

Fostering Connections Checklist

Is DHHS complying with federal law in your abuse/neglect cases? Use this checklist to find out whether the provisions of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act have been followed.

Relatives

- Within 30 days of removal, DHHS has identified and notified all adult relatives regarding the child's removal. Adults at least include: grandparents, adult siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins, and adult relatives suggested by the parents (If the child is Native American, the tribe's definition of relative applies). Exception for cases of domestic or family violence. Notification includes:
 - Specifying that the child has been removed from the home
 - Explaining options for the relative's involvement in care and placement
 - Describing requirements to become a placement
 - Describing how the relative can enter an adoption assistance or kinship guardianship

Education

- DHHS' case plan establishes that:
 - Placement of the child in foster care takes into account the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement
 - It has coordinated with schools to ensure the child remains in the same school as at the time of placement
 - If remaining in the same school is not in the child's best interests, that DHHS is providing immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school and transferring all educational records

Siblings

- Sibling groups in foster care are placed in the same placement unless it has been determined that it is contrary to their safety or well-being
- DHHS has made reasonable efforts to place siblings together
- If siblings are not jointly placed, DHHS has made reasonable efforts to provide frequent visitation or other ongoing interaction between the siblings unless DHHS has documented that it would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings

Older Youth

- For children over 16, an Independent Living Plan (ILP) has been provided that includes:
 - An individual assessment of the youth's needs and strengths
 - Services, supports and programs that will be meeting the youth's needs in preparing for adulthood
- For children over 16, the ILP created for the youth is reviewed and approved by the court in writing every six months.
- For children within 3 months of turning 19, DHHS has assisted in the youth in developing a transition plan personalized to the youth, and including information on:
 - Housing
 - Health insurance
 - Education
 - Local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services
 - Work forces supports and employment services

For more information, go to:

DCFS Administrative Memo #7-2010 (replacing Administrative memo #8-2009), <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/jus/Memos/AM-7-2010.pdf>

Fostering Connections Resource Center, <http://www.fosteringconnections.org>

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Program Instruction, ACYF-CB-PI-10-11, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/policy/pi/2010/pi1011.htm

