

## Child and Family Services Policy Manual: Adoption Foster Parent Adoption

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### Policy

Foster parents who express interest in adopting a child living in their home for whom adoption is or is likely to become the case plan must be allowed to apply to adopt. Foster parents who express interest in adopting a child in their home should be referred to a Family Resource Specialist and should have a pre-placement evaluation completed as soon as possible, but not later than six months after the foster family has met all of the requirements to adopt.

Foster parents must meet the same criteria for approval as other adoptive parents including participating in adoptive parent training. Foster parents are required to participate in adoptive parent training unless a written exception is granted by the regional administrator.

Adoption by the child's foster parents maintains continuity with persons the child has come to know as caretakers. Maintaining a relationship between the foster parents and the child through adoption may be in the child's best interests. However, the pre-placement evaluation should include an assessment of the foster parents' understanding of the differences between foster parents and adoptive parents, as well as the difference between attachment and making a lifetime commitment to the child.

If approved as adoptive parents, foster parents with whom the child has been living will be given priority over non-related adoptive parents if the foster parents are determined to be the most appropriate family for the child as determined by the selection committee and if the placement is in the child's best interest. Documentation of "best interest" must be provided. See Section 603-2, Identification and Selection of the Family.

### Concurrent Family

A concurrent family is a family approved both as a foster family and an adoptive family to provide early permanency for children. The foster family must be willing to work with the Department, the child's birth family, and the child's extended family members toward the goal of reunification. If a permanent placement is not established through reunification with the child's birth family or extended family, the concurrent family will be given priority for adoption if they are determined to meet the best interest criteria for the child. See Section 603-2, Identification and Selection of Family.

Once the determination is made that the concurrent family will be adopting the child, no further foster care placements shall be

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made with the foster family unless the child(ren) placed are siblings to the child to be adopted.

Six months following the adoption finalization the family may once again be assessed as to their readiness for placement of additional children. The assessment is completed by the family resource specialist, who will review the adjustment of all family members, but particularly that of the child(ren) who was adopted.

An exception to the above may be granted in writing by the family resource specialist supervisor.

When the child's foster parents and relatives or other kin both wish to adopt the same child, and both have a favorable pre-placement evaluation completed, the relatives or other kin shall be given priority if they meet the placement criteria developed for the child as determined by the selection committee. Refer to Section 603-2, Identification and Selection of the Family and to Section 602-4, Kinship Adoption.

### References

Mont. Code Ann. § § 42-3-202, 203, 204, and 42-3-301.  
Mont. Admin. R. 37.52.205