

Sibling Placements

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Quality Standards

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FOSTER CARE



National Fostering Standards

- 1.3 Priority is given to the placement of Siblings are placed together, unless this is inappropriate given the assessed needs of the children
- 2.2 Siblings are placed together where possible, taking into account their wishes. If they are not accommodated together , arrangements sre made for them to have high levels of contact, including holidays together, provided this is in their best interests

Clarify the Core Siblings

- Who are the core group of children
- What information is known about children living elsewhere
- Each child needs to be consulted and their views on who is their brother and sister and who is important to them

Research

- Research (Leathers 2005) suggests that placing each child consistently with the sibling they get on with best is likely to be beneficial
- Older children had a lower disruption rate (Wedge and Mantle 1991)
- Quinton (1998)and Rushton (2001) Found sibling placements associated with greater stability and poorer outcomes for singly placed children.
- Consistent findings of better outcomes and more stable placements for children and their sibling groups, Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster care Studies, University of Bristol (Saunders and Selwyn 2012)

Assessing Children in the Sibling Group

- Assessing each child's needs
- Context in which relationship has developed
- Assessing each child's attachment to and relationship with each sibling
- Dynamics of sibling group
- What work could be done to improve sibling relationship

Assessment

- Behaviour of Child A to B (BAAF)
- Defend or Protects
- Recognises Sib's distress and offers support
- Teaches or Helps
- Initiates Play
- Responds to overtures of play
- Openly shows affection
- Misses sib when apart
- Resolves conflict through age appropriate reasoning
- Annoys, irritates or teases
- Shows hostility or aggression
- Blames or attempts to get sibs into trouble
- Behaviour sabotages efforts to meet sib's needs

Potential Circumstances for Separation

- Intense rivalry and jealousy with each totally pre-occupies with, the attention which their sibling may be getting
- Exploitation, often based on gender, such as boys may see themselves as inherently superior to sister with a right to dominate
- Chronic scapegoating of one child: maintaining unhelpful alliances in a sibling group and family of origin conflicts-sibling patterns of behaviour may be strongly entrenched and may prevent re-parenting or learning new cultural norms
- Maintaining unhelpful hierarchical positions eg a child may be stuck in the role of bully
- Highly sexualised behaviour
- Acting as triggers to each others traumatic material and potentially constantly re-traumatising each other. The triggers may well be unconscious unintentional and mundane

When Siblings have to be fostered Separately

Other measures that may be helpful

- Trying to place siblings in the same area and at the same school and organising frequent contact
- Encouraging each sibling to discuss their feelings and arranging overnights together in one placement