

Number
#26-68-05

Date
March 30, 2026

Of interest to
County Directors
Social Services Supervisors and
Staff
County attorneys
Tribal Directors
Tribal Social Services
Supervisors and Staff
Tribal attorneys

Action/due date
Please read information and
prepare for implementation

Expiration date
March 30, 2028

Foster Care Sibling Bill of Rights

Topic

Updates to the Foster Care Sibling Bill of Rights Commissioner's Form and a new agency requirements document.

Purpose

Provide updated guidance on the Foster Care Sibling Bill of Rights and introduce new forms.

Contact

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Signed



Rebecca St. George, Assistant Commissioner
Child Safety and Permanency Administration

Terminology notice

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) supports the use of "People First" language.

Foster Care Sibling Bill of Rights

In 2017, the Minnesota Youth Leadership Council proposed that Minnesota adopt a Sibling Bill of Rights. These youth were inspired during a national youth conference, where they learned that youth leaders from other states had passed similar measures to keep sibling families intact. The 2018 Minnesota Legislature established a [Foster Care Sibling Bill of Rights](#) for children who enter foster care.

Starting in 2024, the Office of the Foster Youth (OOFY) ombudsperson reviewed county case records for children in care who were not currently living with their siblings. (See [OOFY Sibling Issue Report](#) for more details.) They found no evidence of the required disclosure of the Sibling Bill of Rights, nor of support for sibling contact and relationships. Caseworkers expressed a need for more clarity on how to provide the notification.

Therefore, the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families engaged with the Minnesota Youth Leadership Council to create an updated, youth-friendly [Sibling Bill of Rights Commissioner's Form](#) (DHS-8068) and incorporated feedback from OOFY. A new agency requirements document, [Foster Care Sibling Bill of Rights: Responsible social services agency requirements and instructions](#) (DHS-8068A), was created to assist caseworkers and to support consistent work across the state.

At the first caseworker visit following placement, caseworkers must provide the Sibling Bill of Rights Commissioner's Form to all children 10 and older who have a sibling. The signature on the form is for the child to acknowledge receipt and understanding of their rights. While the form may not be given to younger children, the Sibling Bill of Rights must be explained in age-appropriate language. Placement caregivers must also be provided with the Sibling Bill of Rights Commissioner's Form at the first caseworker visit after placement occurs. Any adult siblings must be provided with the Sibling Bill of Rights Commissioner's Form within 30 days of being identified. Caseworkers must report all these notifications to the court and document in a case note in the Social Service Information System (SSIS) titled "Foster Care Sibling Bill of Rights."

Reasonable and active efforts in Minnesota for maintaining sibling connections must be documented in SSIS and reported to the court for both Chapter 260C (child protection) and Chapter 260D (voluntary foster care for treatment) placements. If parents or legal custodians are not cooperating with sibling connections, the agency must address the presenting issues and report any barriers to the court during review hearings. The agency will need to consider referrals for services that can support sibling connections, address the issues and mitigate the barriers. Visitation planning is the responsibility of the child welfare agency and must not be delegated to placement caregivers; however, they can help with logistics and implementation.

The agency requirements document has instructions for case workers, including additional resources and a checklist.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling 651-539-7700 (voice). For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.