

WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES	CHAPTER: Placement and Permanency POLICY: Preserving Connections POLICY NUMBER: 5.2.6
EFFECTIVE DATE: April 3, 2009	Current: 4/3/09 Revised: Original: 4/3/09

A. PURPOSE

To help preserve the continuity of family relationships and connections for child(ren)/youth and families who are involved with DFS.

B. PROCEDURE

1. When appropriate and safe for the child(ren)/youth and family, efforts shall be made to help the child(ren)/youth preserve connections with significant people in their lives. These people include, but are not limited to:

- Parents
 - Siblings
 - School
 - Foster families/Caregivers
 - Friends
 - Relatives (immediate and extended family)
 - Non-traditional “family” (neighbors, close family friends, godparents)
 - Culture, community, religion
- a. Whenever possible, a child(ren)/youth shall be placed in close proximity to their parents.
 - b. Reasonable efforts shall be made to place siblings together unless it is contrary to their safety or well-being. These efforts and/or safety or well-being concerns shall be documented in the case file.
 - If siblings are not placed together, provide for frequent visitation or other on-going interaction between the siblings unless documented that it is contrary to the safety or well-being of the siblings.
 - If appropriate and possible, siblings who are initially placed separately shall be reunited.
 - c. Efforts shall be made to keep the child(ren)/youth in the school of origin unless it is not in their best interest and documented in the case file.
 - d. Visitation, preferably in person, and communication shall be encouraged with family and other important people to the child(ren)/youth (in person, by phone, video conference, letters, pictures, etc).

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- e. Positive relationships shall be promoted. Activities to promote positive relationships may include, but not limited to:
- Phone calls or letters to relatives living out of town
 - Visitation with relatives living out of town (complete background check)
 - “Play dates” with old friends
- f. When extended family is not an acceptable or a safe placement option, DFS caseworker shall encourage visitation and/or communication with them when it is appropriate and safe to do so.
- g. Encourage family, including foster family, biological family, and extended family, to keep or contribute to a life book/scrap book of memories and documentation for the child(ren)/youth.
- h. Keep child(ren)/youth in a consistent school placement or daycare setting and avoid school or daycare changes. Encourage the child(ren)/youth to stay involved with their extracurricular activities or engage them in new activities to help build peer support and friendships.
- i. Help child(ren)/youth maintain a connection to their language and culture of origin by encouraging foster parents and/or family members to:
- Make books available about their culture and language.
 - Allow/encourage child(ren)/youth to spend time with people who share their cultural background.
 - Attend and acknowledge celebrations and events pertaining to the child(ren)/youth’s culture.
 - Speak freely with child about cultural issues.
 - Respect child(ren)/youth’s religious beliefs and help them participate if possible.
- j. Diligent search shall be completed to locate and involve noncustodial/absent parent and relatives. (**Refer to Diligent Search policy [5.6](#) and [5.7](#)**).
- k. Comply with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) guidelines in order to ensure the child(ren)/youth maintains a connection with their identified tribe (**See [ICWA Policy 5.3](#)**).
- l. Comply with the Multi-Ethnic/ Interethnic Adoption Provisions Act (MEPA/IEAP) Policy (**Refer to MEPA/IEAP 5.2.11**).