact, and efforts to reunify siblings
- M. Submit the 90 Day Case Review Packet to the FSW Supervisor for review.
- N. Submit the 90 Day Case Review Packet to the local OCC attorney.

The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the plan for visits and other contact with siblings.
- B. Assist with sibling visit logistics if needed.
- C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff, interns, and/or volunteers, as applicable, involved with siblings visits to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.
- D. Review the 90 Day Court Review Packet and request any necessary changes.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Assist with transports to and/or supervision of sibling visits as assigned.
- B. Share information gathered from transports to and supervision of sibling visits with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.

PROCEDURE VI-C3: Other Relative and Fictive Kin-Child Contact in Out-of-Home Placement

01/2016

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Assess and determine the frequency and length of contact with other relatives and fictive kin to recommend to the court.

- B. Arrange for contact with other relatives or fictive kin as outlined in the case plan to include assisting with transportation and/or other logistics, as needed.
 - 1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants, interns, and/or volunteers to assist with transports to and supervision of visits, as appropriate.
- C. Prepare children for visits with other relatives and fictive kin.
- D. Ensure supervision of visits as needed.
- E. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of contact with other relatives and fictive kin.
- F. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding contact with other relatives and fictive kin.

The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the plan for contact with other relatives and fictive kin.
- B. Assist with logistics of contact with other relatives and fictive kin if needed.
- C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff who may supervise visits with other relatives and fictive kin to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Assist with logistics of contact with relatives and fictive kin as assigned.
- B. Share information gathered from interaction with children, other relatives, and fictive kin with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.

POLICY VII-I: ~~Supervision~~ DIVISION CONTACT WITH CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS of Children in Out-of-Home Placement

0109/201608

Regular, quality contact between the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and a child in an out-of-home placement can be one source of vital constancy for the child. Consistent contact not only provides some stability in the child's life, but also allows the Division to ensure the child's safety and well-being. As such, DCFS will have regular visits and other forms of contact with children in out-of-home placements.

The child's Family Service Worker (FSW) will visit the child ~~Children~~ in his/her approved out-of-home placement ~~will be visited regularly and such visits will take place no less than~~ at least weekly during the first month of placement and at least weekly in any new placement thereafter ~~for the first month of placement into foster care or a new foster home.~~ ~~Visitation~~ after the first month in care or in a new placement will occur at least monthly in the ~~foster home~~ approved out-of-home placement. During visits in the out-of-home placement, the FSW will engage the age-appropriate child in a private conversation to better assess the quality of care being provided.

In the event the FSW is unable to conduct these regular visits in the out-of-home placement, another FSW or the FSW Supervisor may make the visits in the place of the FSW to ensure the safety and well-being of the child and meet the regular visit requirement. However, these exceptions will be limited. While DCFS support staff (e.g., Program Assistants) may also visit the child in the out-of-home placement, the regular out-of-home placement visit requirement will not be considered met until an FSW or FSW Supervisor has conducted the regular out-of-home placement visit.

~~In addition to the visits in the child's out-of-home placement, the FSW will with the worker~~ maintaining weekly contact with the child through ~~the following settings~~ forums such as: school, parent-child~~al~~ visits, during transportation to various ~~medical~~ appointments, family-centered staffings, court hearings, and/or via telephone or programs such as FaceTime and Skype. Additional contact each week with other Division staff such as Program Assistants or Division interns or volunteers via telephone, transports, etc. is appropriate, but will not replace the requirement for the child's FSW to maintain weekly contact with the child.

The purpose of these visits and other contact will ~~shall~~ be to:

- A. Provide the child with accurate information about his/her case at an age and developmentally appropriate level;
- ~~A.B. Answer questions the child may have; Keep open communication with the age-appropriate child;~~
- ~~B.C. Engage the child and foster parents, as appropriate, in activities geared to accomplish case plan goals and to assure the child's needs are being met;~~
- ~~C.D. Assess the quality of the care being provided;~~
- D.E. Determine and monitor, through conversation and/or observation, the child's safety and Determine the extent to which the child's developmental, medical, intellectual, and emotional needs are being met; and,
- F. Assess the child's adjustment to the out-of-home placement, foster parents, other persons in the home, and school.
- E. _____

_____ Weekly visits will occur in the foster home and include a private conversation with the age-appropriate child to assess the quality of care being provided.

PROCEDURE VII-I1: Supervision of Children in Out-of-Home Placement

0109/201608

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Regularly inform the child and placement provider when visits will take place (though unannounced visits are allowable when necessary).
 - 1) Keep all scheduled visit appointments or, if unable to do so, inform the child and/or provider about the cancellation and reschedule as soon as possible.
- B. Document visits with the child in his/her out-of-home placement at least once a week in the out-of-home placement for the first month of placement or on the contact screen with the "Face to Face Placement Provider" selected as the type and "Foster Child Weekly/Monthly" selected as the purpose.
- C. Document all other forms of contact with the child in CHRIS contact screens.
- D. Speak with any PA, secondary FSW, intern, and/or volunteer who has interacted with the child to gather information regarding those interactions and/or review CHRIS contacts entered by other Division staff.
- E. Conference with the FSW Supervisor about information collected during regular visits and other contact with the child.
- A.F. Update the CANS and/or case plan as appropriate based on visits and other contact with the child placement in a new foster home. Visits by other DCFS staff (e.g., SSA, Supervisor) will count as a weekly visit after the case has been opened 30 days.

The FSW Supervisor will:

- A. Conference with the FSW regarding regular visits and other contact with the child.
- B. Conduct visits with the child in the out-of-home placement if needed.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Share information gathered during their contact with children in out-of-home placements with the child's FSW and the PA's supervisor.
- B. Document contacts with children in out-of-home placements in CHRIS.
- B. Visit the child in the foster placement monthly and document visits in the contact screens in CHRIS. Visits by other DCFS staff will not count towards the worker's required monthly visit.
- C. Maintain weekly contact with the child in foster care. Weekly contact can be face-to-face in other settings (e.g., school, during parental visits, during transportation to medical visits, after a court hearing, or via telephone). Document weekly contacts in the contact screens in CHRIS.

POLICY VII-I: DIVISION CONTACT WITH CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS

01/2016

Regular, quality contact between the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and a child in an out-of-home placement can be one source of vital constancy for the child. Consistent contact not only provides some stability in the child's life, but also allows the Division to ensure the child's safety and well-being. As such, DCFS will have regular visits and other forms of contact with children in out-of-home placements.

The child's Family Service Worker (FSW) will visit the child in his/her approved out-of-home placement at least weekly during the first month of placement and at least weekly in any new placement thereafter. Visits after the first month in care or in a new placement will occur at least monthly in the approved out-of-home placement. During visits in the out-of-home placement, the FSW will engage the age-appropriate child in a private conversation to better assess the quality of care being provided.

In the event the FSW is unable to conduct these regular visits in the out-of-home placement, another FSW or the FSW Supervisor may make the visits in the place of the FSW to ensure the safety and well-being of the child and meet the regular visit requirement. However, these exceptions will be limited. While DCFS support staff (e.g., Program Assistants) may also visit the child in the out-of-home placement, the regular out-of-home placement visit requirement will not be considered met until an FSW or FSW Supervisor has conducted the regular out-of-home placement visit.

In addition to the visits in the child's out-of-home placement, the FSW will maintain weekly contact with the child through forums such as school, parent-child visits, during transportation to various appointments, family-centered staffings, court hearings, and/or via telephone or programs such as FaceTime and Skype. Additional contact each week with other Division staff such as Program Assistants or Division interns or volunteers via telephone, transports, etc. is appropriate, but will not replace the requirement for the child's FSW to maintain weekly contact with the child.

The purpose of these visits and other contact will be to:

- A. Provide the child with accurate information about his/her case at an age and developmentally appropriate level;
- B. Answer questions the child may have;
- C. Engage the child and foster parents, as appropriate, in activities geared to accomplish case plan goals and to assure the child's needs are being met;
- D. Assess the quality of the care being provided;
- E. Determine and monitor, through conversation and/or observation, the child's safety and the extent to which the child's developmental, medical, intellectual, and emotional needs are being met; and,
- F. Assess the child's adjustment to the out-of-home placement, foster parents, other persons in the home, and school.

PROCEDURE VII-I1: Supervision of Children in Out-of-Home Placement

01/2016

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Regularly inform the child and placement provider when visits will take place (though unannounced visits are allowable when necessary).
 - 1) Keep all scheduled visit appointments or, if unable to do so, inform the child and/or provider about the cancellation and reschedule as soon as possible.

- B. Document visits with the child in his/her out-of-home placement on the contact screen with the "Face to Face Placement Provider" selected as the type and "Foster Child Weekly/Monthly" selected as the purpose.
- C. Document all other forms of contact with the child in CHRIS contact screens.
- D. Speak with any PA, secondary FSW, intern, and/or volunteer who has interacted with the child to gather information regarding those interactions and/or review CHRIS contacts entered by other Division staff.
- E. Conference with the FSW Supervisor about information collected during regular visits and other contact with the child.
- F. Update the CANS and/or case plan as appropriate based on visits and other contact with the child.

The FSW Supervisor will:

- A. Conference with the FSW regarding regular visits and other contact with the child.
- B. Conduct visits with the child in the out-of-home placement if needed.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Share information gathered during their contact with children in out-of-home placements with the child's FSW and the PA's supervisor.
- B. Document contacts with children in out-of-home placements in CHRIS.

CLEAN



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Children and Family Services
90 Day Case Review for Separated Siblings Summary

Case Name: _____ Case Number: _____

FSW Name: _____ FSW Phone: _____

Review Period: _____ Summary Date: _____

Current placement for each sibling in this case:

 Sibling(s) Current Placement

 Sibling(s) Current Placement

 Sibling(s) Current Placement

 Sibling Current Placement

Summary description of sibling visits and other contact:

Summary of efforts to reunify separated siblings:

 Signature

 Date