

Division of Children and Family Services Protection and Safety Procedure Update #35-2012	
Regarding:	Sibling Placement and Visitation
Rescinds:	None
Date Effective:	October 30, 2012
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Issued by:	Thomas D. Pristow

Philosophy:

The Division of Children and Family Services believes that it is in the best interests of children for siblings to live together with the same family, whenever it is safe to do so. All efforts should be made to place siblings together and when this is not possible, frequent visitation between siblings will be a priority.

Procedure:

Placement of Siblings

Siblings are defined as biological siblings and legal siblings including, but not limited to, half-siblings and stepsiblings

When siblings are removed from their home, reasonable efforts must be made to have them in the same out of home placement unless it is contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings. This includes foster care, adoption, or guardianship placements.

If the siblings are not placed together, the CFS Specialist will provide the siblings and the court with the reasons why a joint-sibling placement would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings or why placing the siblings together was not possible.

The CFS Specialist will continue to make reasonable efforts to place siblings together even when an order of termination of parental rights has been entered unless the court has issued an order that visitation, contact or placement with the siblings should not occur.

Sibling Visitation

When a court order is issued to facilitate visits, the CFS Specialist will notify the parents as soon as reasonably possible

The CFS Specialist will make a reasonable effort to provide for frequent sibling visitation, unless it is determined that ongoing visitation is contrary to the safety or well-being of any sibling. The CFS Specialist will provide the siblings and the court with reasons why such sibling visitation would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings.

Documentation:

Efforts made to place siblings together and the efforts made to facilitate visitation must be documented in narrative on N-FOCUS. Additionally, if placement or visitation with siblings is contrary to safety or the well-being of any of the siblings or was not possible, the CFS Specialist will document the reasons for this in narrative on N-FOCUS.

References:

- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351)
- Nebraska Revised Statute 43-1311.02