**Section 301.230 Contact Among Siblings Placed Apart**

a) Unless the Department determines that it is not in the child's best interests to be provided information on a sibling's whereabouts or to have his or her whereabouts provided to his or her siblings, or a court has prohibited disclosure of this information, the Department shall promote contact and communication among siblings placed apart by taking the following actions:

1) the Department or purchase of service agency shall provide children and their foster parents or other caregiver with each sibling's birth date and the name, address, and telephone number of the foster parent or other caregiver of each sibling placed by the Department in substitute care. The Department shall also provide the birth date and the name, address and telephone number of siblings in the custody of a parent, adoptive parent, legal guardian or adult sibling, if that information is or becomes known to the Department;

2) the Department or purchase of service agency shall provide children who are in the care of their parents with the name, address and telephone number of siblings in the custody/guardianship of the Department, unless:

A) the Department or purchase of service agency has determined that it is not in the child's best interests to provide information on his or her whereabouts to his or her siblings, and the Department has notified each child's attorney and guardian ad litem in accordance with subsection (b);

B) the Department or purchase of service agency has determined that identifying information of the foster parent/relative caregiver shall not be released to the sibling based on the results of the assessment completed in accordance with Section 301.440(a), and each child's attorney and guardian ad litem has been notified in accordance with Section 301.440(b); or

C) a court has prohibited disclosure of this information;

3) whenever a child is moved to another placement, the Department shall:

A) give written notice of the name, address and telephone number of the child's new foster parent or other caregiver to each sibling and the foster parent or other caregiver of each sibling, in writing, within seven days after the move; and

B) review and, if necessary, amend the Visitation and Contact Plan in consultation with the caseworkers, foster parents, caregivers, children/siblings and other appropriate parties;

4) the Department shall encourage foster parents and caregivers to allow children in their care to use available modes of communication (e.g., telephone, cell phone, letter writing, email, video conferencing, etc.) to contact their siblings between visits as often as the children wish, provided, however, that, if necessary, a plan for scheduling reasonable contact may be established by the children's caseworker, together with the foster parent or other caregiver and the children. This plan shall be incorporated in the Visitation and Contact Plan.

b) If the Department determines that it is not in a child's best interests to be provided information on a sibling's whereabouts or to have information on his or her whereabouts provided to his or her siblings, the Department shall notify each child's attorney and guardian ad litem in writing within seven days after that determination. The Department shall also record the reasons for that determination in the children's case records.

c) Neither the Department nor its purchase of service or other contractual agencies shall withhold or restrict, or seek to have any court withhold or restrict, contact among siblings as a form of discipline under any circumstances.

(Source: Amended at 40 Ill. Reg. 666, effective December 31, 2015)