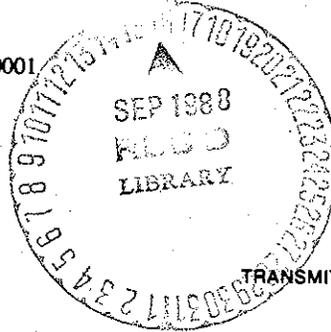


NEW YORK STATE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

40 NORTH PEARL STREET, ALBANY, NEW YORK 12243-0001

CESAR A. PERALES
Commissioner



INFORMATIONAL LETTER

TRANSMITTAL NO: 88 INF-61

TO: Commissioners of Social Services
Executive Directors of Voluntary Child
Caring Agencies
DIVISION: Family and Children
Services

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Photo-listing of Children
in the Blue Book (New York State's Waiting Children)
DATE: September 8, 1988

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION:
Directors of Services
Adoption Supervisors
Adoption Caseworkers
Staff Development Coordinators

CONTACT PERSON:

Ms. Mary Elizabeth O'Brien, New York State Adoption Service,
1-800-342-3715, extension 3-1512.

FILING REFERENCES

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Department Regs.	Social Services Law and Other Legal References	Manual References	Miscellaneous Reference
83-ADM-54		420	372c 153d		

DSS-329 (Rev. 6/87)

Purpose

This letter has been developed to highlight new expanded guidelines for Blue Book photographs and summaries, as well as guidelines for requesting a delay in publication of the photo-listing. These guidelines are set forth in this Letter and they will also be found on the back of new copies of the DSS-2703 form, Registration of Child with State Adoption Service.

Photographs and summaries of approximately 1,000 waiting children are distributed via the Blue Books (New York State's Waiting Children) each year. Agencies are encouraged to submit good quality, appealing photographs and summaries of children who are to be listed in the Blue Books. These photographs and summaries provide the only information initially available to prospective adoptive parents. Consequently, the manner in which a child is presented will often be the determining factor in whether an inquiry is made regarding a particular child.

It should be noted that since the Blue Books were initiated twelve years ago, adoptive homes have been found for over 4,000 photo-listed children. These listings have a proven track record, but it is still essential that children be presented in an attractive and positive manner to draw the initial attention of prospective adoptive parents.

Staff responsible for obtaining photographs and/or preparing summaries on waiting children should be aware of the guidelines presented below and put them into practice. Staff should also be reminded that these guidelines have also been printed on the back of new copies of the DSS-2703 form.

Guidelines for Blue Book Photographs and Summaries

A. General Comments:

1. Section 372-c of Social Services Law requires that agencies submit descriptions and photographs of children legally freed for adoption who are in foster care for three months or more and not placed in an adoptive home. Only children 14 years of age or older who choose not to be listed are exempted from this requirement. A goal of adult custodial care or independent living does not exempt a child.
2. A photograph and narrative are to be mailed to the State Adoption Service within 10 business days of the child becoming legally free.
3. Arrangements should be made to obtain a suitable photograph of the child prior to the child becoming legally free. This will prevent failure to meet the time frame for submission of the photograph.
4. Agencies are encouraged to utilize professional photographers and to ensure an attractive and high quality photograph of the child. Such an expense is reimburseable as adoption related.
5. Photo-listing is an adoption recruitment activity. As such, the agency should provide an attractive photograph of the child. The narrative

should provide an honest description of the child, with an effort to bring out the child's positive and likeable characteristics.

B. Photographs:

1. The photograph should be less than one year old.
2. The photograph may be in color or black and white. Black and white photographs reproduce better.
3. The photograph submitted can be reduced or enlarged (up to double in size).
4. School pictures of children reproduce well.
5. The photograph should show full or 3/4 face of the child.
6. It is desirable to submit a group photo of siblings. If separate photos of siblings are submitted, they should be similar in size, etc.
7. Only the child(ren) to be photo-listed should be included in the photograph. It should not include other individuals or identifying signs, etc.
8. Photographs of dark skinned children with dark backgrounds or light skinned children with light backgrounds often do not reproduce well. This should be considered in submitting photographs.

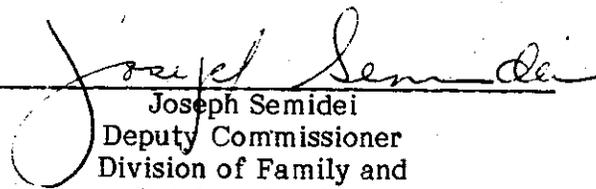
C. Narrative:

1. The first line should include the month and year of the child's birth, the child's age and a positive statement about the child.
2. The child's behavior and personality should be classified in an objective manner. Judgemental descriptions should be avoided.
3. Describe the child's activities and interests.
4. Mention any health problems and try to describe them in layman's terms. Also mention if the child takes medication. However, avoid lengthy descriptions since more information can be provided to individuals who subsequently contact the agency about the child.
5. For children in school, provide the grade placement and information on the child's math and reading levels.
6. Include information about special circumstances but exercise discretion in this regard since the photo-listings are available to the public.
7. Mention the child's goal if it is independent living or adult custodial care rather than adoption.
8. The narrative should be typed, double space.

Guidelines for Request for Delay in Publication

1. The Request must still be accompanied by a photograph and narrative even if it is not likely to be utilized. This makes this material readily available in the event of a change in circumstances.
2. Appropriate reasons for requesting delays are:
 - foster parents will adopt;
 - an adoptive family has been selected;
 - a home can be found for the child easily without photo-listing; or
 - child is 13½ years old and does not wish to be photo-listed; and the child has not been photo-listed previously.
3. Under most circumstances a delay should not last longer than four months.

New copies of the revised DSS 2703 form should be ordered from the Forms and Publications Unit of the Department using DSS-876, Request for Forms and Publications.



Joseph Semidei
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Family and
Children Services