

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 10:</b> Adoption/Permanency	<b>Effective Date:</b> August 1, 2008
	<b>Section 6:</b> Recruitment of Adoptive Families: Making a SNAP Referral	<b>Version:</b> 2

<b>POLICY</b>
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The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will utilize Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) services to assist with finding an adoptive family for every child who meets SNAP eligibility requirements.

Children in substitute care who are wards of DCS and meet one of the following criteria will be eligible for SNAP Services:

1. Any child who is two (2) years of age or older;
2. A child who is a member of a sibling group of two (2) or more children and who must be placed together with the sibling group in the same home;
3. A child with a medical condition or physical challenge, as determined by a physician licensed to practice medicine in Indiana or another state or territory; or a child with a mental, emotional, developmental, or educational challenge as determined by a psychiatrist or a clinical licensed to practice in Indiana or another state; or
4. Hard to place child(ren)

**Note:** At least one (1) child in a sibling group must be two (2) years of age or older.

Code Reference

- [IC 31-19-27: Program for Adoption of Hard to Place Children](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-51: "Hard to place child" or "hard to place children"](#)

<b>PROCEDURE</b>
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To initiate SNAP services, the adoption worker<sup>1</sup> will:

1. Determine if the child is eligible for SNAP services;
2. Determine if the child was previously referred to SNAP; if yes, contact the SNAP Specialist to discuss the child's previous involvement with SNAP;
3. Secure a recent (i.e., within the past six (6) months) color photo of the child or arrange for a photo to be taken;
4. Forward the following items to the regional SNAP Specialist to initiate assistance with recruiting a suitable adoptive family, **within 30 days** of the child's Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) filing:

**Note:** For children under the age of 14 and for those aged 14 and older that have consented, complete the [Child Registration: Indiana Special Needs Adoption Program](#)

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<sup>1</sup> The "adoption worker" may be a DCS Family Case Manager (FCM) or an employee of a licensed child-placing agency (LCPA).

[\(SNAP\) Picture Book and Website Form \(SF11840/CW 1440\)](#) and forward to the SNAP Specialist to initiate the process of the child being added to the picture book.

5. Document that the information has been forwarded to SNAP and any reasons why the child was not published on the "[AdoptUsKids](#)" website.

**Exception:** If the child has been previously referred to SNAP, speak first with the SNAP Specialist to determine if updates are needed to the following:

- a. [Child Social Summary](#). See separate policy, [10.11 Social Summaries](#), and
  - b. A recent color photograph of the child.
6. **Within 15 days** of the court's finalization of TPR (the child is legally free for adoption), if a suitable pre-adoptive family has not already been identified.
    - a. Begin the process of preparing the child for adoption, show children age five (5) and older a copy of the adoption picture book and explain the book, and
    - b. If the child is age 14 or older, ask the child if he or she wants to be listed in the picture book.
  7. Stay in regular contact with the SNAP Specialist in order to learn of potential adoptive matches;
  8. Alert the SNAP Specialist if the adoption worker learns of a potential adoptive family so the match can be presented at a SNAP Team Meeting; and
  9. Respond to inquiries from potential adoptive families within 48 hours after inquiry is received.

When the SNAP team has identified one or more potential adoptive matches. The adoption worker will:

1. Involve children age 14 and older (younger children can also be included if they are age appropriate) in the family interview process to facilitate compatible, successful adoptive matches;
2. Speak with the regional SNAP Specialist to:
  - a. Determine the date and location of the SNAP family interview where the potential matches will be presented,
  - b. Present the [Child Social Summary](#) and family preparation document at the SNAP Family Interview meeting, and
  - c. Discuss the child's strengths.
3. Receive a written copy of the final recommendation from the SNAP family interview team; and
4. Within 72 hours of the meeting, forward a copy of the final recommendation to the DCS Local Office Director.

**Note:** The DCS Local Office Director must receive a copy of the SNAP team recommendation prior to signing the adoption consent. See separate policy [10.7 SNAP Services](#).

If at any point a suitable adoptive family is identified for the child outside of the SNAP process, the adoption worker will within 30 days of the filing of the adoption petition notify the SNAP Specialist that an adoption is pending.

If at any point the child's permanency goal is changed to something other than adoption, the adoption worker will:

1. Notify the SNAP Specialist of the permanency goal change; and
2. Ask for the child's information to be removed from the internet and/or picture book within two (2) days of court approval of the new permanency goal. See separate policy, [10.08 SNAP Team Meetings](#).

#### PRACTICE GUIDANCE

N/A

#### FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Child Registration: Indiana Special Needs Adoption Program \(SNAP\) Picture Book and Website Form \(SF11840/CW 1440\)](#)
2. [Child Social Summary](#)

#### RELATED INFORMATION

##### **Obtaining Photographs of Children**

Good sources for obtaining a recent photograph may include:

1. The child's substitute caregiver; or
2. The child's school.

DCS local offices may have agreements with local photography studios to take photos of wards at no cost or a reduced cost. The FCM should check with his or her Supervisor to learn if such an agreement exists. Finally, as a last resort, the adoption worker may contact the SNAP Specialist to see if the Specialist is able to take a photograph of the child.

##### **Photos Taken with Digital Cameras**

If the photograph was taken using a digital camera, a hard copy print can be made (on photographic paper) or the electronic file (e.g., \*.JPG, \*.JPEG, etc.) can be forwarded via email to the SNAP Specialist. When using electronic photo files, care should be taken to assure that the resolution (i.e., the number of distinct pixels in each dimension that can be displayed) is high enough for the adoption picture book. As a rule, if the file size is less than 640 by 480, the resulting print will look "fuzzy". Therefore, the resolution will be too low for printing in the adoption picture book. Lighting and background need to be taken into consideration when children of darker skin tones are photographed.

**Note:** Check the resolution on your camera phone before using for documentation.