



The State of Mississippi
Phil Bryant, Governor
Dr. David A. Chandler, Commissioner
www.mdcp.ms.gov

Attachment B

Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN NEEDING FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT

Surveys were conducted as a part of Mississippi's Diligent Recruitment and Retention Grant to identify the characteristics of children most in need of foster and adoptive homes as well as the characteristics of resource parents who are successful in parenting these populations of children. Eight populations of special needs have been identified that correlate with a higher percentage of broken placements or that require a greater level of time and experience.

The 2015-2019 Diligent Recruitment Plan will focus on these populations of children for recruitment:

- 1. Teens of both Genders** – Any children, male or female, aged 13 or older.
- 2. Sibling Groups** – Groups of three or more children related either by blood or by marriage.
- 3. Sexually Abused Children** – Children who have been victimized through fondling, forced touch, penetration, indecent exposure/exhibitionism, pornography, etc.
- 4. Sexually Active Children** – Children who actively engage in promiscuous behaviors including sexual intercourse and/or oral sex with peers.
- 5. Sexually Acting Out Children** – Children who may engage in acts such as dressing provocatively, masturbating, inappropriately touching other individuals, and/or inappropriate sexual advances.
- 6. Pregnant Girls/Teenage Moms** – Pregnant teenage mothers who plan to or currently have their baby with them in and out-of-home placement.
- 7. Children with Severe Behavior Problems** – Behaviors may vary in frequency, severity, and/or intensity. This may include behaviors such as aggression towards other children, aggression towards adults, running away, stealing, lying, cruelty to people/animals, fire setting, destruction of property, and/or school suspensions/expulsions.

8. Children with physical (including medically fragile), emotional, or intellectual challenges-

- a. Physical (including medically fragile) challenges:** Physical challenges may be defined as any long-lasting condition that substantially limits one or more physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting or carrying, or conditions which require routine or constant medical attention such as insulin dependent diabetes or tracheotomy patients. These children have medical needs or physical handicaps which may require ongoing medical attention, structural changes in the home, and other specialized care.
- b. Emotional Challenges:** Emotional challenges may consist of diagnosis of depressions, anxiety, PTSD, ADD/ADHD, Reactive Attachment Disorder, bonding issues, etc. These children often struggle in school and social settings, and may often seem withdrawn, depressed, and angry.
- c. Intellectual Challenges:** Intellectual challenges are characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior. Limitations may include lack of conceptual skills, social skills, and practical skills. These children most often suffer from learning disabilities, mental retardations, or developmental delay.

OVERVIEW

Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS), formerly Mississippi Division of Family and Children's Services, is actively evaluating and reorganizing its organizational structure to better serve its children, youth, and resource families. As it relates to the diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive parents, MDCPS is hiring additional licensure/adoption supervisors and specialist in its Regional Resource Units. The Regional Resource Units will receive direct oversight from Licensure/Adoption Bureau Directors in the State Office. These additions are expected to lower workloads, and improve the quality and timeliness of services provided in licensing resource homes and services provided to MDCPS's children/youth. It is anticipated that the decrease in workloads will allow for more active, effective recruitment for children/youth on the regional and state levels. MDCPS will further develop and amend its Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan as the Department's new organizational structure is formalized.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

MDCPS will continue engaging its community partners, including churches, private adoption agencies, and other service organizations, in all of MDCPS's foster and adoptive parent recruitment efforts. The Department's community partners will remain actively involved with Regional Resource Units in recruiting, educating, and licensing resource homes. Additionally, community partners will support MDCPS's efforts to find permanent placements for children/youth who are typically harder to place.

CHILD SPECIFIC RECRUITMENT

MDCPS will partner with Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth (SCSCY), a private adoption agency, to gather updated professional photos and profiles for MDCPS's children/youth (specifically children who are free for adoption and harder to place). These photo and biographies will be used for child-specific recruitment at recruitment events designed to engage communities throughout Mississippi. In addition, SCSCY will provide the updated photos and profiles to MDCPS for its website's gallery and the Adopt US Kids website's gallery.

MDCPS will feature children/youth on the Adopt US Kids website. State Office staff will work in collaboration with Regional Resource staff and SCSCY to obtain and upload updated information on all children/youth (who are free for adoption) to the website.

MDCPS will feature children/youth on Mississippi's Wednesday's Child Program. Regional Resource staff will collaborate with State Office staff to ensure that harder to place children are featured in a Wednesday's Child segment.

Regional Resource staff will be present MDCPS's children/youth at placement committee meetings where community partners are present. Regional, multi-regional, and state level placement committee meetings are held on a regularly recurring scheduled.

MULTI-ETHNIC PLACEMENT POLICY

MDCPS's MEPA states, "Neither race, color, nor national origin (RCNO) of a child or prospective caregiver may be considered in the placement selection process for a foster child unless an individualized assessment reveals that such consideration is in the child's best interest. Culture may not be used as a proxy for RCNO and placements may not be delayed or denied on the basis of RCNO of the child or the provider."

ACCESS TO AGENCIES

MDCPS will partner with private child-placing agencies to better serve its children/youth and resource families. Several private agencies across the state provide pre-service training, home study services, and placement services, and they regularly participate in placement committee meetings. Additionally, these agencies license resource homes and provide other adoption services. Some of the agencies license therapeutic foster homes and medically fragile foster homes for a specific population of the children in care. Private agencies and other community stakeholders will participate in various regional and state level recruitment and retention efforts.

The Department will advertise the Adoption Resource Exchange Hotline on all recruitment material used in community education and targeted recruitment. Callers who express interest

in becoming licensed resource parents receive a packet that includes contact information for foster and adoptive programs for MDCPS and other licensed child placing agencies.

DIVERSITY TRAINING

Diversity training will be included in pre-service training for all frontline staff. Diversity is also addressed in the *Mississippi PATH: Parents as Tender Healers* training for all Resource Parents.

LINGUISTIC BARRIERS

The Resource Development Unit has translators on staff available to provide translation services that support recruitment and retention efforts. Translators are available to translate recruitment materials and speak with potential resource parents utilizing Adoption Resource Exchange Hotline.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY FEE STRUCTURES

MDCPS does not require fees for services.