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	CLIENT SERVICES INDEX	SECTION: E. Substitute Care
	ISSUED BY: Office of Safety and Permanency for Children FINAL: 7-01-01	SUBSECTION: 1. Placement Services
SUBJECT: 1. Working with F	Relatives Toward Placement of Children – OAR	

REFERENCES:

Indian Child Welfare Act. P.L. 95 Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, P.L. 105-89 ORS 419.A.004(16)(Definition of Parent) ORS 419B.192(1)-(2) (Placement of Child) ORS 109.119 (1)-(7) (Rights of Grandparent, Child-Parent Relationship, Ongoing Personal Relationship) Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. PL 104-193. Sec. 505 DHS Information Memorandum ACYF-IM-CB-96-24 Child Welfare Policy I-B.3.1, Service Plans: Service Agreement or Letter of Expectations http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-b31.pdf Child Welfare Policy I-E.2.1, Placement of Indian Children http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual 1/i-e21.pdf Child Welfare Policy I-E.6.1, Title IV-E Foster Care and General Assistance http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-e61.pdf Child Welfare Policy I-G.3.1, Adoption Assistance http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual 1/i-q31.pdf

FORMS:

CF 446, "Relative Search & Contact Letter (Packet with CF 448 & CF 449)" http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0446.doc

PURPOSE

413-070-0060 By law, relatives are the placement of preference for children. These rules describe how SOSCF will search for and work with the relatives of children in SOSCF custody who are in substitute care to develop placements and alternate permanency plans for them. SOSCF shall consider relatives as the placement of preference, but in making placement decisions shall ultimately be guided by the best interest of the child. It is the *consideration* of relatives as the placement of choice that is mandated by federal law, not the actual placement with relatives that is required. In the case of an Indian child, SOSCF shall follow the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and SOSCF Policy I-E.2.1, Placement of Indian Children (OAR 413-070-0100/0260).

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

DEFINITIONS

413-070-0063 (1) "Interbranch Permanency/Adoption Committee": Means the permanency/adoption committee(s) established through the Permanency/Adoption Council which are responsible for decisions regarding adoptive placement selections as specified by rule that are neither the responsibility of the branch nor the central office. One type of Interbranch Permanency/Adoption Committee is set by the worker using a pool of qualified permanency/adoption/legal assistance staff designated by the Permanency/Adoption Council. Another type, the Standing Interbranch Permanency/Adoption Committee, is either a predetermined Council appointed committee of three people, or a committee established by the Permanency/Adoption Committee.

(2) "Diligent Search" means identifying, locating and contacting relatives regarding their interest in providing a temporary or permanent placement for or adopting a child when the child is placed in substitute care and before the child is placed in a potential adoptive home or other permanent placement. Because of the potentially limitless opportunities to identify relatives, the child's family has the primary responsibility to identify them, and the branch is responsible for determining when the diligent search is concluded.

(3)"First Cousin Once Removed" means the son or daughter of the child's first cousin.

(4) "ICWA" means the Indian Child Welfare Act, P.L. No 95-608, codified at 25 USC § 1901-1963, which the Congress of the United State adopted in 1978, "to protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families" 25 USC § 1901.

(5) "Personal Relationship" means a relationship with substantial continuity which is characterized through interaction, companionship, interplay and mutuality.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

VALUES AND PROCESS

413-070-0066 (1) Each child's placement shall be the one that best meets his or her individual needs for safety, attachment, permanence, and well being.

(2) In planning for the placement of a child, SOSCF shall focus on the best

interest of the child and treat all persons with respect.

(3) Relatives are important to a child's sense of identity and belonging.

(4) Early identification of a permanent placement resource is in the best interest of the child.

(5) SOSCF should consider relatives as both temporary and potential permanent resources for children who are unable to live safely with a parent.

(6) Even though a relative may not be able to safely provide care for a child SOSCF should consider ways the relative can be safely and meaningfully involved in the child's life.

(7) Working with relatives is a multi-step process including:

(a) Identifying the child's needs;

(b) Searching for relatives;

(c) Identifying the interest of relatives in providing care;

(d) Helping families assess the most appropriate role of the relatives in the child's life based on the child's needs and best interests;

(e) Assessing the suitability of those relatives who express interest in providing care for a child;

(f) If adoption is the plan for the child, completing an adoption home study on those relatives who are suitable and interested;

(g) If adoption is the plan for the child, referring an appropriate relative(s) to an adoption committee which may or may not select the relative as the adoptive resource; and

(h) Determining what the permanent placement for the child will be. Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS AS TEMPORARY RESOURCES

413-070-0096 renumbered to 413-070-0067 Although some foster parents become permanent resources for children, at placement it is the responsibility of the worker to inform the foster parent that planning for the child does not necessarily

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include permanent placement with the foster parents. SOSCF workers shall discuss with foster parents that the foster parent role is that of a transitional resource. The worker shall keep the foster parent informed of the primary permanent and alternative permanent planning for the child. If the foster parents become interested in the permanent placement of a child in their home, procedures outlined in SOSCF Policy I-G.1.1, Current Caretaker Adoption Planning, apply.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

IDENTIFICATION OF RELATIVES

413-070-0069 (1) At the shelter hearing when a child is placed in the custody of SOSCF, if a diligent search for maternal and paternal relatives has not occurred within the prior 6 months, the SOSCF branch with responsibility for the child shall request the court to order the child's parents to identify relatives for the SOSCF branch. Subsequently, but no later than 30 days after a child is placed in the custody of SOSCF, the SOSCF branch with responsibility for the child shall begin a diligent search for relatives in order to identify a potential placement resource and assist the agency and the family in the formulation of an alternate permanency plan for the child within 60 days after the shelter hearing (ORS 419B.343(b)). SOSCF shall search for the relatives as specified in this rule. Relationships described in the following sections are in relationship to the child(ren):

(a) Relatives of specified degree who had a legal relationship with the child at the time the child entered care, as follows:

(A) Any blood relative or half blood relative, including persons of preceding generations denoted by the prefixes of grand, great or great-great who is related to the child through the biological or adoptive mother or the legal or adoptive father of the child as defined by ORS 419A.004(16);

(B) Aunts, uncles, adult first cousins and adult first cousins once removed who are related to the child through the biological or adoptive mother or the legal or adoptive father of the child as defined by ORS 419A.004(16);

(C) Stepparent(s) or ex-step parents who had a personal relationship with the child prior to the child entering foster care.

(D) Adoptive parents of the sibling of the child or persons who have been designated the adoptive resource for a sibling of the child, and the adult biological and adopted children of the adoptive or designated adoptive parents.

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(2) SOSCF may consider the unrelated biological father or mother of the child's half sibling in the same category as a relative, but is neither required to do so nor to search for this parent or the parent's relatives.

(3) The rights of a "Stanley-type" putative father (Stanley vs. Illinois, U.S. Supreme Court) do not extend to his relatives. The relatives of a "Stanley-type" putative father are not considered relatives per sections (1) through (2) of this rule. The branch is not obligated to search for the relatives of a "Stanley-type" putative father unless he establishes paternity and becomes a legal father.

(4) In the case of an Indian child who is subject to the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act, SOSCF staff shall follow procedures in accordance with SOSCF Policy I-E.2.1, Placement of Indian Children, (OAR 413-070-0100 through OAR 413-070-0260).

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

CONDUCTING THE DILIGENT SEARCH

413-070-0072 (1) In conducting the diligent search for the above persons SOSCF shall, as applicable:

(a) Question the child and the child's parents or guardians about the child's relatives and preferences about the relatives;

(b) Use Family Decision Meetings to ask participants to help identify other relatives of the child;

(c) Contact relatives and request names of other relatives, divulging only the information necessary to help identify additional relatives and assess their interest in accepting placement of the child. When requesting information from relatives in writing, SOSCF shall use form CF 449, Relative Contact Information.

(2) SOSCF shall document the diligent search efforts using forms CF 447, "Relative Information" and CF 448, "Permanency Commitment/Waiver", unless exempted by 413-070-0081(8). SOSCF shall retain the form CF 447, "Relative Information" in the file and not generally distribute it.

(3) Unless superseded by court order, if a parent objects to SOSCF contacting relatives, the SOSCF branch manager of the child's branch shall make a determination as to whether relatives should be contacted. In making this determination, the branch manager shall consider, but not be limited to, the following factors:

(a) Whether the safety of the child or the parent will be jeopardized if relatives are contacted;

(b) Whether contacting relatives is in the best interest of the child; and

(c) Whether contacting relatives will substantially limit SOSCF's ability to work with the parent to the detriment of the child.

(4) In any situation where the branch elects to contact relatives over the objections of the parent(s), SOSCF shall notify the parent(s) that the agency will contact the relative(s).

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

EXTENT AND TIMELINESS OF THE DILIGENT SEARCH

413-070-0075 (1) The extent of the diligent search shall be reasonable and prudent.

(2) SOSCF shall conduct and conclude the diligent search for relatives of known legal parents by 6 months after the date of the shelter hearing. The branch is responsible for determining when the diligent search is concluded and shall document the date on the CF 447, Relative Information.

(3) SOSCF shall include in court reports information on the progress and results of the diligent search, and what efforts were made to place the child with a relative.

(4) If SOSCF locates another legal parent during the diligent search or after the conclusion of the time frame established in OAR 413-070-0075(2), SOSCF may continue to search for relatives of the newly located legal parent beyond the time frame in OAR 413-070-0075(2) if SOSCF determines it is in the best interest of the child.

(5) If SOSCF locates a relative, or a relative contacts SOSCF after the conclusion of the time frame established in OAR 413-070-0075(2), SOSCF may consider the relative as a potential placement resource for the child if SOSCF determines that it would be in the child's best interest to do so. In making this decision SOSCF shall consider:

(a) The child's individual needs, including attachment to the relative(s) or current caretaker currently under consideration as the placement resource;

(b) The potential of the relative to be able to meet the child's needs; and

(c) The effect on the child of the delay in permanency for the child which

may occur as a result of the new consideration process. Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

CONSIDERATION OF RELATIVES AS POTENTIAL PLACEMENT RESOURCES

413-070-0078 (1) SOSCF shall consider relatives as described in OAR 413-070-0069(1) (a)(A) through (D):

(a) Who have contacted SOSCF or whom SOSCF has identified, and

(b) Who have demonstrated their interest in placement of a related child or children.

(2) Relatives must demonstrate interest in the placement by an appropriate written response within 30 days of the date of receipt of the request to SOSCF's inquiries and requests for information that SOSCF has sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, which are relevant to the potential placement.

(3) SOSCF may consider as a placement resource any relative who responds in writing after 30 days of the date of the receipt of the request if it is in the best interest of the child.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

ASSESSMENT OF SUITABILITY

413-070-0081 (1) More than one relative family. If more than one relative family as defined in 413-070-0069(1) (a)(A) through (D) requests consideration for temporary or permanent placement of the child(ren), SOSCF shall:

(a) Provide the relatives with specific information on the methods and the criteria described in (4) of this rule that SOSCF will use to assess the suitability of a relative's home for the temporary or permanent placement of a child ;

(b) Confer with the relative families for the purpose of assisting them within a reasonable time line set by the branch to come to consensus regarding which relative family would be the most appropriate for placement of the child(ren); and

(c) Determine which relative family or families are most appropriate for consideration if the relative families cannot themselves conclude which relative family is the best resource for the child. In making this decision, the child's worker and supervisor shall include in their consideration which family has the

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closest existing personal relationship with the child.

(2) Notwithstanding OAR 413-070-0072 or OAR 413-070-0081, SOSCF is not required to assess for suitability any more than three relative families, but may assess additional families if the agency determines it is in the best interest of the child; and

(3) If SOSCF has determined that a relative family is suitable according to the requirements of OAR 413-070-0081 (4) through (6); or OAR 413-070-0081(7) in the case of an out-of-state relative, SOSCF is not required to assess additional families for placement of this child(ren).

(4) Factors. As early as possible when appropriate in the case planning process, as SOSCF determines by evaluation of the individual case, SOSCF shall assess the suitability of relatives as temporary or permanent placement resources. In the assessment of suitability SOSCF shall assess relatives on their own merits and never in comparison with any other potential resource family. The assessment of suitability shall be based on, but not limited to, the following factors:

(a) The relative's ability to provide for the safety of the child, including protection from all persons and situations which brought the child into care, including but not limited to:

(A) A criminal record check per OAR 413-120-0400 through 413-120-0470; and

(B) A family history, including a domestic violence history and a child abuse history.

(b) The relative's ability to acknowledge and meet the child's individual needs;

(c) The relative's willingness to cooperate with any restrictions placed by the court or SOSCF on contact between the child and others;

(d) The relative's willingness to prevent anyone from influencing the child in regard to the allegations of the case; and

(e) The relative's ability to support efforts of SOSCF to implement the permanent plan for the child.

(5) In addition to factors cited in subsection (4) of this rule, if the relative requests consideration as the permanent placement resource for the child, SOSCF shall consider:

(a) The timeliness of their interest in providing a permanent home, and

(b) Their ability to commit to the child on a permanent basis.

(6) Issues specific to a placement with a relative which the child's branch shall consider during the above assessment include but are not limited to household residents, care giving standards, birth parents' interaction with the relative, family legacies, resources and ability to care for the child, ability and willingness of the relative to assist the child to develop or maintain a lasting relationship with his or her siblings, and ability to support alternate permanency planning for the child.

(7) To determine the suitability of a relative who resides outside the state of Oregon, the SOSCF branch shall request a foster home study through the Interstate Compact on Placement of Children.

(8) If the SOSCF branch having responsibility for the child determines that, based on a review of OAR 413-070-0081(4)(a), the safety of the child may be jeopardized in the proposed relative's home, SOSCF shall document these findings in the child's case record and need not consider the suitability assessment factors detailed in OAR 413-070-0081(4)(b)-(e). If SOSCF learns this information prior to sending the CF 0448, "Permanency Commitment Waiver," SOSCF shall not send this form to the relative, and need not contact the relative.

(9) A relative who has served as a temporary placement for a child who came into care on an emergency basis will not necessarily be selected as the permanent placement for the child.

(10) SOSCF shall complete the diligent search and the assessment of suitability within 6 months of the date of the shelter hearing.

(11) When placing a child with a relative, SOSCF shall inform the relative of the availability of the relative foster care program and other financial resources to support the placement.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

CONSIDERATION OF OTHER FACTORS

413-070-0087 (1) Other factors, such as family income, amount of prior contact of family member with the child, geographic location (including location outside of the United States) shall not preclude a finding of suitability. If SOSCF determines that the family is otherwise suitable according to factors in OAR 413-070-0081 (4)(a)-(e), and (5) through (7), SOSCF shall engage the family so that SOSCF and the family can

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determine whether a potential placement is appropriate.

(2) SOSCF shall request the assistance of the designated consulate to determine the suitability of families residing outside the United States.

(3) Pursuant to the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, SOSCF shall not delay or deny child placement based on geographic location.

(4) If SOSCF concludes that an out-of-state or out-of-country relative family is appropriate for potential placement of the child, SOSCF shall nonetheless not move the child until SOSCF has ceased providing reunification services to the child's family and the court has given approval for the move. If a child cannot be moved due to reunification services being provided to the child's family, the child's relationship with the potential placement resource may be furthered through face-to-face visits, telephone contact, e-mail, or written correspondence.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

CONCLUSION THAT RELATIVE IS NOT A SUITABLE RESOURCE

413-070-0090 (1) The SOSCF branch with responsibility for the child is responsible for making the decision that a relative is not a suitable temporary or permanent resource. At a minimum the child's worker, supervisor and branch manager shall participate in any decision not to place a child with a potential relative resource.

(2) In especially complex or challenging cases, branch staff may use established branch or an Interbranch Permanency/Adoption Council, as well as the central office adoption placement specialist assigned to the branch, to assist in assessing the issues to arrive at a decision that is in the best interest of the individual child.

(3) If SOSCF concludes as a result of the suitability assessment that the relative is not a suitable resource, SOSCF shall inform the relative in writing of the specific reasons for not proceeding with the relative as a temporary or permanent resource for the child. This letter shall be signed by the branch manager of the branch responsible for the child, with a copy placed in the child's file and a courtesy copy provided to the Services Unit Manager.

(4) When a relative who has an existing personal relationship with the child is not selected as the placement resource, the child's branch should encourage and may facilitate the development of an agreement for ongoing contact between this relative and the child if such an agreement is in the best interest of the child. Examples of contact include contributions to the child's Life Story Book and exchange of letters.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATE PERMANENCY PLAN

413-070-0092 (1) If permanent placement with a relative is the alternate permanent plan for a child, SOSCF shall further develop the alternate permanent plan to the extent that:

(a) It is in the best interest of the child;

(b) It does not conflict, to the detriment of the child, with reunification services for the parent while reunification/placement with a parent continues to be the primary plan; and

(c) SOSCF has determined the relative to be suitable per OAR 413-070-0081.

(2) Development of the alternate permanent plan may include but is not limited to: proceeding with case management activities as applicable, including but not limited to requesting a home study, completing ICWA requirements, making an Interstate Compact referral, arranging visits with suitable relatives, or developing other opportunities for child-relative contact.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)

CONCLUSION THAT RELATIVE IS A POTENTIAL PERMANENT PLACEMENT RESOURCE

413-070-0093 (1) If SOSCF has begun a formal process to free a child for adoption where SOSCF has submitted a Legal Assistance Referral for termination of parental rights, or one parent has voluntarily relinquished his or her parental rights and if, having considered the factors listed in OAR 413-070-0081(4) and OAR 413-070-0087, SOSCF concludes that the relative is a suitable potential permanent placement resource for the child, SOSCF shall proceed as follows:

(a) Oregon Relatives. The child's worker shall document in writing in the case file, the date and description of the options discussed with the Oregon relative family(s). The child's SOSCF caseworker shall direct the relative family(s) in writing by certified mail with a copy to the relative family(s) local branch adoption supervisor, to:

(A) Contact the relative(s) local SOSCF branch office and follow the branch's process to apply to adopt; or

(B) Provide written notification to the child's worker, within 14 days

of being advised in writing by SOSCF of their options, of their intent to complete an adoption home study, and the name of the agency, public or private, that will be completing the study; and

(C) If the relative chooses a private agency, obtain at the relative family's own expense a current adoption home study through an Oregon licensed private adoption agency and have the private agency provide a copy of that study to the child's caseworker within 90 days of the date of the written notification of intent.

(b) Relatives Residing in a State Other Than Oregon. SOSCF shall use the following process to consider relative families who reside in another state:

(A) The child's caseworker shall contact the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, Deputy Administrator, prior to discussing adoptive options with relative family(s) to assure compliance with adoptive statutes of the relative's state of residence and contractual adoptive issues;

(B) The child's caseworker shall document in writing, in the case file, the date and options discussed with the relative family(s). The child's caseworker shall direct the relative family(s) in writing by certified mail to:

(i) Contact the relative's local public agency child welfare office and follow the agency's process to complete an adoption home study; or

(ii) Provide written notification to the child's worker, within 14 days of being advised in writing by SOSCF of their options, of their intent to complete an adoption home study and the name of the agency, public or private, that will be completing the study. In addition, within this same 14 day timeline, if the relative selects a private agency, the relative family must provide written verification from the licensed private agency that an adoption home study is in process; and

(iii) If the relative chooses a private agency, obtain at the relative's own expense a current adoption home study through a private adoption agency licensed in the relative's state of residence and have the private agency provide a copy of that study to the child's caseworker. Complete the home study and provide a copy to the child's caseworker within 90 days of the date of the written notification of intent.

(C) If the relative family chooses a public agency to complete their home study, the child's SOSCF caseworker shall request an adoption home study through Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children within 30 days of the notification in OAR 413-070-0093(1)(b)(B)(ii);

(D) If the worker is unable to obtain a completed adoption home study from the relative's home state, the worker shall contact the central office adoption placement specialist for consultation.

(c) Relatives Residing Outside the United States. If the relative(s) reside outside the United States in a location other than a U. S. Military Base, the caseworker shall contact the closest consular office(s) of the country in which the relative(s) reside. If the relative residing outside the United States is domiciled in the United States, the Interstate Compact on Placement of Children, OAR 413-040-0200 / 0330 applies.

(2) Notwithstanding any other rule, after receipt of completed relative family adoption home studies, SOSCF shall refer children who are being considered for placement with a relative family or families to the appropriate adoption committee as follows:

(a) If only one relative family who is not a current caretaker is being considered for a child or sibling group, the child(ren) shall be referred to a branch Permanency/Adoption Council. At branch discretion, the branch may delegate placement selection to a central adoption committee;

(b) If a diligent search has occurred and there is a sole relative resource who is the current caretaker for the child or children, the current caretaker selection process as described in OAR 413-120-0500 through 0540 shall be used.

(c) If more than one relative family is being considered for any child, the child shall be referred to a central adoption committee;

(d) If a current caretaker as defined in OAR 413-120-0510 is being considered along with a relative family for a child, the branch shall refer the child to a central adoption committee.

(3) Notwithstanding OAR 413-070-0093(1), if during the process of doing the adoption study, SOSCF learns information which indicates that the child's safety or permanency would be jeopardized by placement with the relative, the SOSCF branch manager of the child's branch shall inform the relative in writing of their decision that the relative is not a suitable resource per OAR 413-070-0090(1)--(3), with a courtesy copy provided to the Adoption Services Unit Manager. SOSCF shall not refer the relatives to

an adoption committee for consideration in this situation.

(4) The local SOSCF child's branch may consider additional relatives the branch determines may be appropriate adoptive resources; and

(5) If the SOSCF child's branch can clearly document that it has performed a diligent search OAR 413-070-0072 through OAR 413-070-0075 the branch may refuse to consider relative families as defined in OAR 413-070-0069 who request consideration:

(a) After adoption committee has been set; or

(b) After SOSCF has completed a positive suitability assessment on another relative resource even if the home study on that family has not been completed.

(6) In deciding whether to consider a relative family who requests consideration as a placement resource under conditions described in (5)(a) or (b), SOSCF shall be guided by whether it is in the best interest of the child to include the relative as a possible placement resource. SOSCF shall use the factors listed in OAR 413-070-0075 (5)(a) through (c) in making this assessment.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005 Stats. Implemented: ORS 419A.004(16), 419B.192(1)-(2), ORS 109.119(1)-(7)