**Section 309.110 Preparation and Training of Adoptive Families**

The preparation and training of prospective adoptive families will be done in the following four phases:

a) Pre-service Preparation and Education

During this first phase the Department or adoption agency will educate prospective adoptive parents in the following areas:

1) the purpose and goals of adoption;

2) the selection process and the criteria for being licensed and certified as adoptive parents;

3) the laws, regulations, policies, resources and values that direct the adoption program;

4) information about the needs and strengths of children who require adoption services;

5) the respective roles of adoptive parents, agencies, and courts;

6) differences between parenting in foster home placement, legal risk placement, and adoptive placement regarding attachment, commitment, relationship with the child's family of origin, expectations, responsibilities, supports and the lifelong impact of adoption;

7) the child's sense of attachment to his/her siblings, the importance of maintaining a relationship with siblings over the child's lifespan, and the impact upon the child if those relationships are not preserved;

8) developing, implementing and modifying Post-Permanency Sibling Contact Agreements; the role the adoptive parent can take in supporting the child's connections, and the possibility that the adoptive parent/guardian may be contacted in the future regarding placement of or contact with siblings;

9) the knowledge and practical skills necessary to become successful adoptive parents; and

10) the knowledge of developmental challenges and changes faced by adoptive families.

b) The Assessment Phase

During the assessment phase the Department or adoption agency will:

1) help applicants make an accurate and informed assessment of the strengths they bring to adoption, including the kinds of children they could most successfully parent and their ability to parent a sibling group;

2) help applicants make an accurate assessment of their needs, including the kinds of support they would need from the Department or the adoption agency;

3) make an accurate assessment of the strengths and needs of the prospective adoptive family;

4) match the prospective family's assessment with the Department's or agency's assessment;

5) develop a written strength and needs assessment or family profile to be used to guide placement of specific children; and

6) explore with applicants their willingness to help the child maintain contact with his/her siblings and other significant relationships in the child's past.

c) The Certification Process

The certification process includes completion of the required certification training and an assessment that includes a written home study that incorporates information from the assessment phase and includes a recommendation regarding the types of children the family is able to parent that have been approved by the Department or adoption agency supervisor.

d) Post-Certification Phase

During this phase the Department or adoption agency will:

1) provide continued support to the family, including information regarding children available for adoption;

2) make specialized training available; and

3) introduce adoptive families to adoptive parent support groups, and/or master adoptive parents in those areas where they exist.

(Source: Amended at 40 Ill. Reg. 720, effective December 31, 2015)