Understanding the Matching Algorithm in Portal 2.0

What exactly is a matching algorithm?   This term is a fancy way to describe a formula to help solve a problem. For example, if you have a pie that is cut into six pieces and you want to know how much pie you have left after serving some of it, the formula is six minus the number of pieces given out.

The algorithm for matching is not quite as simple as knowing how much pie is left. The algorithm has three major components: 1) critical characteristics, 2) important characteristics and 3) demographics.

Critical characteristics are comprised of the following special needs (SN) and characteristics from the CY130 form:

1   Mental retardation diagnosis (SN)
2   Special medical care (SN)
3   Physical disability (SN)
4   HIV (SN)
5   Masturbates frequently or openly (Q29)

6   Abuses animals (Q34)
7   Inappropriate sexual behavior (Q39)
8   Run away (Q40)
9   Fire setter (Q41)

These nine items were deemed critical characteristics because families are less likely to be trained about or willing to take children with these particular needs.   Knowing what families are willing to accept comes from these complementary questions on the CY131 and CY130 forms. **If a family will not accept or is not willing to consider any of these nine items, then they are not considered as potential matches for the child who possess these characteristics.** These characteristics represent 45 percent of the overall match score, if a child possesses any of these critical characteristics.

Important Characteristics are comprised of the following characteristics:

1   Hyperactivity (Q3)
2   Legally Blind (Q8)
3   Seizures (Q11)
4   Behavior problems (Q20)
5   Lying (Q31)
6   Stealing (Q32)
7   Fighting (Q33)

8   Destructive behavior (Q35)
9   Foul language (Q36)
10   Ties to birth family (Q42)
11   Sexual abuse (Q46)
12   Exposed to promiscuous behavior (Q48)
13   Parent has mental illness (Q55)
14   Continue visits with birth family (Q59)

These characteristics are more acceptable to most families but continue to show some preference differences between families. Generally, about 50% of families find these characteristics acceptable. Families who indicate they will not consider any of these characteristics may still be matched with a child who possesses these characteristics but their score will be lower. They will not be a top match for this child. This component represents 15% of the overall match score.

Demographics are comprised of the following:

1. Age
2. Child's race and ethnicity
3. Child's gender
4. Siblings and number

Several demographic items are for families who view as important more precise choices about matching. Consequently, **families are not considered for a match with a child if the gender of the child or siblings is not approved by the family.** The age of a child is compared to the minimum age a family will accept. For each year a child is out side that minimum set by the family, points are deducted. If a child's age is not within the minimum and maximum age range, then a family gets a zero score for age in the demographics. Families can still be matched with children who are outside of their minimum and maximum age range. The demographics category represents 40% of the overall matching score. All children will have a demographic score.

Important Process activities will include**:**

1. Only the top ten family matches will be included when matching a child, but fewer matches may be made if the child has significant need.
2. Matches for children can be run at the request of the caseworker; this includes additional matches or new matches if a child needs them.
3. Each family recommended in a match will not be matched with another child for an additional 30 days. At the end of 30 days, if the family is not placed on a "hold status" by the family's caseworker then they will be suggested for additional children. It is important to review the packets quickly and let the family's worker know immediately if you are considering their family.
4. Notices of matches will be sent electronically where the caseworkers' emails are provided.
5. All newly registered children who need a match will have an electronic match run. Families can view all eligible children online at the www.adoptpakids.org website. However, if a family wishes to receive an electronic match, one will be run at the caseworker's request.