



## Administrative Policies and Procedures: 15.5

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Registering and Maintaining Status of Children on AdoptUSKids (AUK)</b>
<b>Authority:</b>	<b>TCA:</b> 37-5-105 (3), 37-5-112 TCA 36-1-101–142, 36-1-201, 37-4-201 et seq., 37-5-105(3), 37-5-106, 39-17-316; Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 HR 4472; Adoption and Safe Families, P.L. 105-89; Safe and Timely Interstate Placement Act of Children in Foster Care Act of 2006 - P.L. 109-239 and the Social Security Act; Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, (P.L. 110-35).
<b>Standards:</b>	<b>COA:</b> PA-CFS 28.01 ;PA-CFS 28.02; PA-CFS 22.02
<b>Application:</b>	To All Department of Children's Services Permanency Specialist Employees, Family Service Workers, and Contract Provider Employees
<b>Policy Statement:</b>	
<p>All children and youth in full guardianship of the Department of Children's Services (DCS) who have no identified permanent family will be registered on AdoptUSKids (AUK). A profile narrative and photo listing will be maintained to reflect current information about the child.</p> <p>In limited situations, the team may determine it is not in the child's best interest to be registered on AUK due to the child refusing recruitment, the child's severe or terminal medical needs, and/or the child's need for stabilization. The team will periodically reassess if the child can be registered on AUK due to changes in the child's circumstances.</p>	
<b>Purpose:</b>	
<p>DCS uses AdoptUSKids, a national photo listing website, to locate permanent homes for children in state custody who are available for adoption. AdoptUSKids supports child welfare systems to connect children in foster care with forever families.</p> <p>Note: Federal authority and DCS Policy prohibit discrimination in distinct areas including inter-jurisdictional boundaries in identifying families for children whose permanency goal is adoption.</p>	
<b>Procedures:</b>	
<b>A. Registering and Maintaining Children on Adopt USKids (AUK)</b>	<p><b>Regional Responsibility</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Registering and maintaining the child's profile and narrative information on AUK is the responsibility of the Family Service Worker (FSW), Permanency Specialist, and/or Contract Provider representative assigned to the child's case.</li> <li>2. The Permanency Specialist, in collaboration with the FSW and the Contract Provider representative, should ensure that children with a legal status of full guardianship have an AdoptUSKids profile completed and registered within sixty (60) days of the child/youth entering full guardianship.</li> </ol>

3. If the child/youth experiences a disruption in their permanent placement the child should be registered on AUK within 60 days from the date the disruption occurred, unless extenuating circumstances exist that would cause a delay in having the child registered on AUK.
4. In limited situations, a child may not be registered on AdoptUSKids if the child and family team that it is not in the child's best interest to be registered.
5. Those situations may include:
  - ◆ The child/youth's refusal to be adopted
  - ◆ The child/youth's refusal to be photo listed
  - ◆ The child/youth's severe or terminal medical needs
  - ◆ The child/youth's need for stabilization

The team will periodically reassess if the child can be registered on AUK due to changes in the child's circumstances.
6. All profile narratives and registration information should be submitted to the Central Office AUK Coordinator for review and listing to the AUK website.
7. The AUK coordinator has seven (7) working days to submit the child's profile and photo to AUK and disseminate to other recruitment websites.
7. The AUK public narrative is accessible to anyone, including the child and their peers. Information in the public narrative should be strengths-based and emphasize the child's unique personality and qualities.
8. The child/youth should be engaged in the process of creating their profile narrative. Involving the child/youth in creating their narrative helps ensure that the profile is more accurate and compelling. It also gives the child/youth a sense of control and empowers them to make decisions about what information they want to share with prospective families.
9. The public child profile narrative should include the following information:
  - ◆ Preferred first name
  - ◆ Positive personality traits
  - ◆ Strengths
  - ◆ Hobbies, interests, and favorite pastimes
  - ◆ What they like about school and school successes
  - ◆ Things that are important to them
  - ◆ Answers to questions such as: What makes them laugh? What is their dream day like?
  - ◆ What makes them proud?
  - ◆ Ways they are connected to the community
  - ◆ Information about cultural connections or languages they speak or use

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Dreams for the future</li><li>◆ Quotes from the child</li><li>◆ Positive quotes or input from others in their life</li><li>◆ Important family connections</li><li>◆ In profiles of siblings, how they relate to one another</li><li>◆ How a family might be a part of their life</li><li>◆ If recruitment is limited to Tennessee families only, this can be noted in the public profile narrative.</li></ul> <p>10. The public profile narrative <b><u>should not</u></b> include any of the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Identifying Information</li><li>◆ Information about abuse or neglect</li><li>◆ Placement Information</li><li>◆ Intellectual ability or educational challenges</li><li>◆ Sexual orientation or gender identity</li><li>◆ Medical or mental health diagnoses, medication or treatment, including whether the child has or is attending therapy or counseling</li><li>◆ Behavioral Challenges</li><li>◆ Video games that the child plays</li><li>◆ Social media platforms that the child uses</li><li>◆ Potentially painful or embarrassing information such as references to child's anxieties or fears, trouble making friends, slow to warm up to people, problems in school or need for extra assistance</li><li>◆ Limits on the type of family who will be considered, including marital status, race or ethnic background, number or age of other children in the family, religion, or other fixed characteristics</li></ul> <p>11. The private profile narrative is accessible to home studied families and case workers who are registered on AUK. Private narratives may include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ The type of family that would be best suited for the child</li><li>◆ General information about the child's need for ongoing therapy and care without disclosing specific diagnoses or information, as this information is shared with prospective adoptive families during the full disclosure process when families are matched with children in foster care as a potential adoptive placement.</li></ul> <p>12. The DCS Permanency Specialist and/or Contract Provider representative ensures the child profile narrative and photo listing is maintained to reflect their current information and status on AUK.</p> <p>13. The DCS Permanency Specialist and/or Contract Provider representative provides updates to photos, profile narratives, and registration form information at least annually and as the child's status changes. It is the responsibility of the</p>
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	<p>Permanency Specialist or Contract Provider representative to notify Central Office when there is a change in the child's status to include any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ When the child becomes available for adoption (active);</li> <li>◆ When the child's profile should be placed on hold;</li> <li>◆ When the child is placed for adoption;</li> <li>◆ When the child has been adopted;</li> <li>◆ When the child has exited foster care</li> </ul> <p><b>Central Office Responsibility</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The DCS Central Office AUK coordinator ensures all photo listings and profile narratives are reviewed and registered on the AUK website within seven (7) working days of submission unless modification or corrections are needed to the profile information.</li> <li>2. The DCS Central Office AUK coordinator ensures the child's profile and narrative information is submitted to AUK and other agency websites used for recruitment and photo listing.</li> <li>3. The DCS Central Office AUK coordinator responds to family inquiries and forwards inquiry information to the designated members of the child's recruitment team for follow up within seven (7) business days.</li> </ol>
<p><b>B. Required Information for Registering and Maintaining Child Profile and Narrative Information on AUK</b></p>	<p>The DCS Permanency Specialist or Contract Provider representative ensures that all required information submitted to register a child/youth on AUK is current, completed thoroughly, and presented in a strengths-based way. Required information includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Completed DCS form <b>CS-1012, AdoptUSKids Registration</b> to include written profile information for the public and private profile narratives. The public profile narrative must be a minimum of 100 words.</li> <li>◆ A current photograph of the child. Consideration should be given to the child's hygiene, clothing, hair, age-appropriate use of make-up, body language, and clarity of the picture when choosing a photo for registration. The child's clothes or any other item in the photograph should not include any identifying information (i.e., name of child, school, city, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>C. Following Up on AUK Inquiries</b></p>	<p>The Permanency Specialist and/or Contract Provider representative follows up on family inquiries received through AdoptUSKids. The process below is the same for families who inquire about specific children and families pulled from the AUK system as a result of the system's matching capability.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The CFT will consider families from all states, unless the child refuses to consider families outside of Tennessee or there is a valid reason for considering only Tennessee families. Limiting families to a specific state must be documented in the Electronic Case Record as well as on the Individual Recruitment Plan.</li> </ol>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Upon receiving inquiries from the Central Office AUK Coordinator, the Permanency Specialist or Contract Provider will respond to all families via email or phone within seven (7) business days. For inquiries received from an agency worker on behalf of a family, the Permanency Specialist or Contract Provider will respond to the agency worker via email or phone within seven (7) business days.</li> <li>3. The Permanency Specialist or Contract Provider documents all responses to inquiries on the child's Individual Recruitment Plan, as indicated.</li> <li>4. During the initial conversation with the family, the Permanency Specialist or Contract Provider identifies the licensed child placing agency or public agency serving the family. This information helps to identify supports and services available to the child and family during transition planning and post placement of the child into the adoptive home.</li> <li>5. When the decision is made not to further engage an inquiring family based on information gathered during the initial contact and conversation with that family or after the team reviews the family's home study, the Permanency Specialist and/or Contract Provider representative is responsible for communicating with the inquiring family as to why they were not considered to be the best adoptive match for the child without disclosing specific or identifying information.</li> </ol>
<p><b>D. Use of AUK Matches</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The DCS Permanency Specialist and/or Contract Provider representative may utilize AUK data in conjunction with Electronic Case Record listings to identify and match families who are most suitable to meet the needs of DCS children who need permanent families.</li> <li>2. A family search should be completed on AdoptUSKids monthly to identify and match families if the child/youth has not received inquiries. A family search can be completed to expand the pool of families to be considered, if the child/youth has not received inquiries from families within Tennessee. It is the team's responsibility to select the family that will best meet the child/youth's needs, regardless of the geographic location.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Forms:</b></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>CS-0768, Child/Youth Specific Recruitment Plan</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>CS-1012, AdoptUSKids Registration</u></a></p>
<p><b>Collateral Documents</b></p>	<p>None</p>