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To: Regional Managers  
Directors, Local Offices, Department of Child Services

From: James W. Payne, Director  
Angela Green, Deputy Director of Practice Support  
David Judkins, Deputy Director of Field Operations  
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Department of Child Services

Subject: Indiana Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP)  
DCS-10-03

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) continues to improve partnerships with the children and families we serve. In fulfilling the value that "Children thrive in safe, caring, supportive families and communities," recent collaborative efforts have been made to achieve a more effective way to place children in adoptive homes, provide on-site support to the DCS local office staff, and assist families with post-adoption services. This administrative letter outlines recent policy changes to the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) that were sent out via email and effective on May 1, 2010.

**The SNAP Specialist**

SNAP will focus on identifying qualified adoptive families for every child needing a permanent adoptive placement. A new structure of the SNAP has been established, resulting in changes to the roles and responsibilities of SNAP Specialists and Family Case Managers (FCMs). There are seven (7) SNAP Specialists embedded in DCS local offices throughout the State of Indiana. The SNAP Director is located in the DCS Central Office. SNAP Specialists will focus on walking potential adoptive families through the adoption process, as well as, serve as a liaison for post-adoption services. The SNAP Specialists will take all initial inquiries from potential adoptive families, as well as, make appropriate referrals for home studies, adoption background checks and required pre-service training.

SNAP Specialists will respond to any child specific inquiries from potential adoptive families by sending child summaries when appropriate and answering any questions the family may have about the adoption process. SNAP Specialists will work closely with DCS local offices to identify children with special needs who are in need of adoptive family recruitment. SNAP Specialists will pre-match children with potential adoptive families, considering both the child's needs and the potential adoptive family's strengths. SNAP Specialists will send pre-matched home studies to the appropriate FCM for consideration. SNAP Specialists are available to attend or assist with adoption interviews.



*Protecting our children, families and future*

When appropriate, the SNAP Specialists will hold matching events and quarterly family meetings. Matching events give potential adoptive families and children in need of recruitment an opportunity to interact. Quarterly family meetings will be held as needed and will focus on topics that fit the need of the families attending.

### **SNAP Council Meetings**

Regional SNAP Meetings will no longer be held; instead the SNAP Council will meet in Indianapolis, on the second Monday of each month (or more often if required). The SNAP Council will determine if the family being presented, via home study, is appropriate to become a forever family for a special needs child. Those foster families or relatives adopting children already placed in their homes will not need to be reviewed by the SNAP Council. The meetings will include the SNAP Specialists, the SNAP Director, DCS local office representatives and the Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA).

### **Post- Adoption Services**

All adoptive families are eligible for post-adoption services, which include home-based counseling, respite care, and community support groups. When a family contacts a DCS local office for assistance, they should be directed to the SNAP Specialist that is assigned to that region. The SNAP Specialist will make appropriate referrals for services based on the adoptive family's needs. This process will promote consistency for field staff and families, by utilizing one main contact for referrals.

### **The FCM**

Per policy 10.6, the FCM will continue to notify the SNAP Specialists of any child who meets SNAP eligibility requirements so that the SNAP Specialists can recruit for and match the child with a prospective adoptive family. The FCM will complete the Child Summary, Child Registration for Picture Book/Website, obtain a photo of the child and submit it to the Regional SNAP Specialist. The FCM will review pre-matched home studies submitted by SNAP Specialists. The FCM must assemble an interview team to interview the prospective adoptive families. The interview team will consist of relevant individuals who are familiar with the child. The FCM will schedule and alert the families of the interview date. The FCM must submit the interview team's recommendation to the DCS Local Office Director for approval. The FCM will be responsible for coordinating all pre-adoption services for the child and prospective adoptive families, as well as, consulting with the DCS Local Office Attorney on subsidy questions.

The DCS Policy Manual will be revised to reflect these important changes. If you have any questions regarding the information presented in this administrative letter, please address them to the DCS policy mailbox at [DCS.Policy@dcs.in.gov](mailto:DCS.Policy@dcs.in.gov).

Sincerely,

James W. Payne, Director  
Department of Child Services

