

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**PERMANENT PLACEMENT OF BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY  
CHILDREN POLICY**

**Policy Aim**

Children's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language are fully recognised and positively valued and promoted when decisions relating to the adoption of the child are made.

**Legislation, Central Government and other External Documents**

National Minimum Standards - Local Authority Adoption Services - Std 2  
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 20  
The Children Act 1989, Section 22  
Guidance to the Children Act 1989 (Vol. 3, 2. 40)  
LAC 98 (20)  
Adoption and Children Act 2002  
Children Act 2004  
Children and Young Persons Act 2008  
Adoption Agencies Regulations 2011  
National Minimum Standards, Adoption 2011  
Adoption Statutory Guidance 2011

**Slough Borough Council and Social Service Department References**

Slough Borough Council - Adoption Agency Policy - April 2011

**Policy**

In placing the child for adoption, the adoption agency must give due consideration to her/his religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background (Standard 1 (5)). Children are matched with adopters who can meet their assessed needs; either with a family that reflect their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language, or who can positively promote it.

The Prospective Adopters' Report and the Child's Permanence Report are used to identify prospective adopters who can meet the majority, if not all of the child's needs as set out in the Child's Permanence Report.

Placing a child in a family of the same race and culture can help to:

- Foster a positive sense of identity and self-esteem for the child,
- Provide positive role models for the child,
- Help develop resilience in coping with and challenging racism.

Where a child cannot be matched with a family which reflects their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language, Slough Borough Council will make every effort to find an alternative suitable family within a realistic timeframe to ensure the child is not left waiting indefinitely in the care system. In these circumstances, families will be sought for children of black and ethnic minority backgrounds who will be able to reflect and/or demonstrate a commitment to and awareness of children's need to know about their history, culture and language.

Where children are not able to be matched with a family which reflects their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language, a clear explanation will be given to them, having regard to their age and understanding, and be recorded.

## **Procedure**

### *1. Taking account of the wishes and feelings of the child*

In matching children with approved adopters, Slough Borough Council will take into account the views and feelings of the child as far as these can be ascertained based on their age and understanding, the child's care plan and written assessments of the child and his birth family, potential adoptive parents and their children.

The wishes and feelings of the child should be recorded; however the responsibility for the adoption placement decision rests with the adults. Where the wishes and feelings of the child are not acted upon, the reasons must be explained to the child and recorded.

### *2. Views of birth parents*

Birth parents' views need to be obtained and recorded. They could play an important role in helping determine the priority elements of a child's heritage.

### *3. Identifying the best option*

Black and ethnic minority children have diverse racial, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. In many cases it will not be possible to find an exact match. In order to identify a 'good enough' match it will be important to identify which elements of the child's heritage may be the most important.

For example, in placing a child of Nigerian Muslim heritage, in the first instance, it might be reasonable to try to seek a suitable African, Muslim family. However, if such a family cannot be identified it will be necessary to consider which aspect of the child's heritage should be prioritised, i.e. their ethnicity or religion. Alongside this however, there must be consideration of how well any prospective family meets the child's other identified needs.

Children with a disability have the same right to be placed with families that reflect their race, culture, religion, ethnicity and language, or who can positively promote it. It will be important to ensure that such a family is able to foster a positive sense of

the child's disability status as well as their race and culture.

#### *4. Alternative options*

When no family can be found which provides a reasonable match for the child within the time-scale set out in the National Minimum Standards, or it is deemed unlikely to, then alternative options will be considered. A record must be made of the attempts to find a suitable match for the child, identifying as far as possible, reasons why these did not prove successful.

These alternative options may include:

- A family that meets some elements of the child's heritage
- A transracial / transcultural placement (which might be the child's foster carer)

In all cases it is important to ensure that the placement meets the long term needs of the child and enables the child to have the opportunity to learn about and be proud of their heritage. If necessary, Slough Borough Council may provide access to support for a child whose racial, cultural and religious background is different to their own, as part of the Adoption Support Plan / Placement Support Plan.

In order to minimise delay, family finding activities will encompass a broad remit, rather than seeking a very specific match in profiling/advertising. Matches must not be delayed because the prospective adopters do not share the child's ethnic origin if they can meet the child's other needs (Guidance 4. 4-8).