

	GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL			
	Chapter:	(11) Adoption	Effective Date:	August 2015
	Policy Title:	Finalizing the Adoption		
Policy Number:	11.14	Previous Policy #:	107.18 -107.20; 107.22-107.26	

CODES/REFERENCES

O.C.G.A §19-8-2 Jurisdiction and Venue of Adoption Proceedings

REQUIREMENTS

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall:

1. Prepare and forward the legal documents for finalization to the family's attorney at a time mutually decided upon by the supervising agency and the adoptive family;
2. Make the family aware they must inform the supervising agency when finalization has occurred; and
3. Prepare a Georgia SHINES adoption case record within 30 days following adoption finalization.

PROCEDURES

The child's Social Services Case Manager (SSCM) will:

1. Have the family complete the Name of Child Following Adoption.
2. Prepare a summary report of the post placement period to include:
 - a. Dates of contacts and person(s) present;
 - b. Adjustment of child and family, including problems experienced and how they were resolved; and
 - c. Recommendation for finalization.
3. Submit the summary report and the Name Change Following Adoption to the County Director/Designee of the child's legal county.

The County Director/Designee of the child's legal county will:

1. Review the summary report and supporting documents.
2. Make an approval determination.

The supervising Resource Development SSCM or the CPA Case Worker will:

1. Notify the family and instruct them to contact their attorney and instruct him/her to write the child's legal DFCS county to request the following documents prior to filing the petition to adopt:
 - a. The Affidavit of Consent to Adoption;
 - b. Birth Family Background Information for Child; and
 - c. The original legal documents.

2. Inform the child's legal county of the scheduled finalization date.
3. Prepare the Georgia SHINES adoption case record to be retained, sealed and locked within 30 days of the finalized adoption (see policy [2.2 Information Management: Adoption Case Record](#)).

The child's legal county SSCM will:

1. Draft a letter to the adoptive family's attorney and prepare the following legal documents for adoptive finalization to be included with the letter to the attorney:
 - a. Affidavit of Consent to Adoption;
 - b. The certified copy (long form) of the child's birth certificate (see policy [11.2 Adoption: Putative Father Registry & Birth Certificates](#));
 - c. The original copies of any voluntary surrenders/denials (see policy [17.12 Legal: Voluntary Surrender of Parental Rights](#));
 - d. A certified copy of the following court orders (see policy [17.11 Legal: Termination of Parental Rights \(TPR\)](#)):
 - i. Termination of parental rights (TPR) court order; and
 - ii. Order of permanent custody (if separate from TPR); and
 - iii. A certified copy of any amendments to the TPR order (if applicable).
 - e. A certified copy of any parental death certificates (if applicable);
 - f. Putative father registry certificate (see policy [11.2 Adoption: Putative Father Registry & Birth Certificates](#));
 - g. Copy of Birth Family Background Information for Child; and
 - h. Attorney Instructions.
2. Forward the letter and the legal documents to the adoptive family's attorney by certified mail return receipt, within ten business days of receipt of the written request from the attorney.
3. Record the date the letter and legal documents were sent to the adoptive family's attorney on the child's Adoption Information page in the ADO stage of Georgia SHINES.
4. Update the legal status to reflect the adoption finalization.
NOTE: Updating the legal status in Georgia SHINES will notify the Adoption Exchange, State Adoption Unit by a system generated alert.
5. Complete the Adoption Assistance Memorandum within 10 business days of the adoption finalization indicating the date the adoption was finalized and the child's new name:
 - a. Obtain the Social Services Supervisor's signature of approval.
 - b. Forward the approved Adoption Assistance Memorandum to:
 - i. Rev Max;
 - ii. Regional Accounting; and
 - iii. SSAU.
6. Prepare the Georgia SHINES adoption case record to be retained, sealed and locked within 30 days of finalizing the adoption (see policy [2.2 Information Management: Adoption Case Record](#)).

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Careful work must be done with the adopting family to help them understand the importance of a child's given name. Adopting parents should retain the child's original first and middle names. A family's acceptance of a child's given name symbolically demonstrates acceptance

of the child's birth history and identity; therefore, special consideration must be given to changing a child's name at the point of finalization. There are instances where the adoptive family will retain the child's first birth name and opt to give the child a family middle name in an effort to retain the child's original identity and also bond the child with the new family.

A copy of the petition to adopt will be sent to the Social Services Administrative Unit by the Superior Court. If the adoption petition is received by the County Department, it shall be forwarded to the Adoption Exchange, State Adoption Unit. The Superior Court will send a copy of the final disposition on the petition to the Adoption Exchange, State Adoption Unit.

The SSCM will be sure the family is aware they must inform the supervising agency when the finalization has occurred. The supervising agency will inform the child's county of the finalization date.

FORMS AND TOOLS

[Adoption Process – Georgia SHINES Job Aide](#)

[Affidavit of Consent to Adoption \(Affidavit 1\)](#)

[Affidavit of Consent to Adoption \(Affidavit 2\)](#)

[Affidavit of Consent to Adoption and Other Finalization Documents – Sample](#)

[Name of Child Following Adoption](#)

[Name of Child Following Adoption - Spanish](#)