

232B.9 Placement preferences.

1. In any adoptive or other permanent placement of an Indian child, preference shall be given to a placement with one of the following, in descending priority order:

- a. A member of the Indian child's family.
- b. Other members of the Indian child's tribe.
- c. Another Indian family.
- d. A non-Indian family approved by the Indian child's tribe.
- e. A non-Indian family that is committed to enabling the child to have extended family visitation and participation in the cultural and ceremonial events of the child's tribe.

2. An emergency removal, foster care, or preadoptive placement of an Indian child shall be in the least restrictive setting which most approximates a family situation and in which the child's special needs, if any, may be met. The child shall also be placed within reasonable proximity to the child's home, taking into account any special needs of the child. In any foster care or preadoptive placement, a preference shall be given to the child's placement with one of the following, in descending priority order:

- a. A member of the child's extended family.
- b. A foster home licensed, approved, or specified by the child's tribe.
- c. An Indian foster home licensed or approved by an authorized non-Indian licensing authority.
- d. A child foster care agency approved by an Indian tribe or operated by an Indian organization which has a program suitable to meet the Indian child's needs.
- e. A non-Indian child foster care agency approved by the child's tribe.
- f. A non-Indian family committed to enabling the child to have extended family visitation and participation in the cultural and ceremonial events of the child's tribe.

3. To the greatest possible extent, a placement made in accordance with [subsection 1 or 2](#) shall be made in the best interest of the child.

4. An adoptive placement of an Indian child shall not be ordered in the absence of a determination, supported by clear and convincing evidence including the testimony of qualified expert witnesses, that the placement of the child is in the best interest of the child.

5. Notwithstanding the placement preferences listed in [subsections 1 and 2](#), if a different order of placement preference is established by the child's tribe or in a binding agreement between the child's tribe and the state entered into pursuant to [section 232B.11](#), the court or agency effecting the placement shall follow the order of preference established by the tribe or in the agreement.

6. As appropriate, the placement preference of the Indian child or parent shall be considered. In applying the preferences, a consenting parent's request for anonymity shall also be given weight by the court or agency effecting the placement. Unless there is clear and convincing evidence that placement within the order of preference applicable under [subsection 1, 2, or 5](#) would be harmful to the Indian child, consideration of the preference of the Indian child or parent or a parent's request for anonymity shall not be a basis for placing an Indian child outside of the applicable order of preference.

7. The prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community in which the parent or extended family members of an Indian child reside, or with which such parent or extended family members maintain social and cultural ties, or the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian child's tribe shall be applied in qualifying any placement having a preference under [this section](#). A determination of the applicable prevailing social and cultural standards shall be confirmed by the testimony or other documented support of qualified expert witnesses.

8. A record of each foster care placement, emergency removal, preadoptive placement, or adoptive placement of an Indian child, under the laws of this state, shall be maintained in perpetuity by the department in accordance with [section 232B.13](#). The record shall document the active efforts to comply with the applicable order of preference specified in [this section](#).

9. The state of Iowa recognizes the authority of Indian tribes to license foster homes and to license agencies to receive children for control, care, and maintenance outside of the children's own homes, or to place, receive, arrange the placement of, or assist in the

placement of children for foster care or adoption. The department and child-placing agencies licensed under [chapter 238](#) may place children in foster homes and facilities licensed by an Indian tribe.

[2003 Acts, ch 153, §10](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §645](#)

Referred to in [§232B.5](#), [232B.12](#), [232B.13](#)

Subsections 8 and 9 amended