

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

**DIVISION
OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

**FAMILY SERVICES POLICY AND
PROCEDURE MANUAL**

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I. GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DIVISION OVERVIEW

POLICY (I-A): PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

The Division of Children and Family Services is in compliance with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act and operates, manages and delivers services without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, mental or physical disability, veteran status, political affiliation or belief. DCFS is the designated state agency to administer and supervise all Child Welfare Services (Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act).

The Division purchases services from private and public agencies, universities and individuals, using state and federal funds. Programs and services of other Divisions within the Department of Human Services (DHS) are also available to clients of DCFS. Delivery of services is coordinated with other Divisions administering TEA/TANF Medicaid, Food Stamps, Social Services Block Grant and other federal entitlement programs.

The services are authorized and funded in conjunction with various state and federal laws which govern the operation of the Division. The major federal laws governing service delivery, as amended, are:

Civil Rights Act: Titles 6, 7, 9

Rehabilitation Act: Sections 503, 504

Americans With Disabilities Act: Title II

Social Security Act Titles:

IV-A Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

IV-B Child Welfare Services

IV-E Foster Care and Adoptions Assistance

XIX Medical Services

XX Social Services Block Grant

Public Laws: 93-207 Child Abuse and Neglect

94-142 Handicapped Children's Act

96-272 Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980

105-89 Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997

Office of Finance and Administrative Support

The Office of Finance and Administrative Support provides administrative and management support to DCFS through personnel administration, budget monitoring, resource control, and contract administration.

The Office of Finance and Administrative Support includes the following units: Personnel, Contracts, and Financial Resources. In addition, the Foster Care/Medicaid Eligibility Unit determines the eligibility for federal funding under Title IV-E (Foster Care and Adoption) and Title XIX (Medicaid) of all children in the care of the Department who are placed in Out-of-Home Placement or subsidized adoption.

Office of Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

The Office of Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning is responsible for statewide DCFS policy development, comprehensive short-term and long-term planning initiatives for the delivery of child welfare services, professional development, child welfare agency licensing, and quality assurance monitoring.

The Office of Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning consists of the following units: Policy, Planning, Professional Development, Child Welfare Agency Licensing, and Quality Assurance.

POLICY (I-D): OFFICIAL RECORD KEEPING

The official record of child welfare information for DCFS is maintained through the Children's Reporting Information System (CHRIS). The CHRIS Unit is a part of the Division of Administrative Services, Office of Technology, which is responsible for the enhancement of the CHRIS Application, data monitoring, Help Desk function and some specialized training. CHRIS is fully automated and is a worker based child-welfare information system. The Family Services Policy and Procedure Manual (FSPP) includes the data input instructions for the CHRIS Application.

A hard copy file of case information will be maintained for data not in CHRIS. Hard copy files will be created, if necessary for case review.

POLICY (I-E): COMPLIANCE WITH THE MULTIETHNIC PLACEMENT ACT (MEPA)

The Division must comply with the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) in making foster care and adoptive placements. The act provides for assessment of individual liability to staff for knowingly violating MEPA requirements.

The Multiethnic Placement Act prohibits delaying or denying the placement of a child for adoption or foster care on the basis of race, color or national origin of the adoptive or foster parent or the child involved.

Consideration of race, color, or national origin is permissible only when an individual determination is made that the facts and circumstances of a particular case require the consideration of race, color, or national origin in order to advance the best interests of the child in need of placement. The Division's compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-608) does not violate MEPA.

POLICY (II-E): COUNTY OFFICE ASSESSMENT OF CHILD MALTREATMENT REPORTS

The Arkansas State Police Crimes Against Children Division (CACD) has the responsibility to assess most Priority I allegations of child maltreatment. Whenever the investigation of a sexual abuse allegation determines that the offender is not the victim's caretaker, the case will remain open with DHS or be transferred to the CACD as an active investigation. DCFS is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of the children even if the primary responsibility for the investigation belongs to CACD. DCFS will assess all situations of voluntary delivery of a child, as well as many Priority II and the following Priority I cases:

- Abandonment
- Failure to protect
- Medical neglect of disabled infants
- Failure to thrive
- Malnutrition

During the assessment of an allegation of child maltreatment, DCFS staff in the county office shall seek to ascertain the existence, cause, nature and extent of child maltreatment, the existence and extent of previous injuries, and the names and conditions of other children in the home. The assessment also seeks to ascertain the identity of the person responsible for the maltreatment, the relationship of the children with the parents or caretakers and their circumstances, the child's environment and all other pertinent data. The assessment shall begin within the time frame prescribed by law.

The Division will ensure reasonable efforts are made to preserve the family and to prevent the need to remove the child from the home; with the health and safety of the child being of paramount concern. Reasonable efforts to reunify the family shall not be required in all cases. See Policy VI-A for exceptions.

The Family Service Worker conducting the child maltreatment assessment shall have the right to enter into the home, school, or other place for the purpose of conducting an interview or completing the assessment. The Department, CACD and law enforcement shall be allowed access to the child's public and private school records during the course of the child maltreatment investigation. The worker will have the discretion, in the child's best interest, to limit the persons allowed to be present when a child is being interviewed concerning an allegation of child maltreatment. The worker will determine when a child or any other children residing in the home should be referred to a physician, psychologist, or psychiatrist for a medical or psychological examination.

This fact-finding phase of the child maltreatment assessment allows the Family Service Worker to determine:

- If services are necessary to assist the family and allow the child to remain safely at home,
- If separation of the child from the family is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child, and
- Whether there is a preponderance of the evidence (see glossary) to support the report.
- In cases where domestic abuse is involved (see glossary for definition of domestic abuse) a family/household member may file a petition for an order of protection. The Family Service Worker may also facilitate the process or file a petition on behalf of a minor child(ren).

III. SERVICES CASE OPENING

POLICY (III-A): SERVICES CASE OPENING AND RE-EVALUATION

The Division of Children and Family Services will open cases to ensure safety and promote the best interest of the child and to provide services to strengthen, reunify, and assist families. This will be accomplished through the delivery of Supportive, Protective, Adoptive (See Section VIII for Adoptive Services) or Out-of-Home Placement Services as deemed appropriate by assessment. The purpose of services shall be to provide the child with a continuous and stable living environment, promote family autonomy, strengthen family life where possible and promote the reunification of the child with the parent, guardian or custodian, when applicable.

Families have a right to appeal the decision of the Division regarding service delivery, eligibility for services, Protective Services, or Adoptive services.

The Division will ensure a determination of Title IV-E/ Medicaid eligibility is obtained for each child placed in an out-of-home setting or subsidized adoption. When a child is removed from his home, a judicial determination as to whether reasonable efforts were made or were not required to prevent removal must be made no later than sixty (60) days from the date the child is removed from the home. Eligibility for Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments will be based on the following requirements:

(1) The child was removed from the home of a specified relative pursuant to judicial determination to the effect that:

- Continuation in the residence in the home would be contrary to, or that the placement would be in the best interest, of the child. The contrary to the welfare determination will be made in the first court ruling that sanctions (even temporarily) the removal of a child from the home. If the determination regarding “contrary to the welfare” is not made in the first court ruling pertaining to removal from the home, the child will not be eligible for Title IV-E maintenance subsidy for the duration of that stay in foster care; and
- A finding of or a deeming of reasonable efforts is required. The judicial determination must state that reasonable efforts to prevent a child’s removal from home or to reunify the child and family are not required.

(2) The child’s placement and care in a foster family home or child care institution is the responsibility of either DHS or any other public agency with whom DHS has an agreement. (Child care institution means a private child care institution, or a public child care institution which accommodates no more than 25 children, and is licensed by the State in which it is situated or has been approved by the agency of such State or tribal licensing authority (with respect to child care institutions on or near Indian reservations) responsible for licensing or approval of institutions of this type as meeting the standards established for such licensing. This definition must not include detention facilities, forestry camps, training schools, or any other facility operated primarily for the detention of children who are determined to be delinquent.) The licensing file must contain documentation that verifies that safety considerations with respect to the staff of the institution have been addressed, And,

(3) The child received aid (for the purposes of the FSPP Manual “aid” is defined as AFDC program requirements in effect 7-16-1996) in or for the month in which court proceedings leading to the removal of the child from the home were initiated, or

- would have received aid in or for the month if application for such aid had been made, or
- had been living with a specified relative within six (6) months prior to the month in which court proceedings were initiated, and would have received aid in or for such month if the he/she had been living with such relative and an application had been made for aid under Title IV-A.

In any case where the child is an alien disqualified by the Immigration and Nationality Act from receiving aid in or for the month in which court proceedings leading to the removal of the child from the home were instituted, such child shall be considered to satisfy the requirements with respect to that month, if he or she would have satisfied such requirements but for such disqualification. The Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) will be consulted if the child's immigration status must be addressed in any manner.

(4) The child was living with a specified relative prior to removal from the home and was AFDC eligible (per AFDC requirements in effect 7-16-1996) for in that home in the month of the initiation of court proceedings. Or the child had been living with the parent or specified relative within (6) months of the month of the initiation of court and the child would have been AFDC eligible in that month if he or she had still been living in that home.

A child of a parent who is under the age of eighteen (18) years and is in DHS custody is also considered a dependent juvenile and is eligible to receive foster care maintenance payments and is deemed to be a recipient of aid to families with dependent children. Titles XIX and XX services will be available to the child in the state in which the child resides.

The state of Arkansas is not a voluntary placement state nor does it implement constructive removals. The removal of a child from his home must occur pursuant to a judicial order placing custody of the child with the Department.

PROCEDURE (III-A1): Protective/Supportive Services Case Opening

The **Family Service Worker** will:

- Complete the "Application for Emergency Services" (CFS-6013) by keying the fields in the "Summary" screen. In the "Client" section, complete the "Gen. Info" and "Relations" screens; and in the "Finances" section, complete the "Eligibility" and "Income" screens based on the information gathered for the "Strengths and Needs Assessment" (CFS-6009). This information is located in the "Case Plan/Needs Assessment" section on the "Family Screen".
- Sign the CFS-6013 for families needing Protective Services if they are not willing to sign the completed form.

PROCEDURE (III-A2): Out-of-Home Placement Services Case Opening

The **Family Service Worker** will:

- Complete the CFS-6013 using appropriate CHRIS screens as indicated in Procedure III-A1.

- Complete the “Case Connect” Screen in the Investigation to open a case.
- Key the appropriate information in the open case on the “Removal” screen in the “Removal” section of CHRIS.

IV. SERVICES CASE PLAN AND STAFFING

POLICY (IV-A): SERVICES CASE PLAN

The case plan is a written document that is a discrete part of the case record between the family and the Division of Children and Family Services that outlines a plan of services. It addresses the family’s needs, building on the family’s strengths, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all involved parties.

Case plans will be developed after a thorough assessment of a family’s strengths and needs. The family shall be the primary source of information. The case plan shall be developed with the involvement of family, the age-appropriate children, the foster parents and the Attorney ad litem (if there is court involvement), the Family Service Worker and any other involved parties.

Consideration of the health and safety of a child must be included in case planning and case reviews for children in out-of-home placement.

No child in Out-of-Home Placement shall have a case plan goal of reunification for longer than twelve (12) months, unless otherwise ordered by the court.

PROCEDURE (IV-A1): Case Plan

The **Family Service Worker** will:

- Complete an initial “Case Plan” (CFS-6010) within thirty (30) days of opening a service case or a child entering an Out-of-Home Placement, whichever comes first.
- Complete the “Treatment” portion of the “Case Plan” section of CHRIS based on the assessment in the “Assess” portion of the “Case Plan” section of CHRIS.

The **Case Plan** will:

- Includes a description of the type of home or institution in which the child is placed.
- Include a description of the services offered and provided to prevent removal of the child from the home and to reunify the family.
- Include a description of the out-of-home placement with regard to the health and safety of the child.
- Include a plan for assuring a child receives safe and proper care.
- Include a discussion of the appropriateness of the services that have been provided to the child.
- Include a plan for assuring services are provided to the child and parent to improve conditions in the parent’s home and facilitate return of the child or the permanent placement of the child.
- Include a plan for assuring services are provided to the child and foster parents to address the needs of the child while in out-of-home placement.
- Include the visitation rights and obligations of the parents, guardian or custodian and the Division during the period the child is in an out-of-home placement.

- Where appropriate for a child 16 or over, include a written description of the programs and services that will help prepare the child for the transition from foster care to independent living. ~~Identify and address specific independent living skill needs, as appropriate.~~ (See Policy VIII-A.)
- Include documentation of the steps taken to (a) find an adoptive family or other permanent living arrangement for the child, (b) place the child with an adoptive family, a fit and willing relative, a legal guardian, or in another planned permanent living arrangement, and (c) finalize the adoption or legal guardianship. At a minimum, documentation shall include child specific recruitment efforts such as the use of state, regional, and national adoption exchanges including electronic exchange systems. This applies in the case of a child for whom the permanency plan is adoption or placement in another permanent home.
- Include a discussion of how the case plan is designed to achieve a safe placement for the child in the least restrictive (most family-like) setting available and in close proximity to the home of the parent(s) when the case plan goal is reunification, and a discussion of how the placement is consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child.
- Set forth the reasons why it is in the best interest of the child if he has been placed in an out-of-home placement that is a substantial distance from the home of the parents, or has been placed out-of-state.
- Includes a discussion of the safety and appropriateness of the placement and how DHS plans to carry out the judicial determination made with respect to the child that:
 - Continuance in the home is contrary to the welfare of the child, or that placement would be in the best interest of the child, and
 - Reasonable efforts to prevent a child's removal from home or to reunify the child and family are not required.
- If the child has been placed in foster care in a state outside the state in which the child's parent(s) are located, assure that the case worker of either state visits the foster home or institution no less frequently than every twelve (12) months and submits a report on the visit to the state agency of the state where the home of the child's parent(s) is located.
- Incorporate the health and education records of the child to the extent available and accessible, including:
 - the names and addresses of the child's health and educational providers;
 - the child's grade level performance;
 - the child's school record;
 - assurances that the child's placement in foster care takes into account the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement;
 - a record of the child's immunizations;
 - the child's known medical problems;
 - the child's medications; and
 - any other relevant health and education information concerning the child determined to be appropriate.
- Print the "Case Plan" (CFS-6010) out of CHRIS under "Reports".
- File the CFS-6010 with the court no later than thirty (30) days after the date the petition was filed or the child was first placed out-of-home, whichever is sooner.

- Review the CFS-6010 and update as needed. The CFS-6010 should be updated at the second staffing held ninety (90) days from the case opening and at subsequent staffing(s) held at a minimum of every three (3) months for out-of-home placement.

VI. SERVICES TO REUNIFY FAMILIES

POLICY (VI-A): OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT CRITERIA

The state of Arkansas is not a voluntary placement state. The removal of a child from his home must occur pursuant to a judicial order placing custody of the child with the Department. When a child is in the custody of the Department of Human Services, DCFS shall ensure that the out-of-home placement is in the best interest of the child, is the least restrictive possible and is matched to the child's physical and therapeutic needs. A child of a parent who is under the age of eighteen (18) years, and is in DHS custody, is also considered a dependent juvenile and is eligible to receive foster care maintenance payments and is deemed to be a recipient of aid to families with dependent children. Titles XIX and XX services will be available to the child in the state in which the child resides. No child shall be placed in the home of a foster parent where a records check reveals a felony conviction for child abuse or neglect, for spousal abuse, for a crime against children (including child pornography), or a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault or homicide. No child shall be placed in the home of a foster parent if the record check reveals a criminal conviction for physical assault, battery, or a drug related offense, if the offense was committed within the past five years. The placement decision shall be based on an individual assessment of the child's needs. All efforts to place a child within Arkansas shall be thoroughly explored and documented before consideration is given to out-of-state placement. Relatives shall be considered for placement first. Placement shall be chosen:

- To ensure the health and safety of a child;
- To ensure that caretakers have the skills and training sufficient to deal with the child's special needs and any disabling condition; and
- To keep the child in close proximity to the family, if possible, to maintain enrollment in the school the child attended before placement.

The Department shall make reasonable efforts to:

- maintain the family unit and prevent the unnecessary removal of a child from his home, as long as the child's safety is assured;
- effect the safe reunification of the child and family (if temporary out-of-home placement is necessary to ensure immediate safety of the child); and
- make and finalize alternate permanency plans in a timely manner when reunification is not appropriate or possible. In determining reasonable efforts to be made with respect to a child and in making such reasonable efforts, the child's health and safety is of paramount concern.

Within 30 days of a child being placed in DHS custody, the Division will provide the parents with literature, verbal information, and referrals to programs for parenting, child abuse, substance abuse, sexual abuse and family planning.

After a child is placed out of the home, reasonable efforts will be made to reunify a family, to make it possible for the child to safely return home. A judicial determination pertaining to reasonable efforts to prevent removal must have been made within 60 days of the child's removal from the home, otherwise the child will not be eligible for Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments for the duration of his stay in foster care. Reasonable efforts to finalize an alternate permanency plan (i.e., place a child for adoption or with a legal guardian or permanent custodian) may be made concurrently with reasonable efforts to reunify a child with his family. Reasonable efforts shall also be made to obtain permanency for a child who has been in an out-of-home placement for more than twelve (12) months, or for fifteen (15) of the previous twenty-two (22) months.

Reasonable efforts to reunite a child with his parent(s) shall not be required in all cases. The court shall conduct and complete a hearing on a “no reunification services” request within fifty (50) days of the date of written notice to the defendants and shall enter an order determining whether or not reunification services shall be provided. Reunification shall not be required if a court of competent jurisdiction, including the juvenile division of circuit court, has determined that the parent has:

- (1) Subjected the child to aggravated circumstances; (See Glossary for the definition of aggravated circumstances.)
- (2) Committed murder (which would have been an offense under section 1111(a) of Title 18, USC, if the offense had occurred in the special maritime or territorial jurisdiction of the United States) of any child;
- (3) Committed voluntary manslaughter (which would have been an offense under section 1112(a) of Title 18, USC, if the offense had occurred in the special maritime or territorial jurisdiction of the United States) of any child;
- (4) Aided or abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit such a murder or such a voluntary manslaughter;
- (5) Committed a felony, battery, or assault that results in serious bodily injury to any child; or
- (7) Had the parental rights involuntarily terminated as to a sibling of the child; or
- (8) Abandoned an infant (not the same as “Voluntary Delivery of an Infant”, see Procedure VIII- E2).

If reasonable efforts to reunify are determined by a court to be unnecessary, a permanency hearing must be held within 30 days after the court’s determination. If the court determines no reunification services will be provided due to aggravating circumstances or upon recommendation from the Division or Attorney ad litem at adjudication, the Family Service Worker will have case management responsibility until the child is placed in a adoptive home.

If the court recommends that reunification services should not be provided to reunite a child with his family, DHS, the Attorney ad litem or the court shall provide written notice to the defendants. When DHS is the agency requesting that no reunification services be provided, it will send the written notice to the defendants in coordination with OCC. The notice shall be provided to the parties at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the no-reunification hearing, and the notice shall identify in sufficient detail to put the family on notice, the grounds for recommending “no reunification services”.

The burden of presenting the case shall be on the requesting party. The court shall conduct and complete a hearing on a “no reunification services” request within fifty (50) days of the date of written notice to the defendants.

PROCEDURE (VI-A1): Out-of-Home Placement Criteria

- The Family Service Worker will:
- Consider placement with appropriate relatives in a Kinship Family Foster Home. (See Policy VII-A.)
- Select the Out-of-Home Placement that best fits the needs of the child. A child who has been identified as an EXEMPTED FROM FINDING UNDER AGE JUVENILE AGGRESSOR OR SEXUAL OFFENDER must not be placed in a foster home with other children, unless the child’s therapist feels that the child is no longer a danger to other children. Proper documentation of this will be contained in the child’s hard copy file. If the recommended placement is a facility, the facility must receive information regarding the allegations. This must be documented in the Recommend Placement screen.

- Document placement selection on the “Case Plan” (CFS-6010) by keying the “Plan Goals” and the “Needs/Svc” screens in the “Treatment” portion of the “Case Plan” section of CHRIS.
- Arrange at least one (1) pre-placement visit for the child before the initial placement and before any subsequent changes in placement if possible and appropriate. Contact the OCC Attorney immediately if child is being moved from one Out-of-Home Placement to another. See Procedure VII-D1.
- Contact the OCC Attorney immediately if there is any indication that the child is a member of an Indian tribe.

POLICY (VI-F): CASE REVIEWS JUDICIAL HEARINGS FOR CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

Following a probable cause hearing, an adjudication hearing shall be held to determine whether the allegations in a petition are substantiated by a preponderance of the evidence. In dependency-neglect cases, a written adjudication order shall be filed by the court within thirty (30) days of the date of the hearing or prior to the next hearing, whichever is sooner. The Office of Chief Counsel is responsible for drafting and filing court orders. The court can determine the case disposition at the adjudication or at a separate hearing. A disposition determines what actions the agency will take in the case. A judicial determination as to whether reasonable efforts were made or were not required to prevent removal must be made no later than sixty (60) days from the date the child is removed from the home.

The status of each child in out-of-home placement, including children placed out-of-state, shall be reviewed no less than every six months by a judicial review to: (1) determine the safety of the child, the continuing need for and appropriateness of the placement, (2) determine the extent of compliance with the case plan, (3) determine the extent of progress made toward alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating the placement, and (4) project a likely date by which the child may be returned and safely maintained at home or placed for adoption or legal guardianship. Pertaining to IV-E eligibility requirements, the judicial review is conducted by court review, not an administrative review process. During each six-month review, the court shall make determinations based upon the best interest of the child. The best interest of the child shall be paramount at every stage of the judicial process.

Each child in an out-of-home placement, including children placed out-of-state, shall have a permanency planning hearing within 12 months of the date the child is considered to have entered foster care and not less frequently than every 12 months thereafter during the continuation of foster care. (A child will be considered to have entered foster care on the date the child enters an out-of-home placement.) When the court determines that reasonable efforts to return the child home are not required, the court shall hold a permanency hearing within 30 of the determination in order to enter a new disposition in the case to determine the child's future status. A permanency hearing shall also be held after a child has been in an out-of-home placement for fifteen (15) of the previous twenty-two (22) months, excluding the time spent while the child is on a trial home placement and runaway status. ~~no later than 12 months from the date of entering out of home care, or after a child has been in an out of home placement for fifteen (15) of the previous twenty two (22) months excluding trial placements and on runaway status, or no later than thirty (30) days after the court files an order that no reunification services shall be made to reunite the juvenile with his family, the court shall hold a permanency planning hearing in.~~ The Permanency Planning Hearing will be conducted by the court, not by an administrative body.

The Division must obtain a judicial determination that reasonable efforts were made to finalize the permanency plan for the child within 12 months of the date the child entered foster care. If a child remains in an out-of-home placement after the initial permanency planning hearing, an annual permanency planning hearing shall be held to reassess the permanency goal selected for the child. If a judicial determination regarding reasonable efforts to finalize a permanency plan is not made, the child will be ineligible under Title IV-E from the end of the 12th month following the date the child is considered to have entered foster care or the end of the 12th month following the month in which the most recent judicial determination of reasonable efforts to finalize a permanency plan was made, and remains ineligible until such a judicial determination is made.

The Permanency Planning Hearing shall determine the permanency goal for the child that includes, listed in order of preference:

- (1) Returning the child home at the permanency planning hearing if it is in the best interest of the child and the child's health and safety can be adequately safeguarded if returned home,
- (2) Termination of parental rights so the child can be adopted, unless:
 - the child is being cared for by a relative and termination of parental rights is not in the best interest of the child;
 - the Division has documented in the case plan a compelling reason why filing a termination petition would not be in the best interest of the child and the court approves the compelling reason as documented in the case plan; or
 - the Division has not provided services, consistent with the case plan, necessary for the safe return of the child to his home.

At any time during the course of a case, DHS, the Attorney ad litem or the court can request a hearing on whether or not reunification services should be terminated. The requesting party shall provide notice to the parties at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the hearing. The notice shall identify the grounds for recommending termination of reunification services in sufficient detail to put the family on notice. The court shall determine whether or not reunification services shall be terminated. The burden of presenting the case shall be on the requesting party. The court shall conduct and complete a hearing on a "no reunification services" request within fifty (50) days of the date of written notice to the defendants. The court shall enter an order determining whether or not reunification services shall be provided. If the court determines that reunification services shall be terminated, the court shall hold a permanency planning hearing within thirty (30) days after the determination. If the court determines the permanency goal to be termination of parental rights, the Department shall file a petition to terminate parental rights within thirty (30) days from the date of the entry of the order establishing such goal. The court shall conduct and complete a termination of parental rights hearing within ninety (90) days from the date the petition for termination of parental rights is filed, unless continued for good cause. After an order of termination of parental rights is filed, the court shall review the case at least every three (3) months when the goal is adoption, and in other cases, every six (6) months until permanency is achieved for the child. (Refer to Policy VIII-C.) The court reviews continue, even if a case is on appeal.

(3) Legal guardianship,

(4) Permanent custody,

If the court grants legal guardianship or permanent custody no further services or periodic reviews are required.

(5) Continue the goal of reunification only when the parent is complying with the established case plan, and orders of the court making significant measurable progress towards achieving the goals established in the case plan, and diligently working toward reunification. Reunification must be expected to occur within a time frame that is consistent with the child's developmental needs.

(6) Independence (see definition of Independence in Glossary). In the case of a child who has attained age 16, the permanency planning hearing will determine the services needed to assist the child to make the transition from foster care to independent living.

Independence shall be selected only if the child cannot be reunited with the child's family; another permanent plan is not available; and a compelling reason exists why termination of parental rights is not in the child's best interest or the child is being cared for by a relative and termination of parental rights is not in the best interest of the child.

If DHS concludes, after considering reunification, adoption, legal guardianship, or permanent placement with a fit and willing relative, that the most appropriate permanency plan for a child is

placement in another planned permanent living arrangement, DHS will document to the court the compelling reason for the alternate plan.

The Department may seek the services of the Federal Parent Locator Service to search for absent parents at any point in order to facilitate a permanency plan.

The Department shall provide the foster parent(s) of a child, and any pre-adoptive parent or relative providing care for the child with timely notice of, and an opportunity to be heard in, permanency hearings and six-month periodic reviews held with respect to the child during the time the child is in the care of such foster parent, pre-adoptive parent or relative caregiver. Notice of and an opportunity to be heard does not include the right to standing as a party to the case. The permanency hearing will also serve to address procedural safeguards as they apply with respect to parental rights pertaining to the removal of the child from the home of his or her parents, to a change in the child's placement, and to any determination affecting visitation privileges of parents.

Judicial determinations regarding "contrary to the welfare", reasonable efforts to prevent removal, and reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan in effect, including judicial determinations that reasonable efforts are not required, must be explicitly documented and made on a case-by-case basis and so stated in the court order.

If reasonable efforts and "contrary to the welfare" judicial determinations are not included as required in the court orders, a transcript of the court proceedings is the only other documentation acceptable to verify that the required determinations have been made.

Neither affidavits nor nunc pro tunc orders will be acceptable as verification documentation in support of reasonable efforts and "contrary to the welfare" judicial determinations.

Court orders that reference state law to substantiate judicial determinations are not acceptable, even if state law provides that removal must be based on a judicial determination that remaining in the home would be contrary to the child's welfare or that removal can only be ordered after reasonable efforts have been made.

At any hearing in which the Department of Human Services is ordered by the court to provide services for a family, the court shall provide the Department with the opportunity to be heard. When DHS is not a party to the case, failure by the court to provide at least five (5) working days' notice to DHS renders any part of the order pertaining to DHS void.

PROCEDURE (VI-F1): Case Review Judicial Hearings for Children in Out-of-Home Placement

The Family Service Worker will:

- Receive the confirmed court date from the OCC attorney.
- Provide the OCC attorney with the name and address of any grandparent who is entitled to notice based on the conditions listed in Procedure (II-E10).
- Provide notice to the parties at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the hearing, if DHS is the requesting party.
- Complete a court report for all review hearings.
- Submit the "Court Report" (CFS-6011) to the OCC Attorney within fifteen (15) working days prior to the hearing.

- Submit the “Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report” (CFS-6024) to OCC, CASA and all parties no later than seven (7) days before the scheduled Permanency Planning Hearing.
- Invite the out-of-home placement provider to all hearings.
- Attend all hearings and be prepared to provide testimony regarding services offered or provided, progress and recommendations to the court.
- Bring case files to all hearings.
- Discuss orders of the court with the family.

POLICY (VI-G): INTERSTATE COMPACT ON PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN (ICPC)

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is used to move children in need of placement, treatment or adoption across state lines. When a child requires placement outside the resident state, DCFS shall use the ICPC process. The ICPC process ensures:

- Proper extensions of authority into the receiving state.
- Maximum opportunity for each child to be suitably placed.
- Proper information to authorities in the receiving state.

The juvenile division of circuit court shall retain jurisdiction to issue orders of adoption, interlocutory or final, when a child is placed outside the state of Arkansas.

PROCEDURE (VI-G1): Types of Placement Covered by ICPC

Children placed out-of-state are to go through ICPC when one of the following placements occur:

- out-of-home placement provider,
- adoptive placements,
- residential treatment programs, group homes, and institutions,
- placements with parent/relatives and non-agency guardians except for a facility for the mentally ill or educational facility or a situation in which a child is placed by a parent or close relative with another parent or close relative in another state.

If in doubt, request clarification from the Arkansas Interstate Compact Unit, P.O. Box 1437, Slot S567 Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203-1437. (Phone: (501) 682-8556)

PROCEDURE (VI-G2): Responsibilities of the Sending State

The **sending party** will:

- provide proper notice of the intent to place and receive authorization from the receiving state prior to the placement.
- retain jurisdiction over the child until the child no longer comes under the jurisdiction of ICPC.
- retain planning and financial responsibility for the duration of the placement.

NOTE: The one exception comes under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) requiring that children under Title IV-E adoption assistance agreements and those receiving Title IV-E foster care payments will be granted Medicaid coverage in their current resident state. (See Medical Services Manual, Section 6600 to 6673.)

- Return the child to the sending state at the request of the receiving state.

VII. SERVICES TO SUPPORT FOSTER PARENTS

POLICY (VII-A): FOSTER PARENT TRAINING, APPROVAL, AND RE-EVALUATION

For the purpose of Title IV-E eligibility, a foster family home means the home of an individual or family licensed or approved as meeting the standards established by the Child Welfare Agency Review Board that provides 24-hour out-of-home care for children. (With respect to foster family homes on or near Indian reservations, approval would rest with the tribal licensing or approval authority(ies). The term includes group homes, agency-operated boarding homes or other facilities licensed or approved for the purpose of providing foster care. Foster family homes that are approved must be held to the same standards as foster family homes that are licensed. Anything less than full licensure or approval is insufficient for meeting Title IV-E eligibility requirements.

In addition, the Child Welfare Agency Licensing Act defines a foster home as a private residence of one (1) or more family members that receives from a child welfare agency any minor child who is unattended by a parent or guardian in order to provide care, training, education, custody or supervision on a twenty-four (24) hour basis, not to include adoptive homes. The home must meet family foster home standards and the individual child's needs for the duration of the placement.

Foster care is a team effort involving DCFS, the family foster parents, the foster child, and the birth/legal parents. When all those directly involved in the situation understand their own and each others' roles and cooperate as team members in a team effort, the quality of the experience for all is increased, and the effect on the child's future well-being is greatly influenced. (See "Family Foster Parent Handbook" (PUB-30) for responsibilities of the Foster Care Team.) The Division shall place children in approved foster homes where the foster parents have satisfactorily completed the Division's pre-service training curriculum, have been cleared through the Central Registry and through a criminal records check. A FBI criminal records check shall be conducted on persons who have not resided in Arkansas continuously for the past five (5) years. The Division will provide documentation in the case record that the criminal record check was conducted on the prospective foster parent. An Individualized Training Plan for in-service training shall be developed for each foster parent. The plan shall take into consideration the age and characteristics of children for whom the foster parent is caring and the expressed preferences of the foster parent.

The approval process shall concurrently educate foster parents on the characteristics of children in out-of-home placement and assess their capability to meet those needs and their compliance with the DCFS standards for approval of foster homes. The Division will not approve a foster home where any adult member living in the home is homosexual.

DCFS shall re-evaluate each foster home's ability to care for children at least annually and whenever there is a major life change in the lives of foster families. Foster parents who do not meet the in-service training requirement will be placed on probation for sixty (60) days. No new children receiving out-of-home placement services may be placed during the probation period. Foster parents shall complete their annual in-service training requirements before they receive any additional children receiving out-of-home placement services unless an exception is granted.

There are three types of DCFS foster homes referenced in the CHRIS System: Foster Family Home (Non-Relative), Relative Foster Home (Kinship Only), and Relative Foster Home (Fostering and Kinship).

Kinship foster homes are homes in which adult relatives within the first, second, or third degree of consanguinity to the parent or stepparent are recruited by the Family Service Worker to provide 24 hours per day care for children who are related through blood or marriage. These homes must meet all of the minimum licensing requirements for a family foster home. Relatives who are approved for placement of children in their home may choose to be a kinship foster home or a regular foster home. Kinship foster homes will be approved only for placement of relative children. If the relatives choose to be a regular foster home, they will have the responsibility of caring for relative and non-relative foster children.

The **Area Manager** will:

- Receive the request for exception to in-service training requirements.
- Review the quality of care provided by foster families and the reasons for overdue training.
- Determine whether to grant an exception to the in-service training requirement for up to sixty (60) calendar days.

POLICY (VII-B): PROVIDING INFORMATION TO FOSTER PARENTS

Foster parents shall be considered as team members working with other child welfare professionals for the family. Complete information, such as a child's health, education records, reasons for entering care, siblings, and probable length of placement, shall be provided to foster parents at the time of placement. The child's social security number may be given to the foster parents, only if the foster parent must have the number to obtain services, care or treatment for the child. Some examples would be to enroll the child in school or to obtain medical treatment for a child who is not Medicaid eligible, when treatment is needed. The foster parent must keep the child's social security number confidential and use the social security number only for an allowable purpose. Additional information shall be shared promptly with the foster parents.

The court shall allow foster parents an opportunity to be heard in any review or hearing held with respect to a child in their care. Foster parents shall not be made a party to such review or hearing solely on the basis that such persons are entitled to notice and the opportunity to be heard.

Foster parents are allowed to receive a copy of substantiated child maltreatment report for the child in their care.

PROCEDURE (VII-B1): Providing Information to Foster Parents

The **Family Service Worker** will:

- Provide foster parents with copies of the "Case Plan" (CFS-6010), "Health Services Plan" (CFS-368) and "Placement Plan-Placement Plan Provider Information Report" (CFS-6007) within five (5) calendar days of completion or revision.
- Provide the foster parent with the child's social security number, when it is required, to obtain services, care, or treatment for the child.
- Review and update the child's health and education records, and provide copies to the out-of-home care provider at the time of placement.
- Provide any additional information, as it becomes available.
- Submit the "Notification of Court Appearance" (CFS-343) to foster parents within ten (10) calendar days of any review hearing to be held with respect to a child in their care. Send the CFS-343 through certified mail for all Permanency Planning Hearings.
- Provide the foster parent with a copy of a substantiated child maltreatment report on the child in their care, if requested.

The **Foster Parents** will:

- Maintain the information shared as confidential.

POLICY (VII-D): CHANGES IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

The Division recognizes the importance of providing a stable placement for children in out-of-home placement. Family preservation services shall be utilized if necessary to address problems in the out-of-home placement in order to prevent disruption.

Changes in placement shall be made only after notification to the age-appropriate child, foster parent, the court, the OCC Attorney, Attorney ad litem, and the child's family. Notices shall be sent in writing two (2) weeks prior to the proposed change. The notice shall:

- specify reasons for the proposed change,
- provide to the Attorney ad litem the address of the proposed new out-of-home placement, and
- provide to the child the name and telephone number of the Attorney ad litem.

The age-appropriate child will be notified of the right to appeal the change and to request assistance from the Attorney ad litem. Pre-placement visits shall be conducted when possible before a change in placement. Exceptions to the advance notice requirement shall be made if the child's health or safety would be endangered by delaying a change in placement.

The Medicaid Eligibility Unit will be notified concerning changes in the child's out-of-home placement. This includes situations wherein the child remains in foster care but is moved from one out-of-home placement to another; has returned home; been placed at a DYS facility, a juvenile detention center, placed with a relative (non-kinship care), on runaway status, or on a trial home visit, etc. ~~The child's IV-E Medicaid eligibility will continue as long as the child is IV-E eligible, this includes maintaining Medicaid eligibility while the child is on a trial home visit.~~ The child's Medicaid case will close the date the child's foster care case is closed.

Good casework practice dictates that trial home visits will not exceed thirty (30) days unless the court dictates a longer duration. To comply with Title IV-E eligibility requirements, trial home visits must occur in the home of the birth parent(s) and may not exceed six (6) months in duration, unless a court orders a longer trial home visit. If a trial home visit extends beyond six (6) months and has not been authorized by the court, or exceeds the time period the court has deemed appropriate, and the child is subsequently returned to foster care, that placement must then be considered a new placement, and Title IV-E must be newly established. Under these circumstances, judicial determinations regarding "contrary to the welfare" and reasonable efforts to prevent removal are required.

At the closure of all out-of-home placement cases discharge planning must be conducted to ensure the health and safety of the child at case closure. The health and safety assessment and risk assessment are tools to be used in determining case closure. Discharge planning must be done at the staffing to close the case. Minimum licensing standards require that a discharge summary be completed on each child and a copy given to the child's parents if the Division has not been granted TPR (Termination of Parental Rights) by the court. A copy of the discharge summary must become a part of the child's case file.

PROCEDURE (VII-D1): Changes in Out-of-Home Placement

The Family Service Worker will:

- Provide written notice to the age-appropriate child, the foster parents, OCC, the court, the Attorney ad litem, and the child's family of any changes in placement two (2) weeks prior to the change.

- Select the Out-of-Home Placement that best fits the needs of the child. A child who has been identified as an EXEMPTED FROM FINDING UNDER AGE JUVENILE AGGRESSOR OR SEXUAL OFFENDER must not be placed in a foster home with other children, unless the child's therapist feels that the child is no longer a danger to other children. Proper

documentation of this will be contained in the child's hard copy file. If the recommended placement is a facility, the facility must receive information regarding the allegations. This must be documented in the Recommend Placement screen.

- Arrange for a pre-placement visit.
- Provide new address to Attorney ad litem.
- Inform age-appropriate child of the right to appeal a change in placement.
- Request an exception to advance notice if an emergency exists.
- Notify the Attorney ad litem, the OCC Attorney, the court, the foster parent and the child's family within twenty-four (24) hours in the event of emergency removal.
- Submit the "Notification of Change" (CFS-495) to the Foster Care/Medicaid Eligibility Unit within 10 days of change in placement.
- Update child placement information in CHRIS. Updating the placement information will open a response window to notify the Eligibility Unit of the placement change.

POLICY (VII-E): FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO FOSTER PARENTS

Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments for a child in foster care may cover the costs of (and the cost of providing) food, clothing, shelter, daily supervision, school supplies, a child's personal incidentals, liability insurance with respect to the child, and reasonable travel to the child's home for visitation with family or other caretakers. Local travel associated with the preceding list of items are also an allowable expense.

Foster care maintenance payments made on behalf of a child placed in a family foster home or child care institution, who is the parent of a child in the same home or institution, include amounts which are necessary to cover costs incurred on behalf of the child's son or daughter. The costs are limited to funds expended on those items described above.

The Division shall provide foster parents with a monthly board payment as an aid to cover the items listed above for each child receiving out-of-home placement services. When foster parents are caring for a child with special needs and the child's needs can not be met with the regular board payment, the Division may provide the foster parents with an additional payment to cover the extra expenses incurred. The amount of these higher, special board rates will be based on the nature and extent of the child's special needs. The amount of this additional monthly payment will not exceed \$460.00 above the standard board rate for the child's age group. A special board rate is approved for a specific placement and need and will be periodically reviewed and adjusted. A change in placement will require a new request and review.

PROCEDURE (VII-E1): Financial Support to Foster Parents

Foster parents shall receive a monthly board rate according to the following chart:

Birth through 5 years	\$400.00 Monthly
Board and Care	345.00
Clothing	40.00
Personal Needs	15.00
6 through 11 years	\$425.00 Monthly
Board and Care	355.00
Clothing	45.00
School and Personal Needs	25.00
12 through 14 years	\$450.00 Monthly
Board and Care	365.00
Clothing	55.00
School and Personal Needs	30.00
15 through 17 years	\$475.00 Monthly
Board and Care	375.00
Clothing	65.00
School and Personal Needs	35.00

POLICY (VIII-C): TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

All children have a right to a safe, permanent family. The Division of Children and Family Services shall develop and implement permanency plans for children. One option is to terminate parental rights to free a child for adoptive placement, when it has been determined that reunification with the family is not a viable option.

The court shall authorize DHS to file a petition to terminate parental rights unless the: (a) The child is being cared for by a relative and termination of parental rights is not in the best interest of the child; (b) DHS has documented in the case plan a compelling reason why filing such a petition is not in the best interest of the child and the court approves the compelling reason as documented in the case plan; or (c) DHS has not provided to the family of the child, consistent with the time period in the case plan, such services as DHS deemed necessary for the safe return of the child to the child's home if reunification services were required to be made to the family.

The Division will file a petition to terminate parental rights in the following circumstances:

- A child (of any age) has been in an out-of-home placement for 15 of the most recent 22 months. A hearing shall be held to determine whether or not DHS shall file a petition to terminate parental rights before the end of the fifteenth (15th) month if:
 - (a) The child has been in out-of-home placement for fifteen (15) continuous months; and
 - (b) At the permanency planning hearing, the court continued the goal of reunification or entered a goal of independence. Trial visits with the parents and time spent on runaway status shall not count in adding up fifteen (15) months.
- The child has been determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be an abandoned infant. The petition to terminate parental rights will be made within 30 days of the judicial determination that the child is an abandoned infant.
- The parent has been convicted of a felony and the court determines no reunification services are required. (See Policy VI-A). The petition to terminate parental rights will be made within 30 days of a judicial determination that reasonable efforts to reunify the child and parent are not required.

If a juvenile is the subject of an open case filed under the Arkansas Juvenile Code, OCC will file all subsequent petitions (i.e., termination of parental rights, adoption, guardianship) in that same juvenile court and case.

If the court adopts the goal of termination of parental rights, the Department shall file a petition to terminate parental rights within thirty (30) days from the date of the entry of the order establishing such goal.

If the court finds that the child should remain in an out-of-home placement, either long-term or otherwise, the child's case shall be reviewed every six (6) months, with an annual permanency planning hearing.

Additionally, if the child has been in an out-of-home placement 15 of the last 22 months, and a termination petition has been filed by another party, the Division will seek to join the petition. Concurrent with the filing of a termination petition, the Division will identify, recruit, process and approve a qualified family for adoption.

NOTE: For the purpose of Title IV-E compliance, the Division will file or seek to join a petition to terminate the parental rights of a parent(s) whose child has been in foster care under the responsibility of the state for 15 of the most recent 22 months. The petition must be filed by the end of the child's 15th month in foster care. In calculating when to file a petition for termination of parental rights, the Division:

- (1) will calculate the 15 of the most recent 22 month period from the date the child entered foster care;**
- (2) will use a cumulative method of calculation when a child experiences multiple exits from and entries to foster care during the 22 month period;**
- (3) will not include trial home visits or runaway episodes in calculating 15 months in foster care; and**
- (4) only apply the 15 of the most recent 22 month rule once if the state does not file a petition because of one of the following exceptions applies.**

The state may elect not to file a petition or join a petition to terminate the parental rights of parent if:

- a. at the option of the state, the child is being cared for by a relative;**
- b. DHS has documented in the case plan (which must be available for court review) a compelling reason for determining that filing such a petition would not be in the best interests of the individual child;**
- c. DHS has not provided to the family, consistent with the time period in the case plan, services that DHS deems necessary for the safe return of the child to the home, when reasonable efforts to reunify the family are not required.**

**PROCEDURE (VIII-D9): Discharge of Guardianship for Children
Placed in Guardianship of DHS**

The **Family Service Worker**, or the **Adoption Specialist** (if the child has been placed with an adoptive family), will:

- Schedule and conduct a staffing.
- Notify OCC Attorney to take action to discharge guardianship.

**POLICY (VIII-E): BIRTH PARENTS RELINQUISHING INFANTS
FOR ADOPTION**

The Division shall provide services to birth/legal parents who are planning to relinquish infants for adoption or who have relinquished their infant to a medical provider or law enforcement agency under the provisions of the Safe Haven Act.

The Safe Haven Act allows a parent of a child who is 30 days old or younger to voluntarily leave or deliver the child to a medical provider or law enforcement agency. Although the statute does not require a court order, DHS will petition the court for an order of emergency custody. The parent must not express any intent to return for the child. DHS takes custody of the child.

**PROCEDURE (VIII-E1): Birth Parents Relinquishing Infants for
Adoption**

The **Family Service Worker** will:

- Refer birth/legal parents planning to relinquish an expected infant for adoption to the Adoption Specialist.

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Complete an Intake Study and the "Biological Family Background Information" (CFS-456) through one or more face-to-face interviews with parents within two (2) weeks of referral. If the parent is under 18 years of age and so desires, involve a relative or concerned advocate in the intake interview. Document the Intake Study if the parent is unavailable, uncooperative, etc.

The Intake Study will include the following information on the birth mother, legal father, and/or putative father:

- Personal information (names, birth dates, sex, race, marital status and religion of each parent and their parents, siblings, other children of either parent, social security numbers and address of each parent).
- Specific problems and needs.
- Assessment of the family's strengths and relationships and relevant social, economic and cultural circumstances pertinent to placement.
- Reasons for placement of the child and attitudes of parents toward relinquishment.

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- Available physical, developmental, educational and occupational history of parents and other members of the family.
 - Available medical and psychological history of each member of the family.
 - Assessment of alternatives to adoptive placement and description of services which have been provided to the family and child in order to preserve and strengthen the family.
 - Assessment of the effect of placement on the parents and other family members.
 - Parents' short and long range goals of the placement.
 - Summary of contacts between parents and DCFS to include date, location, purpose, and results of contact.
 - Help parents understand their retained legal rights and obligations and those designated to DCFS by the court. Provide this information to parents in clear, simple writing. Document these actions in the Intake Study and how the information is understood by the parents.
 - Obtain an affidavit of paternity. Advise the putative father of the Putative Father's Registry at the Department of Health. Document in the Intake Study.
 - Comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act if there is Indian ancestry in either parent's family.
 - Develop a "Case Plan" (CFS-6010) with the birth/legal parents, preferably prior to the infant's birth, which will address:
 - counseling services;
 - health services;
 - post-placement services;
 - Give "Adoption Information Registry Guide" (PUB-113) and "Choices-Adoption is an Option" (PUB-043) to all parents receiving adoption services. Document in the Intake Study.
 - Assist mother in applying for Medicaid for her medical expenses. If ineligible for Medicaid, refer the mother to the private licensed adoption agencies.
 - Apply for Medicaid for the infant as soon as possible after birth.
 - Advise medical providers not to bill the parents for the infant's medical expenses if the parent relinquishes parental rights. Give provider a copy of the custody order.
 - Notify medical providers of the infant's Medicaid number when approved.
 - Give parents a blank "Waiver and Consent to the Appointment of a Guardian" (CFS-410) before birth.

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- Contact OCC Attorney to make arrangements for the appointment of an Attorney ad litem for a minor birth mother and the minor father if he is the legal father of the infant.
 - Wait at least twenty-four (24) hours after the infant's birth, and until the mother is lucid, to present CFS-410 for signature. Explain her right to withdraw her consent within ten (10) calendar days for the signature date.
 - Obtain legal father's signature on the CFS-410/2. Explain his right to withdraw consent within ten (10) calendar days from the signature date.
 - Obtain signature of minor birth mother's Attorney ad litem on the CFS-410 if in agreement with the adoption. Obtain signature of minor birth father's Attorney ad litem on the CFS-410 if the minor is the legal father.
 - Advise OCC Attorney if the minor mother's parents do not agree with the adoption.
 - Route the signed, notarized CFS-410s to the OCC Attorney to start termination of parental rights proceedings.
 - Notify OCC Attorney immediately if the birth mother or legal father revokes her/his consent during the days allowed by law.
 - Name the infant if the mother does not and advise the hospital of the infant's name.
 - Advise the hospital staff of parents' wishes concerning contact with the infant.
 - Prepare an adoption packet about the infant (See Appendix II-A, II-B, Policy VIII-G7).
 - Contact parents at least once during ten (10) day revocation period.
 - Contact parents monthly for at least six (6) months.
 - Maintain a record of parents who request to relinquish an infant for adoption to include:
 - personal information including medical history;
 - social history;
 - copy of the Intake Study;
 - strengths and needs of the parents and the services required;
 - Adoption Specialist's assessment and initial case plan;
 - signed documents between DCFS and the parents;
 - summary of dates of contact and progress toward goals;
 - case review reports;
 - discharge summary;
 - Select an adoptive family (Policy VIII-G).
 - Maintain a record of denials of application for services and reasons for denial.

PROCEDURE (VIII-E2): Voluntary Delivery of an Infant under the Provisions of the Safe Haven Act

Any **medical provider** or **law enforcement agency** shall, without a court order,

- Take possession (72 hour hold) of a child who is:
 - Thirty (30) days old or younger, and
 - Left with or voluntarily delivered to them by the child's parent, who does not express an intent to return for the child.
- Perform any act necessary to protect the physical health and safety of the child.
- Immediately notify the Division of Children and Family Services.

The **Family Service Worker** will:

- Notify OCC immediately upon taking possession of such a child.
- Refer the birth/legal parents of the relinquished infant for adoption to the Adoption Specialist.

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Carry out the same actions as those listed for the Adoption Specialist in Procedure VIII-E1.

**POLICY (VIII-F): FOSTER PARENT, KINSHIP FOSTER PARENT,
AND RELATIVE ADOPTION**

The Division supports adoption by a foster parent or kinship foster parent, who has a well established relationship with the child in their care and who expresses an interest in adoption, without regard to any racial or ethnic differences if such a placement is in the best interest of the child. The Division also supports adoption by a relative, who is not presently caring for the child and who expresses an interest in adoption if such a placement is in the best interest of the child. Each family and child will be carefully assessed and prepared for adoption. The Division provides pre-placement services for relative adoptions to move children into adoptive families in a timely manner. Prior to the finalization of the adoption, post-placement services are provided and services to preserve adoptive families are offered after the adoption is finalized.

Before placement of a child in the home of the adoptive parent, a home study will be conducted. The home study shall address whether the adoptive home is a suitable home, and shall include a recommendation as to the approval of the petitioner as an adoptive parent.

Before placement for adoption, the Division shall compile and provide to the prospective adoptive parents a detailed, written health history and genetic and social history of the child which excludes information which would identify birth parents or members of a birth parent's family. The information shall be set forth in a document that is separate from any document containing information identifying the birth parents or members of the birth parent's family. The detailed, written health history and genetic and social history shall be identified as such, and shall be filed with the clerk before the entry of the adoption decree. The adoption summary shall serve as the detailed health history, genetic, and social history document. Upon order of the court for good cause shown, the chancery court clerk may tender to a person identified by the court a copy of the detailed, written health history and genetic and social history.

The Division shall provide to foster parents and pre-adoptive parents of a child in Department custody, notice of any review or hearing to be held with respect to the child. The original petitioner in the juvenile matter shall provide relative caregivers notice of any review or hearing. The court shall allow foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers an opportunity to be heard in any review or hearing held with respect to a child in their care. Foster parents, adoptive parents, and relative caregivers shall not be made a party to such review or hearing solely on the basis that such persons are entitled to notice and the opportunity to be heard. Families are identified as pre-adoptive once a child is placed in the home and prior to the finalization of the adoption. Adoptive parents, and each member of the household age ten (10) years and older, residing in Arkansas shall be checked with the Child Maltreatment Central Registry. Adoptive parents and each member of the household age ten (10) years and older residing out of state shall provide child Maltreatment Central Registry Checks from their state of residence.

Adoptive parents and each member of the household age fourteen (14) years and older residing in Arkansas shall be checked with the Identification Bureau of the Arkansas State Police for convictions of offenses listed in ACA 9-28-409. Adoptive parents and each member of the household age fourteen (14) years and older residing out of the state shall provide State Police Criminal Record Checks from their state of residence. Out of state adoptive families do not need to do an Arkansas State Police Check if they have never resided in Arkansas. Adoptive parents and each member of the household age sixteen (16) years and older who have not resided in

Arkansas continually for the past six (6) years, shall complete a record check with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Division will provide documentation in the case record that a criminal record check was conducted on the prospective adoptive parent.

A prospective adoptive parent will not be approved or licensed if, based on a criminal record check, a court of competent jurisdiction has determined that the prospective adoptive parent has been convicted of a felony involving child abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, a crime against a child or children (including pornography), or a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault, or homicide, but not including other physical assault or battery.

A prospective adoptive parent will not be approved or licensed if, based on a criminal record check, a court of competent jurisdiction has determined that the prospective adoptive parent has, within the last five (5) years, been convicted of a felony involving physical assault, battery, or a drug-related offense.

All records of any adoption finalized in the state of Arkansas shall be maintained for ninety-nine (99) years.

The juvenile division of circuit court shall retain jurisdiction to issue orders of adoption, interlocutory or final, when a juvenile is placed outside the state of Arkansas.

PROCEDURE (VIII-F1): Staffing and Recommendations

The Family Service Worker will:

- Notify the Adoption Specialist in writing within two (2) working days of the court hearing that termination of parental rights with power to consent to adoption has been granted if the Adoption Specialist was not at the hearing.
- Determine if the foster parent, kinship foster parent, or a relative is interested in adopting the child if parental rights have been terminated.
- Submit the "Notification of Court Appearance" (CFS-343) to all parties entitled to notice within ten (10) calendar days of any review hearing to be held with respect to a child in their care. Send the CFS-343 through certified mail for all Permanency Planning Hearings.
- Present a "Request for Consideration to Adopt" (CFS-489) to the foster parent or kinship foster parent if they are interested in adopting the child.
- Consider the health and safety of the child.
- Schedule and conduct a staffing within ten (10) working days from the court hearing that terminates parental rights, being sure to include the Adoption Specialist, foster parent, kinship foster parent, relative, age-appropriate child, County Supervisor and Attorney-ad-Litem. The staffing is to determine if this type of adoption is an appropriate referral for an adoptive family assessment. The following foster parent/relative placement criteria shall be considered during the staffing:

Jurisdiction:

- DCFS will participate in the adoption of a minor only if either the person seeking to adopt the child, or the child, is currently a resident of Arkansas.

Residency Requirements for Adoption in Arkansas:

- The family planning to adopt may live in Arkansas or reside out-of-state and have an approved adoption assessment from a licensed adoption agency in their state. The family's adoption assessment must be on file in the Adoption Services Unit.

Residency to determine jurisdiction over an adoption may be established in accordance with one of the three following sets of criteria:

- A child under the age of six (6) months is a resident of Arkansas if :
 - The biological mother resided in Arkansas for more than 4 months prior to the child's birth, and
 - The child was born in Arkansas or in any city which adjoins the state line or is separated only by a navigable river from an Arkansas city which adjoins the state line, and
 - The child remains in this state until the interlocutory decree has been entered. Or in the case of a nonresident adoptive family, upon receipt of Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) approval, the child and the prospective adoptive parents may go back to their state of residence and subsequently may return to Arkansas for a hearing on the petition for adoption.
- A child over the age of six (6) months is a resident of Arkansas if that child:
 - Has resided in this state for at least six (6) months, and
 - Currently resides in Arkansas, and
 - Is present in this state when the petition for adoption is filed and heard by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- A person seeking to adopt is a resident of Arkansas if that person :
 - Occupies a dwelling within the state, and
 - Has a present intent to remain within the state for a period of time, and
 - Manifests the genuineness of that intent through an ongoing physical presence within the state together with indications that the person's presence is not merely transitory in nature.

*Age:**Applicant is:*

- Between the age of twenty-one (21) and fifty-five (55) years.
- Between the age of twenty-one (21) and forty (40) years for an infant (up to one year old).

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- A primary caregiver that is at an age so that it can be anticipated that the caregiver can parent the child into adulthood.

Marital Status:

- In a two-parent home, the husband and wife shall be joint applicants, each shall actively participate in the approval process, and shall provide verification that they have been married at least two years. The marriage shall be stable.
- A person, who is divorced must provide verification of that divorce and must have been divorced for at least one year from the date on the court order.
- A single person may apply to adopt.

General Physical and Mental Health:

- Members of the household do not have a health condition or disability that would interfere with the family's ability to parent the child. Each member of the household shall have a physical examination by a physician within six (6) months prior to the approval of the adoption assessment on the prospective adoptive family.

Housing:

- Space is adequate to promote health and safety.
- All firearms are maintained in a secure, locked location.
- All water hazards and dangerous pets will be assessed.
- Children of opposite sexes will have their own separate bedrooms except for infants (up to one year old).
- Water is provided by public water system or approved by the Department of Health.

Criminal Background Check:

- Members of the household fourteen (14) years of age or older must agree to a local police and an Arkansas State Police background check and must have no history of convictions for offences listed in ACA § 9-28-409, to include capital murder, 1st or 2nd degree murder, manslaughter, negligent homicide, kidnapping, false imprisonment in the first and second degrees, permanent detention or restraint, battery in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd degree, aggravated assault, assault in the 1st or 2nd degree, terroristic threatening in the 1st or 2nd degree, any sexual offense, permitting abuse of a child, endangering the welfare of a minor in the 1st or 2nd degree, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, engaging children in sexually explicit conduct for use in visual or print medium, transportation of minors for prohibited sexual conduct, use of a child or consent to use of a child in sexual performance, and producing, directing, or promoting sexual performance by a child; incest, interference with visitation, interference with custody, engaging in conduct with respect with controlled substances, distribution to minors, public display of obscenity, prostitution, promoting prostitution, criminal attempt, criminal complicity, criminal solicitation, criminal conspiracy, any felony or misdemeanor involving violence, threatened violence or moral turpitude, and former or future law of this or any other state or of the federal government which is substantially equivalent to one of the aforementioned offenses.
- In addition applicants and all members of their household age sixteen (16) years or older must agree to a FBI criminal record check if he or she has been a resident of the

state for less than six (6) years. Out of state adoptive families do not need to do an Arkansas State Police Check if they have never resided in Arkansas. Adoptive parents and each member of the household age fourteen (14) years and older residing out of the state shall provide state police criminal record checks from their state of residence.

- Any person who is found guilty of, or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to, an excluded criminal offense pursuant to ACA § 901-28-409(e)(1) shall be excluded as an adoptive parent.

Central Registry Check:

- Members of the household ten (10) years of age or older must agree to a Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check in his state of residence and any state of residence in which the person has lived for the past six (6) years, and in the person's state of employment, if different. The person must have no history of true abuse and/or neglect.
- Adoptive parents and each member of the household age ten (10) years old or older, shall repeat the check every year until the adoption decree has been issued. Adoptive parents, and each member of the household age ten (10) years or older, residing out of state shall have a Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check, if available, in their state.

Resources:

- The applicant must have sufficient resources to meet the financial, medical, physical, educational, emotional and shelter needs of the child. Verification of income/employment is required.

Birth Family:

- The family will meet the child's needs to have continuity with the birth family if applicable.
- The family can deal appropriately with interference from the birth family.
- Geographic location will not present risks for the child to be harmed by birth family.

Foster Family Care:

- The family will continue to be able to meet this child's specific needs if they continue as foster parents. The child's health and safety are paramount.

Pre-Service Training:

- The applicant has completed pre-service training.
- The applicant is willing to complete any further training in order to meet a child's specific needs.

When exceptions to the criteria are requested, the County Supervisor will request it within the written summary of the staffing and forward it to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor within five (5) working days of the staffing. The Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor will make a decision and notify the County Supervisor in writing within five (5) working days of receiving the summary. If the criteria is required by the Minimum Licensing Standards for Child Welfare Agencies, the request must be approved by the Area Manager or designated adoption supervisor and then forwarded to the Assistant Director of Community Services and Division Director for approval. If approved by the Division Director, the request must be forwarded to the Child Welfare Licensing Coordinator for a decision of alternative compliance. The decision must be given in writing and filed in the case record. Alternative compliance with the standards required by the Minimum Licensing Standards for Child Welfare Agencies may be granted if the alternative form of compliance offers equal protection of the health, safety and welfare to children and meets the basic intent of the requirement for which the alternative compliance is sought.

- The Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor will forward a written notification to the family if the exception is not approved and will explain the internal review procedure. A copy will be forwarded to the Family Service Worker, County Supervisor, and Adoption Specialist.

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Participate in the staffing.

The **County Supervisor** will (if staffing supports referral for an adoptive family assessment):

- Forward the following to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor within five (5) working days of the staffing:
 - Written summary which provides the date of the staffing, names/titles of persons participating, findings on compliance to the placement criteria and recommendation.
 - Completed "Request for Consideration to Adopt" (CFS-489) on a foster parent or kinship foster parent.
 - Completed "Home Study/Application and Attachments" (CFS-450) on a foster parent.
 - Initial family assessment/home study on a foster parent or kinship foster parent.
 - Most recent re-evaluation assessment/home study on a foster parent.
 - Most recent "Family Foster Parent Re-evaluation" (CFS-451) and all re-evaluation assessments/studies on a foster parent.
- Refer the foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative to the Adoption Specialist in writing within five (5) working days of receiving written notification if the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor disagrees with the recommendation and directs that an adoptive family assessment be completed.

The **County Supervisor** will (if staffing does not support referral for an adoptive family assessment):

- Forward a copy of the written summary to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor within five (5) working days of the staffing:
 - Written summary, which provides the date of the staffing, names/titles of persons participating, and findings on compliance to the placement criteria and recommendation.
 - Completed “Request for Consideration to Adopt” (CFS-489) on a foster parent or kinship foster parent.
 - Completed “Family Foster Home Study/Application and Attachments” (CFS-450) on a foster parent.
 - Initial family assessment/home study on a foster parent or kinship foster parent.
 - Most recent “Family Foster Parent Re-evaluation” (CFS-451) and all re-evaluation assessments/studies on a foster parent.

The **Area Manager** or **designated Adoption Supervisor** will (if the staffing does not support referral for an adoptive family assessment):

- Assess the recommendation and request any additional information.
- Notify the foster parent, kinship foster parent or relative in writing within ten (10) working days of the decision and state the reason(s) for the decision and internal review procedures.
- Send a copy of this written notification to the Family Service Worker, County Supervisor, Adoption Specialist and Manager, Adoption Services Unit.
- Send a memorandum to the County Supervisor within ten (10) working days with reasons this adoptive placement should be assessed if in disagreement with the recommendation.
- Send a copy of this memorandum to the Family Service Worker, Adoption Specialist, and Manager, Adoption Services Unit.

PROCEDURE (VIII-F2): Assessment and Preparation

The **Family Service Worker** will:

- Assure prior to the permanency planning staffing, that the child's out-of-home placement record is up to date and that all attachments which are required for an adoption packet (see FSPP Appendix II-B) are in the child's record, and are copied and forwarded to the Adoption Specialist within three (3) working days of the permanency planning hearing.
- Send additional attachments to the Adoption Specialist once the initial adoption packet is completed in order to maintain current information until a decision is made.
- Document in the child's out-of-home placement record, and in CHRIS, the efforts to secure needed attachments and the reason for an attachment not being available.
- Provide information requested by the Adoption Specialist in the preparation of the child's adoption summary.
- Prepare the child for adoption and assist in preparing the foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative for adoption.
- Assure compliance to Indian Child Welfare Act, if applicable.

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Prepare the child's adoption packet [adoption summary and attachments -- see FSPP Appendix II-A, II-B, and "Minimum Licensing Standards for Child Welfare Agencies" (PUB-04)] within thirty (30) days from the permanency planning hearing.
- Send a copy of the adoption summary to the Family Service Worker.
- Provide the following forms to the foster parent, kinship foster parent or relative immediately after the staffing that is conducted within ten (10) working days from the hearing that terminates parental rights (if the staffing supports foster parent adoption):
 - "Adoption Application" (CFS-400);
 - "Adoption Questionnaire" (CFS-409);
 - "General Medical Form-Adoptions" (CFS-404) for each member in the household;
 - "State Adoptions Criminal Record Check" (CFS-342B) and release for local law enforcement check for each member of the household who is fourteen (14) years of age or older and FBI criminal record check on each adult applicant who has not resided in the state for at least six (6) years;
 - "Request for CPS Central Registry Check" (CFS-316) for members of the household who are ten (10) years of age or older;
 - "Request/Consent for Health Department Services" (CFS-455) if applicable;
 - "Application for Adoption Subsidy" (CFS-425) if applicable;
- "Statement of Income and Resources for Adoption Subsidy" (CFS-426) if applicable.

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- Complete the assessment and preparation process with the foster parent, kinship foster parent or relative and send the adoption assessment, recommendations, completed forms, reference letters, child's adoption packet and "Change of Status" (CFS-414) to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor within four (4) months of the court hearing that terminates parental rights.
 - Make at least two (2) visits in person with the prospective adoptive family with at least one visit being in the home. Have a separate, face-to-face interview with each prospective adoptive parent. Interview each household member in person who is ten (10) years of age or older.
 - Refer a relative who has not been approved as a foster parent or kinship foster parent to pre-service training. Complete the assessment and preparation process with this relative and send the adoption assessment, recommendation, completed forms, reference letters, child's adoption packet, and CFS-414 to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor within four (4) to six (6) months of the court hearing that terminates parental rights.
 - In CHRIS:
 - complete the Affidavit of Disclosure screen on the child in the child's protective service case. If Foster Parent Adoption, be sure to check the Foster Parent(s) Adoption checkbox.
 - Prepare and present to the foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative one non-identifying copy of the child's adoption packet and a complete Disclosure for Adoption (CFS-471) during the assessment and preparation process.
 - Review and discuss the adoption packet with the foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative.
 - Secure signatures on the Disclosure for Adoption (CFS-471) form and assure a copy is provided.
 - Assist in preparing the child for adoption and prepare the foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative for adoption.
 - Notify the foster parent, kinship foster parent or relative in writing if the assessment cannot be completed within sixty (60) days of the final home visit and explain the reason.
 - Send a copy of this notification to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor and Family Service Worker.
 - Discuss any delays in completing the assessment and preparation process with the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor and document reasons.
 - Complete the packet to determine eligibility for adoption subsidy, if applicable, during the adoption assessment and preparation process and forward to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator, Adoption Unit.

**PROCEDURE (VIII-F3): Foster Parent, Kinship Foster Parent, or
Relative Adoption Decision**

The **Area Manager** or **designated Adoption Supervisor** will:

- Make a decision to approve or deny the foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative's application to adopt within ten (10) working days of receiving the completed adoption assessment and send a written notification to the foster parent, kinship foster parent or relative.
- Send a copy of the approval or denial notification to the Manager, Adoption Services Unit, Adoption Specialist, Family Service Worker, County Supervisor, and OCC Attorney.
- Explain in the written notification the reason(s) for denial and the internal review procedures.
- Send a written notification to the foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative if a decision to approve or deny the application cannot be made within sixty (60) days of the final home visit and explain the reason(s).
- Send a copy of this written notification to the Adoption Specialist and Family Service Worker.

The **Family Service Worker** will:

- Update and transfer the out-of-home placement case record (paper record and CHRIS) to the Adoption Specialist within five (5) working days of receiving the written notification of the approval for foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative adoption.
- In CHRIS:
 - assign the Adoption Specialist as Primary Worker in the Assign/Transfer Screen. The child remains in the current Foster Parent placement until finalization,
 - enters current Foster Parent or Relative as an Adoptive Resource completing the Resource screens.
 - if child is to exit current foster care placement to enter Relative's adoptive home, exit child from current foster parent placement and enter child into the Relative's adoptive home in the Placement screens in the child's protective service case.

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Forward a "Change of Status" (CFS-414) to the Adoption Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit, within five (5) working days of receiving notification of approval to report approval of the placement.
- Assume primary case management once written notification of approval has been received.

PROCEDURE (VIII-F4): When a Foster Parent, Kinship Foster Parent or Relative Files a Petition to Adopt Without Prior Knowledge or Consent of DCFS

The **County Supervisor** or **Adoption Specialist**, when learning about the petition, will:

- Notify immediately the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor and OCC Attorney and follow-up with written notification.

The **County Supervisor** will:

- Arrange a staffing to determine if adoptive placement is appropriate to consider.
- Submit the results and recommendations from the staffing to the Area Manager.
- Direct staff to follow procedures outlined above.
- Work with the OCC Attorney in regard to pending litigation if it appears the foster parent, kinship foster parent or relative would not be a suitable adoptive parents for the child.
- Notify the Adoption Specialist if information regarding other prospective adoptive families for the child is needed.

PROCEDURE (VIII-F5): Post-Placement Services

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Provide casework counseling, support and referral to needed resources and services until the adoption is finalized.
- Visit (no less than twice a month in the home) and make contacts as needed with the family until the adoption is finalized.
- Document in narrative the reasons an adoption has not been legally finalized within two (2) months of the adoption placement date and set a time frame for finalization.
- Document in narrative, place and dates of post-placement contacts, activities, progress, concerns, etc.
- Send copies of the documentation to the Family Service Worker, Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor.
- Develop a "Case Plan" (CFS-6010) within thirty (30) calendar days of written notification to the foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative approving the application for adoption.
- Notify the foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative of the date for a judicial review.
- Recommend initiation of procedures to finalize the adoption upon receipt of approval of the adoption by the designated Adoption Supervisor and approval of adoption subsidy, if applicable, if the child has resided with the foster parent, kinship foster parent or relative for at least six (6) months.
- Inform the family about post-adoption services (provide brochure).

**PROCEDURE (VIII-F6): Disruption of Foster Parent, Kinship
Foster Parent or Relative Adoption**

If disruption (after adoption has become legalized/finalized) of an adoptive placement is imminent, the family's **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Provide appropriate services to preserve the family and prevent disruption, if applicable.
- Notify the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor, County Supervisor, Family Service Worker, OCC Attorney and attorney ad-Litem.
- In CHRIS:
 - Document the reason for disruption in the adoption case in the Contact screen
 - Continue the adoption subsidy in the adoption case until adoptive parent's rights are terminated.
 - Remove check in "In Household" on the adopted child's Client General Information Screen. Also, update the Living Arrangement grouping on this screen to show child is now in a foster care setting.
- If disruption is due to abuse/neglect:
 - the child maltreatment allegation must be reported to the Child Abuse Hotline where a referral will be entered into CHRIS and accepted for investigation.
 - Investigator will initiate the investigation and the child will be placed in DHS custody opening a new child protective service case from the Case Connect screen in the referral accepted for investigation. Connect this new child protective service case to the adoption case by entering the child protective service case number in the Make Association field in the Adoption case.
- Schedule and conduct a staffing to include those listed above and the foster parents, kinship foster parent(s) or relative any age appropriate child and any other significant individuals.
- Return case management responsibility to the Family Service Worker of the initiating county and transfer primary worker designation in CHRIS back to the Family Service Worker if it is not the plan to immediately select another adoptive family, and disruption occurs. Return the child's paper record back to the Family Service Worker within five working days of the disruption.
- Prepare the adoptive family for the disruption and provide casework counseling and referrals for needed services.
- If adoptive parent's parental rights are terminated on child:
 - End-date the adoption subsidy in the Adoption Subsidy screen in CHRIS; and,
 - Close adoption case
- Refer to Policy VIII-G.

PROCEDURE (VIII-F7): Finalization of an Adoption

The **Adoption Specialist** will forward the following to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor when submitting the recommendation to finalize the adoption:

- checklist for Recommendation for Finalization (CFS-432)
- “Change of Status” (CFS-414);
- “Adoption Application” (CFS-400);
- initial adoption assessment of the adoptive family and all updates;
- adoption summary of the child and all updates;
- signed disclosure form;
- post-placement narrative;
- court order terminating parental rights;
- certified birth certificate of child;
- FBI criminal record check if applicable;
- “Adoption Assistance” (CFS-428) if applicable.

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Inform the family of post-adoption services.
- Document in case record narrative the plan of action to resolve barrier to finalizing the adoption (if the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor does not agree with the recommendation). Inform the family of the recommendation.
- Monitor and document the implementation of the plan of action and progress toward achieving the plan.
- Assist OCC Attorney in completing the adoption coupon and securing the fee from the family for an amended birth certificate.
- Forward the child and adoptive family records to the Adoption Services Unit when the adoption is finalized.
- The final decree of adoption shall be entered into the child’s record prior to forwarding any records.
- In CHRIS:
 - Child Protective Service Case:
 - Exit child out of current ‘pre-adoptive’ placement by selecting Adoption as Exit Reason and entering the finalized adoption date as Exit Date.
 - Close child protective service case in Case Summary screen if all children are adopted and no other child protective services are being offered to birth family or siblings.

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- Adoption Case:
 - Open New Adoption Case with adoptive parents and adoptive child as clients.
 - Complete Client General Information screens on all clients; retrieve the adoptive child's characteristics, eligibility and affidavit of disclosure screens from old child protective service case.
 - Complete Adoption Subsidy screens if adoptive parents are receiving an adoption subsidy.
 - Document contacts with adoptive family in Contacts Screen.

The **Area Manager** or **designated Adoption Supervisor** will:

- Assess within five (5) working days the information and recommendation, which has been forwarded by the Adoption Specialist.
- Sign the "Change of Status" (CFS-414) if it is agreed that procedures to finalize the adoption should be initiated.
- Send a copy of the signed CFS-414 to the Adoption Specialist.
- Notify the Adoption Specialist in writing to explain if there is disagreement to initiating the procedures to finalize the adoption.
- Formulate with the Adoption Specialist a plan of action to resolve the barriers to finalizing the adoption.

The **Area Manager** or **designated Adoption Supervisor** will:

- Forward within five (5) working days a packet of information to the OCC Attorney or Private Agency Attorney . This packet will include:
 - the Area Manager's signed consent to the adoption;
 - certified birth certificate of child;
 - termination of parental rights court order;
 - assessment of the adoptive family;
 - child's adoption summary (The child's adoption summary serves as the detailed, written health history and genetic and social history and must be filed with the clerk before the entry of the adoption decree.);
 - "Adoption Application" (CFS-400);
 - "Adoption Assistance" (CFS-428) if applicable;
 - FBI criminal record check if applicable;
 - Post-placement narrative.

PROCEDURE (VIII-F8): Post-Adoption Services

After an adoption has been finalized, the following services may be offered to help preserve adoptive families:

- Adoption subsidy;
- Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry;
- Casework management;
- Information about, and referral to, service providers;
- Respite care;
- Education and training;
- Adoptive parent support groups;
- Resource library;
- Intensive Family Services;
- Family Support Services.

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Arrange these services upon request from the adoptive family.
- Assist the adoptive family in completing forms and in following procedures.
- Document contacts, activities, progress, concerns, etc.

Subsidy Note: Re-evaluations for state adoption maintenance subsidies are not required. However, when state funded subsidies extend beyond one (1) year, or for federally funded subsidies, verification of circumstances to continue the subsidy must be documented annually. To verify a continued need for subsidy in out of state cases the child's school, therapist, physician or clergy can provide verification by submitting a letter which states that the adoptive parent(s) still has the care and responsibility for the child.

- The Adoption Support Specialist will forward a cover memo along with the CFS-431 (Notarized Statement on Eligibility for State Subsidy) to the adoptive parents annually. The cover memo will inform the adoptive parents that the local Adoption Specialist will contact them to schedule a visit.
- The Adoption Support Specialist will forward a copy of the cover memo with the CFS-431 to the local Adoption Specialist concurrently with notice to the adoptive parents.
- The adoptive parents will complete and submit the CFS-431 to the DCFS Adoptions Unit within ten (10) working days of the date of the accompanying cover letter.
- The Adoption Specialist will have annual face-to-face contact with the child or otherwise verify that the child is still with the adoptive family. The adoption specialist should make the face to face contact a positive experience by exploring any needs for post adoption services. The adoption specialist should also inquire as whether the adoptive parents have added the

adoptive child to their medical insurance and if so the family must complete a DCO –662 (Third Party Resource). The Adoption Specialist is responsible for submitting the completed form to the Medical Services Section of the Medical Services Division.

- In CHRIS:
 - Document all contacts, activities, concerns in the Contact screen in the adoption case.

POLICY (VIII-G): DEVELOPMENT OF ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT

The Division provides adoption services to recruit, retain, assess, and prepare adoptive families. The services focus on finding families for children rather than finding children for families. Assessment and preparation of prospective adoptive families are completed according to the need for homes for children. A child is assessed and prepared for adoption. The child's health and safety shall be of paramount concern in the development of the adoptive placement.

Siblings shall be placed together in the same adoptive home. Siblings may be placed separately upon written documentation by a Mental Health Professional that placement of the siblings together would be detrimental to their best interests or is otherwise not possible at the time of placement.

Before placement of a child in the home of the adoptive parent, a home study will be conducted. The home study shall address whether the adoptive home is a suitable home, and shall include a recommendation as to the approval of the petitioner as an adoptive parent.

Before placement for adoption, the Division shall compile and provide to the prospective adoptive parents a detailed, written health history and genetic and social history of the child which excludes information which would identify birth parents or members of a birth parent's family. The information shall be set forth in a document that is separate from any document containing information identifying the birth parents or members of the birth parent's family. The detailed, written health history and genetic and social history shall be identified as such, and shall be filed with the clerk before the entry of the adoption decree. The adoption summary shall serve as the detailed health history, genetic, and social history document. Upon order of the court for good cause shown, the chancery court clerk may tender to a person identified by the court a copy of the detailed, written health history and genetic and social history.

The Division provides pre-placement services to move children into adoptive families in a timely manner and post-placement services to help the family adjust. After finalization, services are available to help preserve adoptive families.

The placement of a child for adoption will not be denied or delayed when an approved family is available outside the jurisdiction responsible for handling the child's case. A fair hearing will be granted to any individual who alleges denial of adoption approval as a result of residing outside the jurisdiction responsible for placing the child.

The juvenile division of circuit court shall retain jurisdiction to issue orders of adoption, interlocutory or final, when a juvenile is placed outside the state of Arkansas.

Adoptive parents, and each member of the household age ten (10) years and older, residing in Arkansas shall be checked with the Child Maltreatment Central Registry. Adoptive parents and each member of the household age ten (10) years and older residing out of state shall provide child Maltreatment Central Registry Checks from their state of residence.

Adoptive parents and each member of the household age fourteen (14) years and older residing in Arkansas shall be checked with the Identification Bureau of the Arkansas State Police for convictions of offenses listed in ACA 9-28-409. Adoptive parents and each member of the household age fourteen (14) years and older residing out of the state shall provide State Police Criminal Record Checks from their state of residence. Out of state adoptive families do not need to do an Arkansas State Police Check if they have never resided in Arkansas. Adoptive parents and each member of

the household age sixteen (16) years and older who have not resided in Arkansas continually for the past six (6) years, shall complete a record check with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The Division will provide documentation in the case record that a criminal record check was conducted on the prospective adoptive parent.

A prospective adoptive parent will not be approved or licensed if, based on a criminal record check, a court of competent jurisdiction has determined that the prospective adoptive parent has been convicted of a felony involving child abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, a crime against a child or children (including pornography), or a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault, or homicide, but not including other physical assault or battery.

A prospective adoptive parent will not be approved or licensed if, based on a criminal record check, a court of competent jurisdiction has determined that the prospective adoptive parent has, within the last five (5) years, been convicted of a felony involving physical assault, battery, or a drug-related offense.

Legal risk adoptive placements may be considered for a newborn that is being relinquished for adoption or for a child whose birth/legal parent has filed an appeal to the termination of parental rights.

All records of any adoption finalized in the state of Arkansas shall be maintained for ninety-nine (99) years.

PROCEDURE (VIII-G1): Recruitment and Retention of Adoptive Applicants

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Publicize the need for adoptive families.
- Publicize the availability and purpose of adoption subsidy.
- Recruit adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom adoptive homes are needed.
- Recruit for placement for specific children when necessary.
- Utilize adoptive families and volunteers in recruitment campaigns.
- Respond within three (3) working days to families wanting to adopt.
- Complete the Adoption Inquiry (CFS-413).
- Provide adoption brochures.
- Support the prospective adoptive parents during inquiry, application, preparation/assessment, approval, waiting for placement, selection, placement and finalization of adoption.
- Explain and discuss the adoption process.
- Complete the adoption preparation/assessment within four (4) to six (6) months (includes pre-service training).

The Adoption Supervisor will:

- Develop, implement and monitor an area-wide adoption recruitment plan.
- Track and monitor adoption inquiries.

The Adoption Unit Manager or designee will:

- Develop, implement and monitor a state-wide adoption recruitment plan.

PROCEDURE (VIII-G2): Criteria for Adoption

The following criteria will be considered in determining the appropriateness of adoptive applicants:

Jurisdiction:

- DCFS will participate in the adoption of a minor only if either the person seeking to adopt the child, or the child, is currently a resident of Arkansas.

Residency Requirements for Adoption in Arkansas:

- See Procedure VIII-F1 for Arkansas residency requirements for adoption.

Age

Applicant is:

- between the age of twenty-one (21) and fifty-five (55) years; or
- between the age of twenty-one (21) and forty (40) years for an infant (up to one year old); and
- a primary caregiver who is at an age so that it can be anticipated that he can parent the child into adulthood.

Marital Status:

- In a two-parent home, the husband and wife shall be joint applicants, each shall actively participate in the approval process, and shall provide verification that they have been married for at least two (2) years. The marriage shall be stable.
- A person who is divorced must provide verification of that divorce and must be divorced for at least one (1) year from the date on the court order.
- A single person may apply to adopt.

General Physical and Mental Health:

- Members of the household do not have a health condition or disability that would interfere with the family's ability to parent the child. Each member of the household shall have a physical examination by a physician within six (6) months prior to the approval of the adoption assessment on the prospective adoptive family, and annually thereafter until placement of a child.

Housing:

- Space is adequate to promote health and safety.
- All firearms are maintained in a secure, locked location.
- All water hazards and dangerous pets will be assessed.
- Children of opposite sexes will have their own separate bedrooms except for infants (up to one year old).
- Water is provided by public water system or approved by the Department of Health.

Criminal Background Check:

- Members of the household fourteen (14) years of age or older must agree to a local police and a State Police background check and must have no history of convictions for offences listed in ACA § 9-28-409. (See Procedure VIII-F1 for a listing.)
- In addition, applicants and all members of their household age sixteen (16) years or older must agree to a FBI Criminal Record Check if he has been a resident of the state for less than six (6) years. Out-of-state adoptive families do not need to do an Arkansas State Police Check if they have never resided in Arkansas. Adoptive parents and each member of the household age fourteen (14) years and older residing out-of-state shall provide state police criminal record checks from their state of residence. A FBI check is not required if applicant has resided in the state for six (6) years or longer.
- Any person who is found guilty of or pleads guilty to an excluded criminal offense pursuant to ACA § 901-28-409(e)(1) shall be excluded as an adoptive parent.

Central Registry Check:

- Members of the household ten (10) years of age or older must agree to a Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check in his state of residence and any state of residence in which the person has lived for the past six (6) years, and in the person's state of employment, if different. The person must have no history of true abuse and/or neglect.
- Adoptive parents and each member of the household age ten (10) years old or older, shall repeat the check every year until the adoption decree has been issued. Adoptive parents, and each member of the household age ten (10) years or older, residing out of state shall have a Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check, if available, in their state.

Resources:

- The applicant must have sufficient resources to meet the financial, medical, physical, educational, emotional and shelter needs of the child. Adoption subsidy may be a resource for a child who meets the eligibility criteria. Verification of income/employment is required.

Pre-Service Training:

- Completion of adoption pre-service training.

When exception to the eligibility criteria are requested, the **Adoption Specialist** will:

Request exception to the eligibility criteria in writing to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor. The Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor will make a decision and notify the Adoption Specialist in writing within five (5) working days of receiving the request. If the criteria is required by the Minimum Licensing Standards for Child Welfare Agencies, the request must be approved by the Area Manager or designated adoption supervisor and then forwarded to the Assistant Director of Community Services and Division Director for approval. If approved by the Division Director, the request must be forwarded to the Child Welfare Licensing Coordinator for a decision of alternative compliance. The decision must be given in writing and filed in the case record. Alternative compliance with the standards required by the Minimum Licensing Standards for Child Welfare Agencies may be granted if the alternative form of compliance offers equal protection of the health, safety and welfare to children and meets the basic intent of the requirement for which the alternative compliance is sought.

- Discuss the decision with the applicant.

PROCEDURE (VIII-G3): Application for Adoption

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Assess and prepare the adoptive applicants for adoption.
- Refer applications from friends, relatives, and DHS employees to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor.
- Provide an interview with a prospective adoptive applicant or a meeting with a group of prospective adoptive applicants within thirty (30) working days of initial contact.
- Notify Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor if this time frame cannot be met.

The **Area Manager** or **designated Adoption Supervisor** will:

- Decide who will assess and prepare an adoptive applicant if there is a conflict of interest.

The **Adoption Specialist** will share the following information during the adoption inquiry interview or meeting:

- The adoption program is child focused, and the family who will best meet the child's individual needs will be selected.
- Application approval does not guarantee placement.
- A child's health and safety are paramount in the development of an adoptive family for a child.
- The completed adoption assessment on the family is the basis for selection.
- Priority is given to completing an adoption assessment on families for children with special needs who are waiting for placement.
- Adoption Specialist's role and responsibilities;
- adoption process;
- assessment and preparation process and time frames;
- reasons children enter Out-of-Home Placement and are legally freed for adoption;
- explanation of children with special needs;
- eligibility criteria for adoption;
- adoption subsidy;
- discussion of children currently awaiting placement (have photo-listing available);
- legal procedures;
- adoption registry and "Adoption Information Registry Guide" (PUB-113).

The **Adoption Specialist** may provide the following forms during the interview or group meeting:

- “Adoption Application” (CFS-400)
- “Adoption Questionnaire” (CFS-409)
- “Adoption Fact Sheet” (CFS-401)
- “Family Assessment Information (CFS-405)
- “State Adoptions Criminal Record Check” (CFS-342B) and release for local law enforcement check for each member of the household who is fourteen (14) years of age or older, and a FBI criminal record check on each adult applicant who has not resided in the state for at least six (6) years.
- “Request for CPS Central Registry Check” (CFS-316) for members of the household who are ten (10) years of age or older.
- “Request for Health Department Services” (CFS-455), if applicable.
- “General Medical Form - Adoption” (CFS-404) on each member in the household and completed within six (6) months of approving the adoption assessment on the prospective adoptive family.

PROCEDURE (VIII-G4): Assessment and Preparation of Adoptive Applicants

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Set up pre-service training for the applicants.
- Make at least two visits in person with the prospective adoptive family with at least one visit in the home.
- Have a separate, face-to-face interview with each prospective adoptive parent.
- Set up pre-service training for the applicants.
- Interview each household member separately who is ten (10) years of age or older.
- Ask the adoptive applicant to complete a photograph album.
- Provide information about the following to the adoptive applicant:
 - parenting children with special needs;
 - the importance of a child’s birth family and out-of-home placement history;

- child maltreatment;
 - separation and attachment;
 - child development;
 - disabilities;
 - support systems;
 - resources to meet a child's special needs;
 - disruption of an adoption;
 - adoption related issues.
- Require a professional assessment of an applicant's ability to parent, if needed. It may be necessary for the adoptive applicant to pay for that assessment.

PROCEDURE (VIII-G5): Narrative Summary of Assessment and Preparation

Upon completion of assessment and preparation, the **Adoption Specialist** will prepare a narrative summary [refer to desk guide and "Minimum Licensing Standards for Child Welfare Agencies" (PUB-04)] about the adoptive applicants.

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Submit the narrative summary and written recommendation, all required forms and references to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor within forty-five (45) days of the final home visit.
- Notify the applicant in writing if this packet cannot be completed within sixty (60) days of the final home visit and explain the reason.
- Send a copy of this notification to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor.
- Evaluate with Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor to determine whether to proceed with approving the applicant if there are any concerns.
- Explain the reasons for denial in a personal interview and refer for professional services if indicated.
- Send a copy of this narrative summary, written notification of approval, all required forms, reference letters, and photograph album to the Adoption Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit when an application is approved.

The **Area Manager** or **designated Adoption Supervisor** will:

- Determine the approval or denial of the adoptive applicant.
- Notify the adoptive applicant in writing of the approval or denial within fifteen (15) days of receiving the narrative summary and related information from the Adoption Specialist.

- In CHRIS:

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- Upon approval of the adoptive applicant, enter the new adoptive family in CHRIS by completing the Resource screens to obtain a Resource Provider Number. Also, the Vendor Maintenance Form - F10021 must be completed and sent to AASIS as soon as possible.
 - Explain in writing the reason for a denial and the internal review procedures.
 - Notify the adoptive applicant in writing if a decision cannot be made within sixty (60) days of the final home visit and explain the reason. Send a copy of the notification to the Adoption Specialist.
 - Return the narrative summary and entire record to the Adoption Specialist with a copy of the written approval or denial notification.

PROCEDURE (VIII-G6): Re-evaluation of Approved Adoptive Applicant's Record

If an approved applicant has not had a child placed within one (1) year, the **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Visit in the home and ascertain changes in the situation and assess the family's continued interest in adoption.
- Update the narrative summary and record annually from the date in the approval letter until a child is placed.
- Submit within forty-five (45) days from the home visit a packet to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor to include:
 - Narrative summary with recommendation;
 - "Adoption Questionnaire" (CFS-409);
 - "General Medical Form-Adoption" (CFS-404s) on each member of the household;
 - "State Adoptions Criminal Record Check" (CFS-342Bs) and releases for local police checks signed by household members who are fourteen (14) years of age or older;
 - "Request for CPS Central Registry Check" (CFS-316s) signed by household members who are ten (10) years of age or older.
 - "Request/Consent for Health Department Service" (CFS-455), if applicable.
 - "Change of Status" (CFS-414).
- Send a copy of the narrative summary, all required forms and written notification of approval to the Adoption Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit when a re-evaluation is approved.

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- In CHRIS:
 - Complete the Resource Evaluation Screen on the adoptive family.
 - Complete the Contact Screen on all activities concerning re-evaluation process.
 - Update the Resource Household Members screens especially the Criminal Record Checks and the Central Registry Checks.
 - Complete the Resource Contracts/Status screen to enter the new Home Study re-evaluation date and Status of the approved home study and Request for Approval.
 - If the approved applicant experiences any major changes (e.g., marriage, divorce, separation, or changes in health, residence or family composition), the Adoption Specialist will re-evaluate the family prior to placement of the child. The Adoption Specialist will not wait for the annual re-evaluation. An additional home visit is required if there has been a change of residence. Completion of new forms, listed above, will be necessary depending on the type of change. A new narrative summary with a recommendation is also required.

The **Area Manager** or **designated Adoption Supervisor** will:

- Refer to Procedure VIII-G5.
- In CHRIS:
 - Review the Resource Evaluation screen on adoptive family.
 - Review and approve the new Home Study and Status on the Contracts/Status screen on adoptive family.

PROCEDURE (VIII-G7): Selection of an Adoptive Family

The **Family Service Worker** will:

- Notify Adoption Specialist of staffings that address the permanency plan of adoption. (See Procedure VI-A2 “Concurrent Planning”.)
- Notify the Adoption Specialist within two (2) working days of the court hearing that termination of parental rights with power to consent to adoption has been granted if the Adoption Specialist was not at the hearing.
- Assure prior to the permanency planning staffing that the child’s out-of-home placement record is up to date and that all attachments which are required for an adoption packet (Appendix II-B) are in the child’s record. These will be copied and forwarded to the Adoption Specialist within three (3) working days after the permanency planning hearing.
- Send additional attachments to the Adoption Specialist once the initial adoption packet is completed in order to maintain current information until a child is placed with an adoptive family.
- Document in the child’s out-of-home placement record and in CHRIS the efforts to secure needed attachments and the reason for an attachment not being available.
- Provide information requested by the Adoption Specialist in the preparation of the child’s adoption summary and in the selection of an adoptive family.

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- Place siblings together in the same adoptive home. Separate siblings by placement only upon written determination by a Mental Health Professional that placement of the siblings together would be detrimental to their best interest or is otherwise not possible at the time of initial placement.
 - Continue to prepare the child for adoption.
 - In CHRIS:
 - Complete the Recommendation for Termination of Parental Rights screen and the Termination of Parental Rights screen to document the dates, Notice Type and Outcome of Hearing.

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Determine prior to the ninety (90) day, six (6) months, and eleven (11) months staffings if there is a resource of approved adoptive applicants to consider for a child who may have a permanent plan of adoption (enter characteristics of child into the computer matching system to obtain listing of approved adoptive applicants). If there is not an adequate resource of approved adoptive applicants, the Adoption Specialist will initiate generalized recruitment for an adoptive family who may be interested in adopting a child with similar characteristics.
- Prepare the child's adoption packet (adoption summary and attachments -- see Appendix II-A and II-B) within thirty (30) days from the permanency planning hearing.
- In CHRIS:
 - Complete the Adoption Characteristics section in the Child's Characteristic's Screen in the child's child protective service case.
- Enter characteristics of the child into the computer matching system, Adoption Data Matching (CFS-468), within five (5) working days from the court hearing that terminated parental rights to obtain a listing of approved and registered adoptive applicants from in and out-of-state.
- Contact the Adoption Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit, to request adoption assessments on the approved adoptive applicants.
- Decide within ten (10) working days from receiving the listing and adoption assessments if recruitment of an adoptive family is needed.
- Assist the Family Service Worker in preparing the child for adoption.
- Complete and maintain an Individualized Recruitment Plan (CFS-433) written recruitment plan if an appropriate adoptive family is not available.
- Send the following to the Adoption Coordinator if a photo-listing and website registration of the child is needed: ten close-up color photographs, adoption summary, special evaluations if applicable, the Adoption Recruitment Agreement (CFS-467) if ten (10) years or older and a draft of the completed registration page.
- Notify the Adoption Coordinator in writing if registrations are needed on available, national adoption exchanges.

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- Monitor and document recruitment activities on the Individualized Recruitment Plan (CFS-433).
 - Enter characteristics of the child into the computer matching system Adoption Data Matching (CFS-468) on a consistent basis if the initial listing did not result in the selection of an appropriate adoptive family.
 - Update the child's adoption summary every six (6) months until an appropriate adoptive family is selected and assure that attachments are updated. Send a copy of the updated adoption summary and special evaluations to the Adoption Coordinator if the child has a photo-listing, website and/or adoption exchange registration. Send a copy of the updated summary to the child's Family Service Worker.
 - Send ten (10) color photographs every twelve (12) months to the Adoption Coordinator to update a child's registration in the photo-listing and website.
 - Assure compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act, if applicable.
 - Consult with the Family Service Worker, the family's Adoption Specialist and other appropriate DCFS staff and professionals involved with the child in the selection of an adoptive family. Schedule and conduct a staffing, if applicable.
 - Select the most appropriate approved adoptive applicant for the child consistent with the child's needs. Ensure the applicant's ability to meet the special needs of the child. Refer to desk guide and "Minimum Licensing Standards for Child Welfare Agencies" (PUB-04). Document the selection by completing the Selection of Adoptive Family (CFS-470).
 - Send the completed Selection of Adoptive Family (CFS-470) to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor within ten (10) working days of receiving the assessments of approved adoptive applicants for a child who does not have a special need(s) and within thirty (30) working days for a child with a special need(s). Attach a copy of the child's adoption summary and the selected family's adoption assessment to the CFS-470).
 - Delete identifying information in the child's adoption packet as it relates to the child's birth/legal parent and extended family. Make a copy of the non-identified adoption packet for the selected adoptive family and one for the family's Adoption Specialist, if different from the child's Adoption Specialist. Upon approval of the selection, complete a Disclosure for Adoption (CFS-471). Forward packets and CFS-471 with a memorandum to the family's Adoption Specialist, if different from the child's Adoption Specialist.
 - The memorandum should include significant information about the child including the need for special resources/services, provide a schedule for pre-placement activities and convey any other significant information that relates to the placement of the child.
 - Send a copy of the memorandum to the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor, Family Service Worker, and OCC Attorney for the child's initiating county.
 - Discuss delays in the selection of an adoptive family with the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor and document reasons for the delay.
 - Determine immediately if another approved adoptive applicant can be selected if the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor, the adoptive family, or child does not agree with a selection. Document if another approved adoptive family cannot be selected and continue recruitment activities.

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- Forward a written notification to the Adoption Specialist for each approved adoptive applicant who has been considered, and provide the reason(s) for the applicant not being selected. The applicant's Adoption Specialist will notify the approved applicant in writing if he had asked to be considered for a child who is registered in the DCFS photo-listing and website but was not selected.
 - Initiate and follow ICPC procedures if an out-of-state approved adoptive applicant is selected.

The **Adoption Coordinator** will:

- Complete, within five (5) working days of receiving the required information, a photo-listing and website registration for a child referred by an Adoption Specialist.
- Coordinate and maintain a photo-listing book and website of children with special needs to be distributed to each Adoption Specialist.
- Complete, within five (5) working days of receiving the required information, a registration on an available adoption exchange for a child referred by an Adoption Specialist.
- Send to an Adoption Specialist within three (3) working days names of prospective adoptive families who respond to recruitment activities.
- Coordinate and maintain the computer matching system to assist in the selection of an adoptive family.
- Maintain the file for adoption assessments of approved adoptive applicants who reside within the state and out-of-state.
- Maintain the file for photograph albums of approved adoptive applicants and send an album to a child's Adoption Specialist's at the time an adoptive family is selected.
- Forward to the Adoption Specialist within three (3) working days of receiving notification, the assessments of approved adoptive applicants to determine if there is an appropriate family for a child.
- Provide technical assistance on recruitment and selection of adoptive families.

The **Area Manager** or **designated Adoption Supervisor** will:

- Assess the child's adoption packet, the assessment of the approved adoptive applicant, and the Selection of Adoptive Family (CFS-470) from the Adoption Specialist and determine the appropriateness of the selection within ten (10) working days.
- Document the determination to approve or deny the selection on the Selection of Adoptive Family (CFS-470) from the Adoption Specialist and explain in writing the reason(s) for a denial.
- Return all information to the Adoption Specialist.

PROCEDURE (VIII-G8): Disclosure, Pre-Placement, and Placement Activities

After the selection of an adoptive family has been approved, the child's **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Continue to assist the Family Service Worker in preparing the child for adoption.
- Assist the Family Service Worker in preparing the child to meet the selected adoptive family (including the presentation of the family's photograph album) after the adoptive parents have signed the disclosure form.
- In CHRIS:
 - Complete the Affidavit of Disclosure in the child's child protective service case once an adoptive family has been selected.
 - Document all contacts, visits, activities, progress, concerns in the Contact Screen in the child's protective service case.
- Arrange and conduct pre-placement visits between the child and the selected adoptive family. There must be at least three pre-placement visits for a child who is two (2) years of age or older. These visits shall not be scheduled until the selected adoptive parent(s) have signed the disclosure form.
- Supervise visits of the child with the selected adoptive family when the visits are in the child's locale.
- Review information about the child with the selected adoptive family and answer questions.
- Provide support to the selected adoptive family.
- Assess the acceptance and development of a relationship between the selected adoptive family and the child.
- Remain in contact with the adoptive family's Adoption Specialist.
- Coordinate times, dates, places, and activities for the pre-placement visitation schedule with the family's Adoption Specialist and child's Family Service Worker.
- Arrange any needed appointments with the Family Service Worker for the selected adoptive family to meet with special providers, i.e., mental health counselors, doctors, school personnel, etc.
- Assess the child's wardrobe. Arrange purchases of any additional clothing with the Family Service Worker.
- Arrange with the Family Service Worker a physical exam and developmental assessment by a physician within thirty (30) days prior to adoptive placement and completion of the "Health Screening" (CFS-366).
- Present and explain the Legal Risk Adoption Placement Agreement (CFS-420) to the selected adoptive parent(s) if a legal risk adoptive placement is planned. Secure the adoptive parent's(s) signature on the CFS-420 prior to placement.

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- Document dates of pre-placement visits, contacts, activities, progress, concerns, etc. and send a copy to the family's Adoption Specialist, Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor, Family Service Worker, and OCC Attorney for the child's initiating county.

The **Adoptive Family's Adoption Specialist** will:

- Review, discuss and present to the selected adoptive parent the child's non-identifying adoption packet and Disclosure for Adoption (CFS-471) and document in narrative.
- Assist in assessing appropriateness of the selection.
- Secure the signature of the selected adoptive parent on the CFS-471.
- Give the selected adoptive parent a copy of the CFS-471.
- Advise the child's Adoption Specialist of the family's interest in adopting the child.
- Coordinate with the child's Family Service Worker and Adoption Specialist a pre-placement visitation schedule.
- Supervise visits of the child with the selected adopted family when visits are in the family's area.
- Discuss and coordinate with the selected adoptive parent resources (adoption subsidy, counseling, medical, educational services, etc.) which a child may need.
- Document dates of contacts, activities, progress, concerns, etc., and send a copy to the child's Adoption Specialist, Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor, Family Service Worker, and OCC Attorney for the child's initiating county.
- Send a completed "Change of Status" (CFS-414) to the Adoption Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit, when the child has been placed.

The **Family Service Worker** will:

- Continue to prepare the child for adoption.
- Prepare the child to meet the selected adoptive family with the assistance of the child's Adoption Specialist after the adoptive parents have signed the Disclosure for Adoption (CFS-471).
- Prepare and support the foster family or out-of-home placement provider for separation and enlist their help with the child.
- Prepare child's school personnel, therapist, and other professionals for the proposed adoption.
- Coordinate with the child's Adoption Specialist times, dates, places and activities for the pre-placement visitation schedule.
- Participate in pre-placement and placement activities and remain involved until the process is completed.
- Assess the feelings and reactions of the child and the foster parents or out-of-home placement provider and share these with the child's Adoption Specialist.

- Provide information about the child to the selected adoptive family.
- Assure that the child's clothing and personal belongings are appropriately prepared and packed for the move to the adoptive family's home.
- Transfer the child's out-of-home placement record (including CHRIS record) to the adoptive family's Adoption Specialist within five (5) working days of the placement date (after pre-placement visits have been completed). The family's Adoption Specialist will assume primary case management responsibility at the time of placement.
- In CHRIS:
 - In the Enter/Exit screen, exit child from current foster home placement selecting Pre-Adoptive Placement and enter child in the adoptive family's home.
 - Update Contact screen, Characteristic Screen, Court Hearing screen and Termination of Parental Rights screen to document all current available information on child.
 - In the Assign/Transfer screen, assign the family's Adoption Specialist as the Primary Responsible Person for case.

The **Foster Parent** or **Out-of-Home Placement Provider** will:

- Help prepare the child for adoption.
- Participate in the pre-placement and placement activities.
- Provide the selected adoptive family with information about the child.
- Assess and report the child's feelings, actions and reactions to the Family Service Worker and/or the Adoption Specialist.
- Encourage and support the child to accept the adoptive family.

PROCEDURE (VIII-G9): Post-Placement Services

The Adoptive Family's **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Provide casework counseling, support, and referral to needed resources/services until the adoption is finalized.
- Visit the adoptive family in their home at least once a week during the first four (4) weeks after placement and at least twice a month in the home until the adoption is finalized.
- Have a private conversation with the age-appropriate child during each visit.
- Process an application for adoption subsidy, if applicable, prior to recommending finalization of the adoption. (Refer to FSPP Policy VIII-H.)
- Document place and dates of contacts, activities, progress, concerns, etc., and send a copy to the Family Service Worker, Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor, child's Adoption Specialist, and OCC Attorney for the child's initiating county.
- Develop a "Case Plan" (CFS-6010) within thirty (30) days of the child's placement.
- Notify the pre-adoptive parent of the date for a judicial review.
- Establish time frame for finalization of the adoption, and document the reasons the adoption has not been finalized within six (6) months.
- Inform the family about post-adoption services (provide brochure).
- In CHRIS:
 - Document all adoption post placement services in the Contact Screen of child's protective service case.
 - Complete Case Plan Treatment Goal screens when case plan has been revised within thirty days of placement.
 - Complete the Court Hearing screens on all judicial reviews.

PROCEDURE (VIII-G10): Disruption of Adoptive Placement

If a disruption of an adoptive placement is imminent before the final decree, the family's **Adoption Specialist** will provide appropriate services to preserve the family and prevent disruption, if applicable.

- Notify immediately the Area Manager or designated Adoption Supervisor. From the initiating county notify the County Supervisor, Family Service Worker, Adoption Specialist, OCC Attorney and Attorney ad litem.
- Schedule and conduct a staffing to include those listed above and the adoptive parent(s), age appropriate child and any other significant individuals.
- Return the following case management responsibilities to the initiating county Family Service Worker if there is no plan to immediately select another adoptive family and disruption occurs:

- Primary case management responsibility for the case.
- Primary information management responsibility in CHRIS.
- The child's paper record within five (5) working days of the disruption.
- Prepare the family for disruption and provide casework counseling and referrals for needed services.
- In CHRIS:
 - Document the staffing, reason for disruption, and all contacts with adoptive family in the Contacts screen.
 - Exit child from current adoptive home placement selecting Placement Resource Requested Removal or Child Requested Change of Placement in the Enter/Exit screen.
 - Transfer the case back to the last Primary Assigned Family Service Worker in the Assign/Transfer screen.

PROCEDURE (VIII-G11): Finalization of an Adoption

Refer to FSPP Procedure VIII-F7.

POLICY (VIII-H): ADOPTION SUBSIDY

The Division provides a federal or state funded adoption subsidy as a service to assist in making adoption possible for a child, who, with special needs, might not otherwise be adopted and for whom a family is not readily available.

A special needs child is defined as a child who is free for adoption and has severe medical or psychological needs that require ongoing rehabilitation or treatment. Other children may be eligible for adoption assistance under this category if they belong to a group of children for whom the Division does not have an adequate resource of approved applicants to provide a pool of available waiting adoptive families. These children include:

- a Caucasian child nine years or older,
- a healthy child of color who is two years or older,
- or a member of a sibling group of three or more being placed together,
and the child is:
 - legally free for adoption with parental rights terminated,
 - under eighteen years old and whose adoption has not been finalized prior to approval of the subsidy,
 - (for the purposes of a State Subsidy only), in DHS custody, or
 - a member of the R.T. Class, or
 - (For the purposes of private and independent adoptions only), who is SSI eligible at the time the adoption petition is filed.

Children at high risk for the development of a serious physical, mental, or emotional condition may be considered special needs if documentation of the risk is provided by a medical professional specializing in the area of the condition for which the child is considered at risk, but no subsidy payment will be made without documentation that the child has developed the actual condition.

Adoption subsidies can be funded through federal Title IV-E adoption assistance or state funds depending on the child's eligibility.

Adoption assistance payments may be made to parents who adopt a child with special needs. A child will not be considered special needs unless:

- The state has determined the child cannot or should not be returned to the home of his parents;
- The state has determined that a specific factor or condition exists with respect to the child (such as ethnic background, age or membership in a minority or sibling group; or the presence of factors such as medical conditions or physical, mental, or emotional disabilities) because of which it is reasonable to conclude that such a child cannot be placed for adoption

without providing adoption assistance or medical assistance under Title XIX; and

- A reasonable, but unsuccessful, effort has been made to place the child without providing assistance except where it would be against the best interest of the child due to such factors as the existence of significant emotional ties with prospective adoptive parents while in the care of such parents as a foster child.

For the purpose of this policy, "AFDC" refers to the AFDC program as in effect 7-16-1996.

There are four ways that a child can be eligible for title IV-E adoption assistance:

1. The child is AFDC-eligible and meets the definition of a child with special needs.

Adoption assistance eligibility that is based on a child's AFDC eligibility is predicated on a child meeting the criteria for such both at the time of removal and in the month the adoption petition is initiated. At the time adoption proceedings were initiated the child must have been removed from the home of a specified relative as a result of a judicial determination to the effect that continuation therein would be contrary to the welfare of the child. In addition, the special needs determination must be made prior to finalization of the adoption.

2. The child is eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits and meets the definition of a child with special needs.

A child is eligible for adoption assistance if, at the time the adoption petition is filed, the child meets the requirements for title XVI SSI benefits, and prior to the finalization of the adoption is determined by the state to be a child with special needs. There are no additional criteria that a child must meet to be eligible for title IV-E adoption assistance when eligibility is based on a special needs child meeting SSI requirements. Specifically, how a child is removed from his home or whether the state has responsibility for the child's placement and care is irrelevant in this situation. The child's eligibility for SSI benefits must be established no later than at the time the adoption petition is filed.

3. The child is eligible as a child of a minor parent and meets the definition of a child with special needs.

A child is eligible for title IV-E adoption assistance in this circumstance if:

- The child's parent is in foster care and receiving title IV-E foster care maintenance payments that cover both the minor parent and the child at the time the adoption petition is initiated, AND
- Prior to the finalization of the adoption, the child of the minor parent is determined by the state to meet the definition of a child with special needs.

There are no other additional criteria that must be met in order for the child to be eligible for title IV-E adoption assistance if the child's eligibility is based on his minor parent's receipt of foster care while placed with the minor parent in foster care.

As with SSI, there is no requirement that a child must have been removed from the home as a result of a judicial determination. However, if the child and minor parent have been separated in foster care prior to the time of the adoption petition, the child's eligibility for title IV-E adoption assistance must be determined based on the child's current and individual circumstances.

4. The child is eligible due to prior title IV-E adoption assistance eligibility and meets the definition of a child with special needs.

In the situation where a child is adopted and receives title IV-E adoption assistance, but the adoption later dissolves or the adoptive parents die, a child may continue to be eligible for title IV-E adoption assistance in a subsequent adoption. The only determination that must be made by the state prior to the finalization of the subsequent adoption is whether the child is a child with special needs. Need and eligibility factors must not be re-determined when such a child is subsequently adopted because the child is to be treated as though his circumstances are the same as those prior to his previous adoption. Since title IV-E adoption assistance eligibility need not be re-established in such subsequent adoptions, the manner of a child's removal from the adoptive home, including whether the child is voluntarily relinquished to an individual or private agency, is irrelevant.

If eligible, the Division will make adoption assistance payments to adoptive parents in amounts so determined through an adoption assistance agreement. The amount of such payment:

- Will take into account the circumstances of the adopting parents and the needs of the child being adopted;
- May be adjusted periodically with the concurrence of the adoptive parents to reflect changing circumstances; and
- May not exceed the foster care maintenance payment, which would have been paid during the period if the child with respect to whom the adoption assistance payment is made had been in a foster home.

In determining eligibility for State funded adoption assistance payments, there is an income eligibility requirement (means test) for the adoptive parents. There is no means test for determining eligibility for federal Title IV-E adoption assistance payments.

Adoption assistance payments may be terminated if it is determined that:

- The child has attained the age of 18 (or the age of 21, where the state determines that the child has a mental or physical disability which warrants the continuation of assistance), or
- The parents are no longer legally responsible for the support of the child, or
- The child is no longer receiving support from the adoptive parents.

The adoptive parents are required to inform the Division of circumstances that would make them ineligible for adoption assistance payments or eligible for adoption assistance payments in a different amount.

An Adoption Assistance Agreement, a written binding agreement between the adoptive parents and the Division, must be in place prior to the finalization of the adoption.

The Adoption Assistance Agreement must: (1) be signed by the adoptive parents and the Division and be in effect before adoption assistance payments are made under Title IV-E, but no later than the finalization of the adoption; (2) specify the duration of the agreement; (3) specify the amount of the adoption assistance payment (if any) and the nature and amount of any other payments, services and assistance to be provided (including non-recurring adoption expenses in agreements that became effective on or after January 1, 1987, for expenditures incurred by the parents on or after that date); (4) specify the child's eligibility for Title XIX and Title XX; (5) specify, with respect to agreements entered into on or after October 1, 1983, that the agreement remains in effect regardless of the state of residence of the adoptive parents; (6) contain provisions for the protection of the interests of the child in case the adoptive parents and child should move to another state while the agreement is in effect; and (7) for agreements entered into on or after October 1, 1983, if needed service specified in the agreement is not available in the new state of residence, the state making the original assistance payment remains financially responsible for providing the specified service(s). However, in cases of unknown medical and psychiatric conditions that surface after finalization, applications for federally funded assistance may be submitted. After the initial denial of this application occurs, in accordance with federal regulations, the adoptive family may appeal the decision.

The types of situations that would constitute grounds for an appeal include: (1) relevant facts regarding the child, the biological family or the child's background were known, but not presented to the adoptive parents prior to the adoption's finalization; (2) Any subsidy decision which the adoptive parents deem adverse to the child; (3) erroneous determination by the Division that a child is ineligible for adoption assistance, and (4) failure by the Division to advise adoptive parents of the availability of adoption assistance. If an appeal is upheld, the child may be eligible for a IV-E or state subsidized adoption. The effective date of a IV-E retroactive subsidy payment will be the date of finalization or a date subsequent to finalization. Authorized retroactive state funded subsidy payments will be two (2) months prior to the date of the "Application For Adoption Subsidy" (CFS-425).

For foster parent and kinship adoptions, it is not necessary to determine that without subsidy the child would not otherwise be adopted.

Payments for a maintenance subsidy and special services subsidy are to meet the needs of the child. In addition, payments for one-time expenses, known as a non-recurring adoption subsidy, may be obtained in order to reimburse the family for out-of-pocket pre-adoptive/finalization expenditures.

The Division will ensure health insurance coverage for any child determined to be a child with special needs for whom there is an adoption subsidy agreement in effect. Federal Title IV-E Medicaid will be utilized to provide medical coverage for a IV-E eligible child. Medical coverage, for a non-Title IV-E eligible child who has a special need for medical or rehabilitative care, may be provided under the Medicaid category Non-Title IV-E Special Needs Adoptive Child if the child is eligible for state maintenance subsidy and meets specified Medicaid eligibility requirements. (See Medical Services Policy 6590.2 Eligibility Requirements.) If the child does not qualify for Medicaid under federal Title IV-E or Non-Title IV-E Special Needs Adoptive coverage, the family may make application for Medicaid under a different category.

Any eligible child for whom there is an adoption assistance agreement in effect is deemed to be a dependent child and is deemed to be a recipient of AFDC (per AFDC requirements in effect 7-16-1996). Any child of such eligible child will be eligible for such services.

The Division shall access resources as necessary in Arkansas, the region and nation to find adoptive families for children with special needs.

PROCEDURE (VIII-H1): Initial Application for Adoption Subsidy

The Adoption Specialist will:

- Follow the same subsidy-related policy and procedures, including subsidies for non-recurring legal expenses, regardless if the adoption is being handled in-state or out-of-state.
- Ensure close coordination with the other state's adoption worker, if applicable.
- Determine that the child has a special need in relation to adoption planning, is between the age of birth to eighteen (18) years, is in the custody of DHS (for state subsidy only), and is legally free for adoption.

Note: These procedures should be followed for federal IV-E adoption maintenance subsidy and state funded adoption maintenance subsidy. Determine if the child is eligible for federal IV-E adoption maintenance subsidy first. If ineligible, establish eligibility for state funded adoption maintenance subsidy.

- Determine that a reasonable, but unsuccessful, effort has been made to place the child without providing adoption subsidy. Such an effort might include the use of adoption exchanges, referral to appropriate specialized adoption agencies, or other such activities. There are exceptions to this requirement when applying for a IV-E maintenance subsidy. These exceptions are: (1) It would not be in the best interests of the child because of such factors as the existence of significant emotional ties with prospective adoptive parents while in the care of those parents as a foster child, (2) Another circumstance is adoption by a relative, in keeping with the statutory emphasis on the placement of children with relatives.

Exceptions for state maintenance subsidy: In the case of a child who has established significant emotional ties with prospective adoptive parents while in their care as a foster child, the Department may certify the child as eligible for a subsidy without searching for families willing to take the child without a subsidy.

- Review the adoption subsidy program with the adoptive parent, determine what type of adoption subsidies are needed, and complete all application procedures at the same time the adoption assessment is being completed for a foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative adoption and within sixty (60) days of placement for all other adoptions
- Review and sign the "Application for Adoption Subsidy" (CFS-425) after the adoptive parent completes it.
- Request IV-E verification of eligibility from the Eligibility Unit.
- Assist the adoptive parents in completing the "Statement of Income and Resources for Adoption Subsidy" (CFS-426) Attach to the CFS-426 verification of family income when a state funded adoption special subsidy is requested. The CFS-426 is not required for a federal funded adoption maintenance subsidy.
- Review the adoptive parents' health insurance policy if a special subsidy is requested to determine if it will allow for any medical, dental, or psychological costs and, if so, to what extent. Document on the CFS-426.
- Complete the "Determination of Eligibility for Adoption Subsidy" (CFS-427).
- Attach the following to the CFS-427:
 - Verification of the costs for a private attorney to finalize an adoption whether in-state or out-of-state, if applicable.
 - Verification of court costs to finalize an adoption if applicable.

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- Complete the CFS-429 (Special Adoption Subsidy Needs Assessment) to verify the child's medical, dental, psychological, etc. condition by a professional which includes the diagnosis, prognosis, and costs of treatment for one (1) year if a special subsidy is requested.
 - Statement, that lists the child's financial resources (source and amount) other than foster care board payment, if applicable.
 - **Special needs subsidy based on a "high risk" condition** - Children at high risk for the development of a serious physical, mental, or emotional condition may be considered special needs if documentation of the risk is provided by a medical professional specializing in the area of the condition for which the child is considered at risk, but no subsidy payment will be made without documentation that the child has developed the actual condition.
 - Verification from the appropriate agency which explains the child's eligibility for financial benefits (SSI, other types of Social Security benefits, VA, etc.) once the adoption is finalized if applicable (provide the agency with the amount of the adoptive parent's income in order that a statement can be prepared). Once a child has been determined eligible for a federal subsidy, the adoptive parents cannot be rejected for adoption assistance or have payments reduced without their agreement because of their income or resources or the child's resources.
 - Verification from Children's Medical Services (CMS) which explains the child's eligibility for services once the adoption is finalized if applicable (provide CMS with the amount of the adoptive parent's income in order that a statement can be prepared).
 - Utilize the scale that is established and published annually by the Adoption Services Unit. The scale shall be 225% of the yearly published Federal Poverty Level for the state of Arkansas.
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- The adoptive parent's income is an eligibility criterion for state funded adoption maintenance subsidy. The adoptive parent's income is not an eligibility criterion for a federally funded adoption maintenance subsidy (i.e., a child who is IV-E or SSI eligible).
 - Special subsidies are state funded, and the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit, will consider the child's eligibility on a case-by-case basis. The consideration will be based on the information developed during the Adoption Specialist's determination of the child's special needs in relation to adoption planning. The adoptive parent's gross income will be considered as well as other financial resources and health insurance in determining eligibility for a special subsidy
 - Complete the CFS-426 (Statement of Income and Resources for Adoption Subsidy) for all special subsidy requests.

- Utilize the following scale to determine the amount of a full monthly adoption maintenance subsidy based upon the standard foster care board payment:

AGE of CHILD	Amount of MONTHLY Maintenance
Birth through 5 years	\$400.00
6 through 11 years	\$425.00
12 through 14 years	\$450.00
15 through 17 years	\$475.00

- Request a larger monthly adoption maintenance subsidy for the child who has received a higher than standard monthly foster care board payment. A monthly subsidy payment cannot exceed the child's foster care board rate which is in effect at the time a subsidy is approved.
- Note: Special Board Rate formulas and procedures will be used strictly as guides in determining an appropriate nonstandard rate to discuss with the family and to use in negotiating a lower rate (when appropriate). ~~If the family does not agree that the lower rate is acceptable, the rate shall not be reduced.~~
- Provide the following documentation with the initial adoption subsidy application packet:
 - Emergency Petition
 - Emergency Order or other initial custody court order
 - Petition and Order for Termination of Parental Rights with Power to Consent to Adoption
 - "EMS 96 or DCO-93 ", or if applicable, award letter for SSI
 - A copy of the approved selection form for an adoption that is NOT a foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative adoption that documents efforts to place the child without adoption subsidy. (Not required for a foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative adoption.)
- Prepare a narrative entitled "Subsidy Family Profile" about the adoptive family to include:
 - Type of adoption (foster parent, kinship foster parent, non-foster parent, relative);
 - Type of subsidy (maintenance, special, non-recurring, non-IV-E Medicaid);
 - Funding source (federal or state);
 - Child to receive subsidy (first name, age, race, developmental information, description of special needs, problems, limitation, reasons for being in out-of-home placement, and brief description of out-of-home placement history);
 - Adoptive father (name, age, education, employment and health);
 - Adoptive mother (name, age, education, employment and health);

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- Other children in family (adopted, birth, custody, out-of-home placement, name, age, education, and health);
 - Others in household (explain if applicable);
 - Marriage (length and comments about the quality of the relationship);
 - Housing (brief description);
 - Income/resources (sources and amounts, health insurance coverage, etc.);
 - Family and adoptive child relationship (description to include strengths and challenges);
 - Reason for adoption subsidy (explain reason child needs adoption subsidy and reason for the adoptive parent requesting it);
 - Subsidy request (maintenance costs per month and for not more than a year), special subsidy type of service and costs for not more than a year, legal assistance, if the OCC Attorney is requested to finalize the adoption, court costs, etc., other subsidy requests and costs;
 - Recommendation to approve or deny.
- Send completed forms, narrative, documents, and other attachments to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit for a decision to approve or deny the initial adoption subsidy application prior to finalization of the adoption.
 - Meet with the adoptive parent to explain an approval, to review the “Adoption Assistance Agreement” (CFS-428), and to secure the adoptive parent’s signature on the CFS-428 within ten working days from receipt of the agreement. Advise the adoptive parent to notify the local adoption specialist if they decide to add the child to their medical insurance policy.
 - Send the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator and adoptive parent a copy of the signed CFS-428 within three (3) working days upon receipt.
 - Contact the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator in writing within three (3) working days from the meeting if the adoptive parent has a disagreement with the contents of the CFS-428.
 - Meet with the adoptive parent to explain a denial, review the decision, and explain internal review procedures within ten (10) working days from receipt of written notification to deny.
 - Send a copy of the Adoption Petition for and Final Decree of Adoption to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator within five (5) working days upon receipt.
 - In CHRIS:
 - Open a new Adoption Case on adoptive family entering the adoptive parents and adoptive child as clients. If child was in the custody of DHS, you must retrieve the child’s eligibility, medical and characteristics screens from the closed child protective service case by entering the child’s protective service case and client numbers in the child’s General Information screen. If child was not in foster care prior to being adopted, the adoptive child’s Characteristic and Medical screens must be completed to identify the special needs.

- Complete the Adoption screens: General Information screen, Affidavit of Disclosure screen, and Subsidy screen. Request for Approval on subsidy.

The **Adoptive Subsidy Coordinator** will:

- Assess all submitted forms and documentation, approve or deny the adoption subsidy application, and provide written notification to the Adoption Specialist of the decision within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the initial application packet from the Adoption Specialist. Contact the Adoption Specialist if additional information/forms are needed.
- Prepare the CFS-428 if the adoption subsidy application is approved and send to the DCFS Director or designee for signature.
- Send signed CFS-428 to the Adoption Specialist with written instructions.
- Notify the adoptive parent in writing if the application is denied and explain the reason and the internal review procedures and Administrative Fair Hearing procedures.
- Send a copy of the notification of denial to the Adoption Specialist.

NOTE ON RE-DETERMINATIONS/RE-EVALUATIONS:

The federal Title IV-E adoption assistance program does not require re-determinations of a child's eligibility. Although, the Title XIX Medicaid Program and the programs that, in part, may qualify a child initially for adoption assistance, such as AFDC and SSI, require re-determinations, they are unnecessary for the purpose of maintaining a child's eligibility for Title IV-E adoption assistance. Once a child has been determined eligible and is receiving Title IV-E adoption assistance, a state may terminate the assistance only under three circumstances:

1. The child has attained the age of 18 (or if the State determines that the child has a mental or physical disability which would warrant continuation of assistance up to the 21st birthday).
 2. The State determines that the adoptive parents are no longer legally responsible for support of the child.
 3. The State determines that the adoptive parents are no longer providing any support to the child.
- The Adoption Support Specialist must immediately notify the Adoption Specialist at the time the adoption subsidy is terminated. (See procedure VIII-H7 Termination of Adoption Subsidy)

Re-evaluations for state adoption maintenance subsidies are not required. However, when state funded subsidies extend beyond one (1) year, or for federally funded subsidies, verification of circumstances to continue the subsidy must be documented annually. To verify a continued need for subsidy in out of state cases the child's school, therapist, physician or clergy can provide verification by submitting a letter which states that the adoptive parent(s) still has the care and responsibility for the child.

- The Adoption Support Specialist will forward a cover memo along with the CFS-431 (Notarized Statement on Eligibility for State Subsidy) to the adoptive parents annually. The cover memo will inform the adoptive parents that the local Adoption Specialist will contact them to schedule a visit.

- The Adoption Support Specialist will forward a copy of the cover memo with the CFS-431 to the local Adoption Specialist concurrently with notice to the adoptive parents.
- The adoptive parents will complete and submit the CFS-431 to the DCFS Adoptions Unit within ten (10) working days of the date of the accompanying cover letter.
- The Adoption Specialist will have annual face-to-face contact with the child or otherwise verify that the child is still with the adoptive family. The adoption specialist should make the face to face contact a positive experience by exploring any needs for post adoption services. The adoption specialist should also inquire as whether the adoptive parents have added the adoptive child to their medical insurance and if so the family must complete a DCO –662 (Third Party Resource). The adoption specialist is responsible for submitting the completed form to the Medical Services Unit of the Medicaid Division.
- In CHRIS:
 - Complete the Contact screen documenting all activities with the adoptive family.

**PROCEDURE (VIII-H2): SUBSIDY PAYMENTS And SUPPORT For
NON-CUSTODY ADOPTIONS (R.T. Class and SSI Eligible Private
Agency and Independent Adoptions)****ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR R.T CLASS:**

If in the month of initiation for court proceedings leading to removal and the language of “contrary to the child’s welfare to remain in the home” is included in the court order and all other above criteria are met, a child not currently in DHS custody can be eligible for a subsidy.

Services shall be offered to families on whom the Department has filed a dependency-neglect petition when the court has placed the child (ren) in the custody of a relative or other person. Adoption services shall be offered to families who have custody of children due to a dependency and neglect order, if the family requests such services.

Sections 406 and 407 of the Social Security Act allow for IV-E subsidy eligibility, if certain criteria are met, in regards to the method of removal of a child from a home. These criteria are:

- If the child is removed from the home pursuant to a judicial determination, such determination must indicate that it was contrary to the child’s welfare to remain in the home;
- In the month the court proceedings were initiated to remove the child, the child must have been AFDC eligible in the removal home;
- The child must be AFDC eligible in the month in which the adoption proceedings were initiated;
- The state must determine that the child meets the three (3) criteria in the definition of a child with special needs; and
- The adoption assistance agreement is signed prior to the finalization of the adoption.

The Adoption Specialist will:

- Accept and review referrals for non-custody adoptions.
- Forward a request to the Eligibility Unit to determine if the child is eligible for Title IV-E adoption assistance. The request consists of a cover memo indicating that this is a R.T.Class case needing AFDC determination for the initiation of an adoption petition. The request must be submitted within the first five (5) working days of the month. The request must be mailed or faxed to the Eligibility Unit.

The request must include the following information:

- The cover memo requesting the AFDC determination.
- A completed CFS-487. The application must include everyone in the adoptive home at the time the form is signed and all the income and resources for each family member. Include the relationship of the adoptive child to everyone in the adoptive home.

The following is a list of the eligibility factors that must be satisfied for AFDC determinations. Listed for each factor is the information needed to make the determination.

Complete the CFS-487 (Application for Title IV-E Payments/Medicaid) by listing everyone in the adoptive home at the time the form is signed. This includes individuals who may be temporarily absent from the home such as individuals on vacation, away at school, etc. Provide a birth certificate or some other legal document that verifies the custodial blood relatives' relationship to the child.

1. Age Requirement.

Children must be under 18 years of age. **The child's birth certificate must be submitted** to verify age.

2. Citizenship or Alienage Requirement.

Eligible members must be US citizens or lawfully admitted aliens intending to permanently reside in the US. Since this will be child only AFDC determination the birth certificate should verify citizenship.

3. Residence Requirements. The individual(s) must presently reside in Arkansas and intend to make it his home. No specific duration of residence is required. If the applicant has the present intention to make the state his home, his eligibility will not be affected by the fact that he intends to leave the state at some future time. Residence is not affected by temporary absence from the state.

4. Deprivation of Parental Care and Support Requirement.

Submit the TPR court order to satisfy this eligibility requirement.

5. Assignment of Rights to Support to the State.

Since there has been TPR, there is no assignment of rights as there are no legal parents of the child at this time.

6. Cooperation in Child Support Enforcement Activities.

Since there has been TPR, there is no cooperation requirement with OCSE as there are no legal parents of the child at this time.

7. Relationship Requirement and Living with Specified Relative.

TPR has not changed the relationship of the adoptive parent to the child. The relationship does not change until the adoption is finalized.

Degrees of Relationship

The child must be living with a relative who is in one of the following degrees of relationship to the child.

1st degree - Parent.

2nd degree - Grandparent, sibling.

3rd degree - Great-grandparent, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece.

4th degree - Great-great-grandparent, great-uncle, great-aunt, first cousin.

5th degree - Great-great-great-grandparent, great-great-uncle, great-great-aunt, first cousin once removed (i.e. the child of one's first cousin).

Half relationships will be considered the same as full relationships.

Step father, step mother, step brother, step sister.

Spouses of any persons named in the above groups. Such relatives may be considered within the scope of this provision though the marriage is terminated by death or divorce.

Relationship must be verified by birth certificates, baptismal records, Bureau of Vital Statistics Records, other authentic documents, or by written statement of a collateral which provides conclusive evidence that the relative is so related to the dependent child.

Persons Who Must be Included in the Standard of Need - Standard Filing Unit

The following relatives of an AFDC dependent child or a child for whom application is made must be included in the assistance unit with the child if they are living in the home with the child and are otherwise AFDC eligible:

The income and resources of these individuals must be reported and verified as part of the determination.

- The natural or adoptive parent of the child, including an unemancipated minor parent.
- All brothers and sisters of the child who are under age 18, unemancipated, and meet the deprivation of parental care or support requirement. This includes brothers and sisters of half-blood relationships but not step-brothers or step-sisters.

8. Non-Participation in a strike.

No additional documentation needed.

9. Project SUCCESS Requirement.

No additional documentation needed.

10. Social Security Enumeration Requirement.

Submit a copy of the child's Social Security Card if available. If the card is not available ensure that the Social Security Number is documented on the CFS-487.

11. Need Requirement.

In completing the CFS 487, carefully read and answer appropriately each question about the type of income and assets of the child. Since you are the authorized representative for the family's AFDC determination it is critical that these questions are answered as accurately and completely as possible.

- The Eligibility Unit will make the AFDC eligibility determination within five (5) working days of receipt of the completed application and fax the determination to the Adoption Specialist.

NOTE: If the CFS-487 is not completed and all supporting documentation needed is not submitted in a timely manner the eligibility determination cannot be made.

- Notify OCC immediately of the child's eligibility status. If the child is determined IV-E eligible OCC must file the petition for adoption in the same month of the eligibility determination, therefore the
- Follow Policy and Procedure VIII-F (Foster Parent, Kinship Foster Parent and Relative Adoption) in approving the family for adoption.
- Refer the family for "Foster Pride/Adopt Pride" training. The family must complete the training prior to approval.

CRITERIA FOR SSI ELIGIBLE PRIVATE AGENCY AND INDEPENDENT ADOPTIONS

A child who is SSI eligible and is part of an independent adoption (i.e., not in the custody of a public or private agency) is eligible for a Title IV-E Subsidy. Cases in which a child is subsequently adopted who received Title IV-E adoption assistance in a previous adoption that dissolved or in which that adoptive parents died are eligible for Title IV-E adoption subsidy. (See FSPP Policy VIII-H.)

The **Adoption Subsidy Coordinator** will:

- Accept and review referrals for independent adoption and private agency subsidy applications.
- Assess all submitted forms and documentation, approve or deny the adoption subsidy application, and provide written notification to the applicant, the person who arranged the independent adoption or the private agency representative of the decision within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the initial application packet from the Adoption Specialist. Contact the applicant, the person who arranged the independent adoption or private agency representative if additional information/forms are needed.
- Prepare the CFS-428 (Adoption Assistance Agreement) if the adoption subsidy application is approved and send to the DCFS Director or designee for signature.
- Send signed CFS-428 (Adoption Assistance Agreement) to the Applicant and Private Agency representative, if applicable, with written instructions.
- Notify the adoptive parent in writing if the application is denied and explain the reason for denial and the internal review and Administrative Fair Hearing procedures.
- In CHRIS:
- Open a new Adoption Case on adoptive family entering the adoptive parents and adoptive child as clients.
- Complete the adoptive child's Characteristic and Medical screens to identify the special needs.
- Complete the Adoption screens: General Information screen, Affidavit of Disclosure screen, and Subsidy screen. Request the Approval for the adoption subsidy.

PROCEDURE (VIII-H3): Amendment to an Adoption Subsidy

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Follow the same subsidy-related policy and procedures, regardless if the adoption is being handled in-state or out-of-state.
- Ensure close coordination with the other state's adoption worker, if applicable.
- Determine with adoptive parent if an amendment to the existing adoption subsidy is needed. (An amendment may be requested at any time.)
- Determine with adoptive parent what type of adoption subsidy is needed.
- Review and sign the "Application for Adoption" (CFS-425) after the adoptive parent completes it.

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- Assist the adoptive parents in completing the “Statement of Income and Resources for Adoption Subsidy” (CFS-426). Attach verification of family income to the CFS-426 when a state funded adoption special subsidy is requested. The CFS-426 is not required for a federal adoption maintenance subsidy.
 - Review the adoptive parents’ health insurance policy if a special subsidy is requested to determine if it will allow for any medical, dental, or psychological costs and, if so, to what extent. Document the information on the CFS-426.
 - Complete the “Determination of Eligibility for Adoption Assistance” (CFS-427) if a special subsidy is requested.
 - Complete a narrative to address the type of subsidy needed, the source of funding, the reason for the subsidy, the costs, and recommendation.
 - Send the forms, narrative, and any other documents to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator within twenty (20) working days from the initial contact with the adoptive parent.
 - Meet with the adoptive parent to explain an approval, to review the CFS-428 (Adoption Assistance), and to secure the adoptive parent’s signature on the CFS-428 within ten (10) working days from receipt of the agreement.
 - Send the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator and adoptive parent a copy of the signed CFS-428.
 - Send the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator a written notification within three (3) working days from the meeting with the adoptive parent to explain a disagreement with the contents of the CFS-428.
 - Meet with the adoptive parent to explain a denial, review the decision, and explain internal review procedures within ten (10) working days from receipt of the written notification to deny.
 - In CHRIS:
 - If subsidy amendment is approved, change the Subsidy Ending Date on the Adoption Subsidy screen to stop the existing adoption subsidy. Then, click Clear and enter the new amended subsidy with the new Beginning and Ending dates and the subsidy amount. Request the Approval for the amended subsidy amount.

The **Adoption Subsidy Coordinator** will:

- Assess all submitted forms and documentation, approve or deny the amendment and notify the Adoption Specialist of the decision within fifteen (15) working day of receiving the application packet from the Adoption Specialist.
- Contact the Adoption Specialist if additional information/forms are needed.
- Prepare the “Adoption Assistance Agreement” (CFS-428) if the adoption subsidy amendment is approved and send to the DCFS Director for signature.
- Send the completed CFS-428 to the Adoption Specialist with written instructions.
- Notify the adoptive parent in writing if the application is denied and explain the reason and the internal review and Administrative Fair Hearing procedures.
- Send a copy of the notification of denial to the Adoption Specialist.

PROCEDURE (VIII-H4): Reinstatement of Adoption Subsidy

If a child's adoption subsidy has been closed, it may be re-opened if eligibility requirements are met. Refer to Procedure VIII-H1.

PROCEDURE (VIII-H5): Request for Continuation of Federal and State Funded Adoption Maintenance Subsidy after Age Eighteen

In some cases a federal adoption maintenance subsidy or state funded maintenance subsidy may be continued for adoptees eighteen (18) to twenty-one (21) years old. Medicaid, however, cannot be extended past age 18 for state funded subsidies. While the foster care Medicaid cannot be extended beyond the month the child turns eighteen (18), the family may apply for another type of Medicaid.

If the adoptive parent requests that the adoption subsidy be continued past the child's eighteenth birthday, the following criteria must be met:

- The adoptive parent must be receiving a federal or state funded adoption maintenance subsidy prior to the child's eighteenth birthday.
- The child must have applied for and been denied SSI.
- A psychologist, psychiatrist or physician must certify that the child has a mental or physical disability that prevents the child from becoming independent from the adoptive home.
- The Adoption Support Specialist will include the above documentation and recommend whether the adoption subsidy should be continued past the child's eighteenth birthday.
- The Adoption Support Specialist will approve or deny the request for adoption subsidies after age eighteen.
- The Adoption Support Specialist will notify the adoptive parent in writing if the request is denied and explain the reason for denial and procedures for the internal review and Administrative Fair Hearing.
- In CHRIS:
 - If subsidy has been extended, change the Subsidy Ending Date on the Adoption Subsidy screen to continue subsidy past child's eighteenth birthday.

PROCEDURE (VIII-H6): Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA)

A child who is receiving Medicaid as a result of an adoption subsidy may continue to receive the subsidy if the child moves to or from another state.

The Adoption Specialist will:

- Contact the ICAMA Coordinator or refer an adoptive parent to the ICAMA Coordinator in the DCFS Adoption Services Unit.
- Provide the ICAMA Coordinator with the adoptive family's new address, phone number, and the effective date of the move.

The ICAMA Coordinator will:

- Complete the ICAMA forms in relation to a child who is moving from the state and forward the forms to the new state of residence. Forward the following: (1) Form 6.01 (Notice of Medicaid Eligibility/Case Activation), (2) Form 6.02 (Notice of Action), and (3) Form 6.03 (Change in Child/Family Status), if applicable.
- Forward completed ICAMA forms to the Eligibility Unit in relation to a child who moves into the state. Forward the following: (1) Form 6.01 OR a COBRA Letter and (2) a copy of the Adoption Subsidy Agreement.
- Notify the Eligibility Unit via the CFS-495 when an ICAMA child leaves the state of Arkansas, and make documentation in CHRIS.

PROCEDURE (VIII-H7): Termination of Adoption Subsidy

Termination of an adoption subsidy will occur:

- Upon the adoptive parent(s)' request.
- When the child reaches the age of 18. Adoption assistance will be provided until the child is 21 years of age if the child has a mental or physical disability which warrants continuation, and a federal funded subsidy or state maintenance is received. (See VIII-H5.)
- Upon the child's death.
- Upon the death of the adoptive parent(s) of the child (one parent if a single parent family and both in a two-parent family).
- At the cessation of legal responsibility of the adoptive parent(s) for the child.
- If the Division determines that the child is no longer receiving support from the adoptive parent(s).

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Notify the Adoption Support Specialist of any change in the adoptive family's circumstances, which would warrant termination of the adoption subsidy.
- In CHRIS:
 - If adoption subsidy is terminated, change the Subsidy Ending Date on the Adoption Subsidy screen to stop the existing adoption subsidy.
 - If there are other adoptive siblings with existing adoption subsidies:
 - End-Date the adoptive child's Involvement in Case selecting the appropriate reason on the Child's General Information screen.
 - If there are no other adoptive siblings with existing adoption subsidies:
 - Close the adoption case on the Case Summary screen selecting the appropriate reason.

The **Adoption Support Specialist** will:

- Determine if termination of the adoption subsidy is necessary.
- Conduct a staffing with the Manager, Adoption Services Unit.
- Provide written notification to the adoptive parent to explain the reason for the termination of the adoption subsidy and the internal review procedures.
- Provide a copy of the notification to the Adoption Specialist.
- Enter computer data to terminate the adoption subsidy.

PROCEDURE (VIII-H8): Payment for Non-recurring Adoption Expenses and Special Subsidy

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Submit a billing packet to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator for non-recurring adoption expenses within sixty (60) days after the finalization of the adoption.
 - For **non-travel related expenses**, the packet will include the DHS-1914, W-9, original invoice, a copy of the CFS-428 and final adoption decree.
 - For **travel related expenses** the packet will include the TR-1, receipts, a copy of the CFS-428 and the final adoption decree.
 - For payment of a **special subsidy**, the packet will include: DHS-1914, W-9, original invoice, copy of the CFS-428 and the final adoption decree.

The **Adoption Subsidy Coordinator** will:

- Review, code and forward each completed billing packet within ten (10) working days and forward to the manager of the Adoption Services Unit for approval. The Manager of the Adoption Services Unit will forward approved packet to the office of finance for payment within ten (10) working days of receipt from the subsidy coordinator.

POLICY (VIII-I): MUTUAL CONSENT VOLUNTARY ADOPTION REGISTRY

The Division recognizes that some adults who were adopted as children and some birth parents who voluntarily or involuntarily relinquished a child for adoption, as well as relatives within the second degree to the adoptee, may wish to be identified to each other. The Division also recognizes that some adult adoptees, birth parent(s), and/or relatives to the second degree of the adoptee are unwilling to be identified. The Division further recognizes that some adult adoptees, birth parent(s) of the adoptee, adoptive parent(s), or, in the event of their death, guardians of the adoptee may wish to obtain non-identifying information pertaining to the birth family. In order to protect the privacy of those who choose not to be identified and to attempt to meet the needs of those who do wish to be identified and to provide non-identifying information, the Adoption Services Unit administers the Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry in accordance with Act 957 of 1985 and Act 1060 of 1987. The Division will keep records of every adult adoptee and birth parent reunited through the use of the Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry.

A.C.A. §9-9-505 Requires compilations of nonidentifying histories of adoptions be available upon request, throughout the time the agency is required to maintain records, to the following persons only: (a) The adoptive parents of the child or, in the event of death of the adoptive parents, the child's guardian; (b) The adoptee; (c) In the event of the death of the adoptee, the adoptee's children, the adoptee's widow or widower, or the guardian of any child of the adoptee; (d) The birth parent of the adoptee; (e) Any child welfare agency having custody of the adoptee. Any additional nonidentifying information which may have been added on health or on genetic and social history, but which excludes information identifying any birth parent or member of a birth parent's family or the adoptee for any adoptive parent of the adoptee, shall be made available ONLY to the persons listed in this paragraph.

Any affidavits filed for placements on the registry and any other information collected shall be retained for ninety-nine years following the date of registration. Any qualified person may choose to remove his name from the Registry at any time by filing a notarized affidavit with the Registry.

PROCEDURE (VIII-I1): Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry and Related Services

The Registry Administrator will:

- Prepare forms to be shared with administrators of other agencies.
- Prepare monthly, quarterly, or annual demographic reports.
- Host a meeting of other Registry Administrators at least once every twelve (12) months.
- Prepare policies and procedures related to the operation of the Registry.
- Establish office procedures which will assure the confidentiality of the Registry, its records, and identifying information.
- Put the information for the affidavit form for placement on the Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry (MCVAR) at the Department of Human Services Internet website by one of two methods:

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- Print, fill out and send the CFS-434 (MCVAR Affidavit/Registration) to the web site manager, or
 - Fill out the CFS-434 directly on the website electronically.
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- Ensure that information contained in the Registry or obtained by Registry staff consists of non-identifying information only.
 - Send information packets, which have registration requirements and procedures and an affidavit to any person who inquires about registration.
 - Have access to the agency's closed adoption records and to court records limited to the act of verifying a Registry match or for compilation of non-identifying information.
 - Collect fees for registration services and accept affidavits for registration.
 - Provide written notification to qualified registrants within twenty (20) working days as to the status of the initial search of all registrants who wish to be identified.
 - Send notification to match registrants by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery.
 - Determine if non-identifying information is available and if the registrant is eligible to receive it.
 - Provide non-identifying genetic, health and social history of the adoptee within sixty-five (65) working days from the date of registration.
 - Mail non-identifying information to the registrant by certified mail, restricted delivery, return receipt requested.
 - Maintain copies of non-identifying information in a secured location.
 - Keep records of every adult adoptee and birth parent reunited through the use of Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry.
 - Provide a copy of the foster care record to the adoptee upon request. De-identify the names of any reporters of child abuse and/or neglect.
 - Arrange for an adoptee to review his foster care record upon request. This access is NOT available to adoptees who were placed as infants for the sole purpose of adoption.

The Adoption Specialist will:

- Refer any person who inquires about the Registry to the Registry Administrator, Adoption Services Unit.
- Provide a minimum of no less than one (1) hour of counseling to Registry applicants for receipt of identifying information and sign the affidavit to verify the service.

POLICY(VIII-J): INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTIONS

The Adoption Services Unit shall provide assistance with Inter-Country Adoptions.

PROCEDURE (VIII-J1): Inter-Country Adoptions

The **Manager**, Adoption Services Unit, or designee will:

- Respond to inquiries/referrals about inter-country adoptions.
- Provide list of licensed private adoption agencies who will complete adoption assessments for inter-country adoptions.
- Determine if an adoption assessment prepared by a qualified licensed social worker or others designated by the court meet child placement licensing requirements for adoption in Arkansas. (Licensed adoption agencies are exempt from this review.)
- Provide an approval letter to the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service upon request to verify compliance to licensing requirements.
- Maintain permanent adoption files.
- Train staff with licensed private adoption agencies, licensed social workers, and others designated by the court involved with inter-country adoption.

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

Refer inter-country adoption inquiries/referrals to the Manager, Adoption Services Unit or designee.

X. SPECIAL SERVICES

POLICY (X-A): HOME STUDIES AND SUPERVISION

The Division will conduct home studies or provide supervision services when ordered by the juvenile division of the circuit court. The Division will also conduct home studies for cases in which DCFS is a party of the litigation and for Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) cases. A court order to conduct a home study is not required for cases in which DCFS is a party to the litigation nor for ICPC cases.

The Division will not be required to conduct a court ordered home study, investigation or supervision related to private litigation cases (i.e. divorce, custody) unless the court has first determined that the responsible party is indigent.

The following policy statements are in accordance to the Uniform Adoption Act. The Department or any licensed certified social worker shall conduct a home study before placement of a child in the home of the petitioner. Home studies on non-Arkansas residents may also be conducted by the person or agency in the same state as the person wishing to adopt as long as the person or agency is authorized under the law of that state to conduct home studies for adoptive purposes.

The Department of Human Services shall not be ordered by any court, except the juvenile division of circuit court, to conduct a home study, unless:

- The court has first determined the responsible party to be indigent; and
- The person to be studied lives in the state of Arkansas.

The home study shall be prepared and submitted in conformity with regulations promulgated pursuant to the Child Welfare Agency Licensing Act § 9-28-401 et seq., as stated in PUB-04.

Requests for home studies on adoption cases requested from other states will only be conducted through ICPC.

PROCEDURE (X-A1): Guidelines for a Home Study

Upon receipt of a request for a home study, the Services Supervisor will:

- Assign the case to a Family Service Worker or, if it is a request to conduct a non-relative independent adoption study, forward the request to the Adoption Unit, Slot S565 for assignment to an Adoption Specialist.
- Contact OCC if an in-state court ordered home study request is received on a private litigation case that does not contain indigent language indicating the responsible party is unable to pay.

The Family Service Worker will:

- Contact the family by letter to advise of the request to conduct a home study. Enclose with the letter the appropriate forms to be completed by the family: "Home Study/Supervision Client Questionnaire" (CFS-421/1-6), "Request for Central Registry Check" (CFS-316), and "Foster Care Criminal Record Check" (CFS-342A) or "State Adoptions Criminal Record Check" (CFS-342B, whichever is applicable. The family will be advised to return the completed forms to the worker within seven (7) working days.

- Contact the family a second time if the family has not returned the completed forms within the seven-day period. Advise the family that the completed forms must be returned within five (5) working days. If the family does not respond to the second request, the worker will send a letter to the requesting party advising that the family has not responded to efforts to conduct the home study. Completion of the home study should not proceed if the information forms are not completed. Any assistance in completion of the forms should be provided or arranged by the worker in situations of physical or mental disabilities or illiteracy.
- Contact the family to schedule a home interview upon receipt of the completed forms.
- Interview the family. Follow the guidelines for completing a home study as outlined in policy. The home study is to be completed within thirty (30) working days of receipt of the request. Notify the requesting party if additional time will be required to complete the home study.
- Forward the completed home study with a cover letter to the court and the requesting party if different. A copy of the home study will be retained in the county office case file.
- In CHRIS:
 - Enter the family as a Resource by completing the General Information screen, Status screen, and Homes screens.
 - Close the family as a Resource on the General Information screen upon completion of the home study.

PROCEDURE (X-A2): Content of the Home Study

- Purpose of the Home Study: Discuss the basis of the action and primary persons involved.
- Household Composition: The full legal names of everyone residing in the home, birth dates, relationships to one another, and a brief physical description.
- Housing: Address and location, type of structure, length of time at residence, upkeep and housekeeping standards, future residence plans, and sleeping arrangements.
- Income and Expenses: Employment history for the last five (5) years (duration, salary, duties/title, degree of job security, hours), other sources of income, monthly living expenses, outstanding debts, and insurance.
- Health: Current health of each family member, prior illnesses or medical problems, disabilities, clinic or doctor utilized and frequency of use, counseling (when and purpose), and hospitalization for alcohol abuse, drug abuse, or mental illness.
- Education: Family members' educational attainment, future educational plans, parenting classes attended, child's school, child's teacher (verification with school personnel on how the child is doing, academically and behaviorally), child's current school grades, child's educational functioning, any school problems or successes experienced by the child.
- Child Care Arrangements or Plans: Current arrangement or proposed arrangement as it relates to their working hours and income.
- Child Rearing Practices: Purpose of discipline, correction methods, how they show affection, how they handle stress, allowance, chores, and homework.

- Daily Schedule: Routines, sleeping habits, feeding habits, personal hygiene habits and consistency with routine.
- Social History: Highlights and verification regarding action of marriages and divorces, children, relationships' support system, future plans, any significant extended family members not living in the home, and any significant personal, developmental, personality or legal problems.
- Family Activities: Religious interests, social organizations, activities with children, and family roles.
- Collateral and Reference Contacts: Discuss the results of contacts with the "Request for Central Registry Check" (CFS-316), "Request for Criminal Record Check" (CFS-306), school, day care providers, and "Reference Letter for Home Study" (CFS-421/2). Any problems or concerns identified through collateral or reference contacts should be shared when appropriate with the family for clarification and further discussion.
- Impressions, Conclusions and Recommendations: Evaluate the family's situation and ability to provide for a child based on the information obtained during the home study.

PROCEDURE (X-A3): Supervision Record

The Family Service Worker/Adoption Specialist will:

- In CHRIS:
 - Document services delivered and activities conducted on the Services Provided To Resource screen in Resource.
- Maintain a file containing the court order, correspondence, narrative and any forms.

- Abuse shall not include when a child suffers transient pain or minor temporary marks as the result of a reasonable restraint if:
 1. The person exercising the restraint is an employee of an agency licensed or exempted from licensure under the Child Welfare Agency Licensing Act;
 2. The agency has policy and procedures regarding restraints;
 3. No other alternative exists to control the child except for a restraint;
 4. The child is in danger of hurting himself or others;
 5. The person exercising the restraint has been trained in properly restraining children, de-escalation, and conflict resolution techniques; and
 6. The restraint is for a reasonable period of time.
- Reasonable and moderate physical discipline inflicted by a parent or guardian shall not include any act that is likely to cause and which does cause injury more serious than transient pain or minor temporary marks.
- The age, size and condition of the child and the location of the injury and the frequency of recurrence of injuries shall be considered when determining whether the physical discipline is reasonable or moderate.

AGGRAVATED CIRCUMSTANCES--When a child has been abandoned, chronically abused, subjected to extreme or repeated cruelty, sexually abused or a determination by a judge that there is little likelihood that services to the family will result in successful reunification.

CARETAKER -- Parent, guardian, custodian, foster parent, or any person ten (10) years of age or older who is entrusted with a child's care by a parent, guardian, custodian, or foster parent, including, but not limited to, an agent or employee of a public or private residential home, child care facility, public or private school, or any person legally responsible for a child's welfare.

CHILD -- Individual who is under the age of eighteen, married or single; is under the age of twenty-one, married or single, who was adjudicated delinquent under the "Arkansas Juvenile Code" for an act committed prior to the age of eighteen and for whom the court retains jurisdiction; or was adjudicated dependent-neglected under the "Arkansas Juvenile Code" before reaching the age of eighteen and who, while engaged in a course of instruction or treatment, requests the court to retain jurisdiction until the course has been completed.

CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE -- This hotline is maintained by the State Police Crimes Against Families Division, for the purpose of receiving and recording notification made pursuant to the "Child Maltreatment Reporting Act". The Child Abuse Hotline is staffed twenty-four (24) hours per day and has statewide accessibility through a toll-free telephone number.

CHILD CARE INSTITUTION -- A private child care institution, or a public child care institution which accommodates no more than 25 children, and is licensed by the State in which it is situated or has been approved by the agency of such State or tribal licensing authority (with respect to child care institutions on or near Indian reservations) responsible for licensing or approval of institutions of this type as meeting the standards established for such licensing. This definition must not include detention facilities, forestry camps, training schools, or any other facility operated primarily for the detention of children who are determined to be delinquent.

CHILD MALTREATMENT -- Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation or abandonment of a child.

SENDING STATE -- A state which has sent a child to another state for supervision under the provisions of the ICPC.

SEVERE MALTREATMENT -- Sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, acts or omissions which may or do result in death, abuse involving the use of a deadly weapon as defined by the Arkansas Criminal Code § 5-1-101 et seq., bone fracture, internal injuries, burns, immersions, suffocation, abandonment, medical diagnosis of failure to thrive, or any of the previous causes resulting in a substantial and observable change in the behavior or demeanor of the child.

SEXUAL ABUSE --(A) Sexual intercourse, deviate sexual activity or sexual contact by forcible compulsion or attempted sexual intercourse, deviate sexual activity or sexual contact by a person ten (10) years of age or older to a person younger than eighteen (18) years of age; (B) Sexual intercourse, deviate sexual activity or sexual contact or solicitation or attempted sexual intercourse, deviate sexual activity or sexual contact that occurs between a person eighteen (18) years of age or older and a person not his spouse who is younger than sixteen (16) years of age; (C) Sexual intercourse, deviate sexual activity or sexual contact or solicitation or attempted sexual intercourse, deviate sexual activity or sexual contact between a person younger than eighteen (18) years of age and a sibling or caretaker; or (D) indecent exposure or forcing, permitting or encouraging the watching or pornography or live human sexual activity.

SEXUAL CONTACT --Any act of sexual gratification involving the touching, directly or through clothing, of the sex organs, buttocks, or anus of a person or the breast of a female. Normal affectionate hugging is not construed as sexual contact.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION -- Allowing, permitting, or encouraging participation or depiction of the juvenile in prostitution, obscene photographing, filming, or obscenely depicting a juvenile for any use or purpose.

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD -- A child who is free for adoption and has severe medical or psychological needs that require ongoing rehabilitation or treatment. Other children may be eligible for adoption assistance under this category if they belong to a group of children for whom the Division does not have an adequate resource of approved applicants to provide a pool of available waiting adoptive families. These children include:

- a Caucasian child nine years or older,
- a healthy child of color who is two years or older,
- or a member of a sibling group of three or more being placed together,
and the child is:
 - legally free for adoption with parental rights terminated,
 - under eighteen years old and whose adoption has not been finalized prior to approval of the subsidy,
 - (for the purposes of a State Subsidy only), in DHS custody, or
 - a member of the R.T. Class, or
 - (For the purposes of private and independent adoptions only), who is SSI eligible at the time the adoption petition is filed.

Children at high risk for the development of a serious physical, mental, or emotional condition may be considered special needs if documentation of the risk is provided by a medical professional specializing in the area of the condition for which the child is considered at risk, but no subsidy payment will be made without documentation that the child has developed the actual condition.

SPECIAL SUBSIDY -- A payment to provide for the costs of special services related to the child's needs which cannot be met by the adoptive parent. It may include, but not be limited to, legal/medical/psychological/therapy services and corrective appliances.

STATE ADOPTION SUBSIDY -- Payments for a child who is not categorized as IV-E or SSI eligible at the time of placement for adoption by the Division. Such a child, who meets other defined special needs characteristics, may be eligible for subsidized adoption from state moneys if it has been documented that a reasonable effort has been made to place the child without the benefit of an adoption subsidy. A child must be in DHS custody to be eligible for a State funded subsidy.

SUBJECT OF THE REPORT -- The alleged offender, the parents, guardian and legal custodians of the child who are subject to suspected maltreatment, and the child who is the subject of suspected maltreatment.

II. ADOPTIONS**GUIDELINE FOR AN ADOPTION SUMMARY- DETAILED HEALTH HISTORY AND GENETIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY**

Before placement for adoption, the Division shall compile and provide to the prospective adoptive parents a detailed, written health history and genetic and social history of the child which excludes information which would identify birth parents or members of a birth parent's family. The detailed, written health history and genetic and social history shall be set forth in a document that is separate from any document containing information identifying the birth parents or members of the birth parent's family. The detailed, written health history and genetic and social history shall be clearly identified as such, and filed with the clerk before the entry of the adoption decree. Upon order of the court for good cause, the clerk may tender to a person identified by the court a copy of the detailed, written health history and genetic and social history.

Adoption Summary of Child

- A. Birth Information: Prenatal care, birth date, measurements at the time of birth, a description of the delivery, any complications that occurred, alcohol/drug and tobacco involvement of birth parent during pregnancy and how it effected the infant, and any birth defects. Describe the nursery progress, discharge weight and recommendations of the doctor on discharge and results of any special health screenings/tests.
- B. Physical Description: Race, weight, height, hair and eye color, complexion, birthmarks, and bone structure. Describe any physical handicaps.
- C. Developmental and Social History: Social, intellectual, emotional and physical development of the child, noting any delays/limitations. Early developmental milestones should be discussed. For example:

Cognitive Development

- Recognition of significant others
- Comprehension of fact vs. fantasy
- Language development
- Comprehension of concepts such as time, space, quantity, etc.

Motor Development

- Head control
- Kicking -- pushing feet
- Lifting chest
- Rolling over
- Holding toys
- Reaching for objects
- Waving bye-bye

- Sitting up
- Eye movements
- Walking
- Crawling
- Running
- Coordination
- Ability to skip
- Ability to catch ball

Social/Emotional Development

- Smiling - Laughing
- Cooing
- Ability to respond appropriately in social situations
- Self-help skills

D. Health History:

- medical history (diseases, conditions, disabilities, allergies, hospitalizations, serious injuries etc.), present problems/needs, future problems/needs
- genetic history
- dental history, present problems/needs, future problems/needs
- mental health history, present problems/needs, future problems/needs
- type of mental health counseling and frequency of sessions
- sickle cell test results for a child with African American heritage
- medications (name, dosage, and reason)
- status of immunizations
- how health problem affects child's life
- child's attitude about health problems
- all special health care providers and frequency of appointments
- parental demands in relation to providing for child's special health care needs
- any special appliances to meet special needs

- statement whether female's menstrual periods have begun, feelings about, hygiene practices, any complications
- statement whether male is circumcised
- E. Personality: general personality; for example, quiet, outgoing, withdrawn, depressed, angry, sad, happy, alert, shy, talkative, questioning, active, etc.
 - interests, likes, dislikes, talents, special skills
 - causes of depression and how expressed
 - causes of anger and how expressed
 - what makes child happy
 - how child gives and receives love/affection
 - child's self-esteem
 - how child relates to adults, peers, younger and older children
 - how child relates to siblings
 - type of people the child likes/dislikes
 - description of what is enjoyable about parenting the child
 - description of what is difficult about parenting the child
 - child's hopes, wishes, and desires
 - fears and worries
 - how child relates to parental/authority figures
 - behavioral problems (state whether child has displayed: lying, stealing, fire setting, running away, aggression, destruction, withdrawal, bed wetting, encopresis, self harm, suicide attempts, depression, abusiveness to animals, cursing, defiance, sexual acting out (be specific), alcohol/substance abuse, etc. and, if so, explain)
 - how easy or difficult is the child to discipline -- what works, what doesn't
 - how child responds to discipline; what rules is the child accustomed to following
 - what rules are easy for the child to comply with, and which ones are difficult for the child
 - eating habits (ability to feed self, table manners, food likes/dislikes)
 - sleeping habits (bedtime routine, nightmares, night light, sleeping difficulties, etc.)
 - grooming/hygiene habits
 - how child cares for belongings
 - how child relates with pets/animals
 - smoking practices (if tobacco products are used)
 - play habits

- child's behavior in social situations such as church, restaurants, department stores, etc.
- knowledge child has about sex
- experience with sex

F. Daily Schedule:

- Birth to one year old -- Give detailed information regarding schedule. For example, when discussing sleeping, indicate not only the times the child sleeps but the length of naps; whether child is rocked, patted, etc., to sleep; whether child sleeps with a special blanket, pacifier, or toy; type of bed child sleeps in and the position child prefers to sleep in (i.e., stomach, back, etc.). Indicate the types of food the child likes/dislikes and the amount child eats and intervals between meals. Include the name of the formula.
- Over one year old -- Briefly describe the child's general schedule on a typical day. Indicate whether the child follows a daily routine or has a flexible schedule.

G. Clothing:

- sizes of clothing and shoes
- type/preference of clothes
- amount of clothing
- quality of clothing (good condition, worn, etc.)
- any special requirements in relation to clothing

H. Out-of-Home Placement Experiences:

- date child entered Out-of-Home Placement and for what reasons
- describe any child maltreatment and who was offender
- statement as to how many foster homes and/or institutions child has lived in and length of time in each placement
- description of reasons for moving from each foster home and/or institution
- brief profile of current foster family or institutional setting -- for example, foster family composition and life style

I. School Experiences:

- description of the type of school the child is attending -- for example, public school, special school (school for the deaf, blind, etc.) and whether resource classes/special education classes are utilized and its schedule (whole day, half day, or certain classes)
- grade level
- history of school attendance (past and present)
- experience with schools; for example, accomplishments, problems, etc.
- attitude towards school
- best subject areas as well as weak areas
- relationship with school mates and teachers
- how teachers view child

- involvement with school activities, clubs, sports, band, etc.
 - potential in relation to school
 - attitude towards homework
- J. Income: Indicate if the child has a source of income. If so, give the source of income and amount (Social Security, SSI, VA, etc.) which the child receives while in Out-of-Home Placement. Do not include foster care board payment.
- K. Siblings: Provide a brief description which includes first name, birth date, living arrangement and sibling status (full sibling, half sibling, step sibling, etc.). If siblings are not placed together, explain frequency of contacts.

Birth/Legal Parent(s):

Discuss each parent separately. Obtain as much information about the parents as possible. Be objective with descriptions of the parents and give factual information about them. Do not make derogatory remarks.

- A. Physical and Personality Description: Include race, ethnic background, age, height, weight, eye and hair color, complexion, bone structure, outstanding features, general appearance, and dominant physical traits within the larger family group. Describe personalities and any special talents, interests or hobbies.
- B. Health: Discuss any medical and mental illnesses, genetic history, allergies, alcohol/substance abuse and/or physical handicapping conditions. Discuss any medical and mental illnesses within the extended birth family including those of a hereditary nature. Discuss any history of neglect, physical abuse and/or sexual abuse within the extended family. Discuss any alcohol/substance abuse within the extended family. If the birth/legal parent is deceased, state the cause and date.
- C. Education: State highest educational level achieved. Discuss overall academic performance, best and weak subjects, and extracurricular activities. Discuss any mental retardation and/or learning disabilities in relation to the birth parent(s) and the extended birth family.
- D. Religion: Provide information about religious affiliation.
- E. Employment: Describe employment history.
- F. Other Significant Information:
- birth family's lifestyle
 - history of criminal behavior
 - reasons child can't return to birth/legal family
 - date child last had contact with birth/legal family, type of contact, and reaction

Preparation of the Child for Adoption

A. Dealing with Birth/Legal Family Issue

- Reasons child gives for entering Out-of-Home Placement
- Reasons child has been given for entering Out-of-Home Placement
- Reason child gives why the child cannot return home
- Reason child was given why the child cannot return home

B. Child's feelings about not returning home

C. Dealing with Out-of-Home Placement Issues

- Reasons child gives for placement changes while in Out-of-Home Placement
- Child's feelings about Out-of-Home Placement experiences and placements

D. Dealing with Adoption Issues

- Child's understanding about the difference in birth/legal family, foster family, and adoptive family
- Child's feelings about accepting an adoptive family's last name
- Child's understanding of the adoption process (selection of a family, pre-placement visits, post-placement visits, etc.)
- Child's feelings, fears and worries about adoption
- Child expectations about adoption/an adoptive family
- Child's preferences in relation to an adoptive family

Recommendations:

- The Adoption Specialist may describe the type of family the child needs and state if the child should not be placed in a certain location due to proximity to birth/legal parents/relatives.
- The Adoption Specialist may request the child be placed in a home of the same racial or ethnic heritage if indicated by an individualized determination that this placement is needed to advance the best interests of the child.
- If there are siblings, the Adoption Specialist will explain whether they should be placed together. If separation is recommended, reasons will be stated.
- The Adoption Specialist may state preferences in relation to pre-placement visits between the child and an adoptive family.

B. ATTACHMENTS TO THE ADOPTION SUMMARY

- Photographs:
 - Twenty-five (25) color photographs of a child with special needs (non-family foster parent adoption).
 - Five (5) color photographs of a child without special needs (non-family foster parent adoption).
 - Photographs of a child are not needed for a family foster parent adoption.
- birth certificate
- hospital birth records (delivery, care, discharge)
- CFS-457 (Hospital Data) for newborn infants being relinquished for adoption
- CFS-456 (Biological Family Background Information) -- complete Medical Passport, complete medical/developmental evaluation reports (CFS-366, EPSDT, etc.), hospitalization reports, etc. since placement in Out-of-Home Placement
- complete medical/developmental evaluation reports prior to placement in Out-of-Home Placement if accessible
- up-to-date immunization record
- sickle cell evaluation report for child with African American heritage
- dental evaluation reports since placement in Out-of-Home Placement
- vision evaluation reports since placement in Out-of-Home Placement
- psychological evaluation reports since placement in Out-of-Home Placement and any such reports prior to placement in Out-of-Home Placement if accessible
- mental health counseling (progress) reports since placement in Out-of-Home Placement and any such reports prior to placement in Out-of-Home Placement if accessible
- therapeutic Out-of-Home Placement monthly progress reports if applicable
- speech evaluation reports since placement in Out-of-Home Placement if applicable
- hearing evaluation reports since placement in Out-of-Home Placement
- complete academic transcript from kindergarten to the present
- current Individual Education Plan (IEP) if applicable
- any school academic testing results (achievement tests)

- current Out-of-Home Placement Case Plan (CFS-6010)
- termination of parental rights/court order and most recent judicial review court order
- psychological evaluations of birth parents if one has been previously completed (not for disclosure to the Adoptive family)
- written consent of child (adoption of child for whom placement is not readily available) ten (10) years of age or older to utilize photograph, video, etc. in activities to recruit an adoptive family

NOTE: Placement Specialist, Adoption Services Unit, Central Office will complete the "Child's Information Sheet" (CFS-412) on a child with special needs (adoption of child for whom placement is not readily available) if activities to recruit an adoptive family are needed.

VI. RECORD ORDER/RECORD FILE FOLDER (Family Foster Homes)

Special divided folders shall be used for the case records of foster family homes. When a foster family home is approved, the foster family home record shall be established according to the order below.

Front left: Approval/Renewal

Copy of the CFS-342 (A) (Foster Care Criminal Record Check), all information received and, in case of a report of violations, a summary of the face-to-face discussion, determination, and reasons for the determination.

Copy of the CFS-316 (Request for CPS Central Registry Check), all information received and, in case of a report of violations, a summary of the face-to-face discussion, determination, and reasons for the determinations.

CFS-450 (Foster Home Study/Application and attachments)

Summary with Recommendations

CFS-455 (Request/Consent for Health Department Services)

CFS-480 (Alternate Compliance of Water Supply Agreement), when appropriate

CFS-478 (Physician's Report)

Verification of Marriage and/or Divorce

CFS-449 (Reference Letters)

CFS-463 (Knowledge of Pre-Service Training Material)

CFS-464 (Foster Parent Evaluation)

CFS-475 (Checklist for Compliance)

Approval or Denial Letter

CFS-481 (Family Foster Home Approval Certificate)

CFS-462 (Initial Foster Home Agreement)

CFS-462 (A) (Foster Home Agreement Addendum)

CFS-485 (Foster Home Face Sheet)

Order: Foster Home Face Sheet on top, Approval or Denial Letter, CFS-475, etc., filed in chronological order with the most current on top.

Front Right: Copy of information contained in the Resource and Placement Screen in CHRIS (i.e., changes in placements, case transfer, provider changes, etc.)

Order: File information in chronological order with the most current on top.

Center Left: Narrative

Order: Filed in chronological order with the most current entry on top.

VII. CASE RECORD ORDER (Out Of Home Placement Cases)

The Family Service Worker shall maintain and organize the current case record on every foster child in his caseload. Policy (I-D): Official Record Keeping, states that a hard copy file of case information will be maintained for data not in CHRIS. Hard copy files will be created, if necessary for case review. The following is the case record order to maintain files on information not in CHRIS. This case record order will also be used when hard copy files are created for case review.

Front Left Legal Section

Services Face Sheet CFS-386
Client Information CFS-6002
6 Month Review Order
Adjudication Order
Emergency Order
Summons
Warning Orders
Order Terminating Parental Rights and Granting to DHS the Power to Consent to Adoption
Petitions
Affidavit CFS-411
Birth Certificate
Social Security Card SS-5

Order: CFS-386 (Services Face Sheet) on top, Order Terminating Parental Rights (if applicable), next to the top, then most current court order followed by all legal documents related to that order (i.e., petition, warning orders, summons, etc.). Other information behind this is filed in chronological order with the most current on top. Behind each court order, file all legal documents related to the order.

Front Right Case Plan, Staffings, and Progress Reports

Case Plan (CFS-6010)
Treatment Plan – signed CFS-6010
Placement Plan – signed CFS-6008
Child's Health History Services Plan CFS-368/Medical Passport
Independent Living Case Plan (if applicable)

Order: CFS-6010 (Case Plan) on top and applicable medical passport forms, and staffing reports filed in chronological order with the most current on top.

Center Left Child's Social Record and Narrative

Family Strengths and Needs Assessment CFD-6009
Case Summary CFS-6022
Client Services CFS-6005
Contacts/Visits CFS-6006
Court Report CFS-6011

Order: File in chronological order with the most current on top.

Center Right Correspondence

Invitation to Family Centered Meeting CFS-590
Change in Placement Review CFS-331
Letters/Memos
Incident Reports (use IRIS link on DHS Gold)

Order: Most current on top.

Back Left Medical and School Record

CFS-362 Medi-Alert Form (Initial Placement)
Placement Plan – Placement Provider Information CFS-6007
Client Medical and Psychological Information (each client) CFS-6012
Child Health Services Plan CFS-368
Health Screening CFS-366
Medical, Dental, Vision, Hearing and Psychological Episodic Form CFS-352
Past Medical History Records Requested CFS-353
Consent for Release of Information DHS-81
School Records (Report Cards, IEP, etc.)
Psychological Evaluations

Order: Child' medical record on top; others intermixed with most current on top.

Note: Educational records and reports of each age appropriate child, not just those children with special educational needs, shall be filed in the foster child's case record. Reports and records include report cards, Individual Education Plan (I.E.P), etc.

Back Right Financial

Application for Title IV-E Payments/Medicaid CFS-487 (print from CHRIS screen)
Referral/Information Transmittal DHS-91
Notification of Change (print from CHRIS screen)
Requisition DHS-1914
Authorization for Billing CFS-334 (Only for payments from Child's Trust Account)
Homemaker Referral CFS-322
Information/Referral DHS-3300

Order: Intermixed with most current on top.

INSTRUCTIONS

PURPOSE

This form is used to calculate a CFCIP/IL client's income (including Pell Grant funds) and his/her financial obligations so that it can be determined if the board rate is inadequate, adequate or excessive to cover school-related expenses.

COMPLETION

At the top of the form, complete the student's name, CHRIS Number, school term dates for which the budget applies and the name of the school.

In the top right box enter the amount of the Pell Grant expected or received for the semester or term. If the Pell Grant has not been received, enter the "Date Applied For" on the line above the "Tuition" box.

Enter the known or expected costs for tuition, books and fees in the boxes next to those headings. Enter the total for tuition, books and fees in the box beside "Total" and subtract that amount from the amount for "Pell Grant" above. That amount is the Pell Grant balance after subtracting costs for tuition, books and fees. It may be a positive or negative balance. If it is a positive amount, it should be entered as income in one of the "Other Income Amount" boxes under "Board Budget". If it is a negative amount, the CFCIP program will pay the school that balance when a purchase order and correct bill is submitted.

In the "Board Budget/Income" boxes, fill in and total all of the client's sources of income.

In the Board Budget/Expenses boxes, fill in all the client's school-related expenses and total them.

Subtract the "Total Expenses" from the "Total Income" to determine if there is a positive or negative balance. Use that information to determine if you will ask for an increase, decrease or no change in the current amount of the board rate. If a rate increase is requested, a copy of the budget form should be attached to form CFS-304 as justification for the increase.

The Budget Preparer, Sponsor and Student should sign and date the budget form and it should then be forwarded to the Supervisor to approve or deny the request.

ROUTING

The client and the Sponsor should receive a copy of the completed budget form and the original should be forwarded to the Supervisor. A copy should be placed in the client's file.

**Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services
Justification for Special Board Rate Form**

CHILD: _____ AGE: _____

CASE NUMBER: _____

PROVIDER: _____ NUMBER: _____

I. EMOTIONAL

LEVEL (Letters A, B, C, D, E)
POINTS (5 to 240)
MONTHLY SPECIAL SERVICE RATE

II. PHYSICAL

LEVEL (Letters A, B, C, D, E)
POINTS (5 to 240)
MONTHLY SPECIAL SERVICE RATE

III. AUXILIARY

LEVEL (Letters A, B, C, D, E)
POINTS (5 to 250)
MONTHLY SPECIAL SERVICE RATE

BASIC BOARD	\$ _____
EMOTIONAL	\$ _____
PHYSICAL	\$ _____
AUXILIARY	\$ _____
TOTAL SPECIAL BOARD RATE:.....	\$ _____

_____ CHILD HAS OTHER INCOME

Justification for Special Board Rate Form

Instructions: First determine the level of care required in each applicable category of need. Refer to the Point Chart to determine the assigned number of points per level and category. Refer to the Rate Chart to determine the dollar amounts corresponding to points assigned. Add the dollar amounts for each applicable category to the basic board rate (standard of age) to obtain the total monthly Special Board Rate.

LEVELS OF REQUIRED CARE

I. Emotional Need Category

Level A. These are children who periodically exhibit excessive dependency, passivity, lack responsiveness and the ability to relate.

Level B. Children at this level require abnormal amounts of attention and affection, have need for a regimental program such as behavior modification. Such children often have school problems, difficulty with peers, moodiness, frequent enuresis. Foster parents often have to provide an abnormal amount of structure (e.g., constant repetition and follow-through on instructions).

Level C. These children exhibit extreme attention-seeking behavior, stealing, drug use, encopresis, destructive behavior, extreme hyperactivity, sexual acting-out, running away, withdrawal, etc.

Level D. These children show extreme, bizarre behavior, may be self-destructive and require exceptional care.

Level E. Children at this level show severely disturbed behavior, such as frequent running away, depression attempted suicide, fantasizing, or inappropriate behavior. They may be dangerous to themselves or others, and cannot be maintained in a normal family setting.

II. Physical Need Category

Level A. These children need some help with putting on braces or prosthetic devices, some help with buttons, laces, etc., but basically self-caring.

Level B. These children need help with dressing, bathing, general toilet needs, as well as some help in ambulation. They exhibit feeding problems such as excessive intake, extremely slow and/or messy requiring help and/or supervision due to retardation or emotional or physical handicap. Need for tube or gavage feeding. Physical therapy, under one hour per day.

Level C. These children need appliances for drainage or ileal conduit, or a colostomy. They might need aspiration, suctioning, mist tent, etc. they are nonambulatory, needing constant attendance, and/or prescribed physical therapy, 1-2 hours per day, by foster parent.

Level D. These children require custodial care, physical therapy 2-3 hours per day. They have uncontrollable seizures.

Level E. Due to the severity of their physical handicap, these children are unable to tolerate a normal family setting and require on going care. Such children possible need 24 hours supervision.

III. Auxiliary Need Category

Level A. These children require special diets or supplements that require extra expense and are not covered under any other program. Regular but infrequent (less than monthly) trips must be made to physician, psychiatrist, therapist, etc.

Level B. Children require special equipment or a regular and consistent tutoring program at home. There is unusual wear and tear on the home, and need for occasional period of relief by an adult. Therapeutic appointments must be met every 2-4 weeks.

Level C. There is extreme wear and tear on the home, frequent hospitalizations, therapeutic visits every two weeks or oftener.

Level D. These children exhibit either emotional or physical problems of such severity that the foster parents must make extraordinary adjustments in their family life style to accommodate the foster child. Such adjustments may include, but are not be limited to ongoing regular attendance at supportive group meetings physical changes in the home (such as building ramps, installing, lifts, etc.), ongoing consultation with child care professionals. These children require foster parents with skill in adapting family life to the needs of each child.

Level E. The post-secondary board payment for IL students who choose to remain in care, but not in a licensed foster care facility while pursuing their educational goals should be used primarily for the following expenses:

1. Living quarters rent or dorm room charges
2. Food or meal plan charges
3. Clothing needs
4. Personal needs
5. Utilities
6. Deposits (rent/utilities)

POINT CHART

	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>
Emotional	5	15	30	60	175
Physical	5	15	30	60	175
Auxiliary	5	15	30	60	250

RATE CHART

Points	Monthly	Points	Monthly	Points	Monthly	Points	Monthly
5	\$50	70	\$180	135	\$310	220	\$440
10	\$60	75	\$190	140	\$320	230	\$450
15	\$70	80	\$200	145	\$330	240	\$460
20	\$80	85	\$210	150	\$340	* 250	\$630 max
25	\$90	90	\$220	155	\$350		
30	\$100	95	\$230	160	\$360		
35	\$110	100	\$240	165	\$370		
40	\$120	105	\$250	170	\$380		
45	\$130	110	\$260	175	\$390		
50	\$140	115	\$270	180	\$400		
55	\$150	120	\$280	190	\$410		
60	\$160	125	\$290	200	\$420		
65	\$170	130	\$300	210	\$430		

* Applies to IL students only. The actual monthly amount depends on completion of a CFS-0025 (IL Budget Calculation).

Adoption Questionnaire – continued

	Acceptable to me	Willing to discuss	Unacceptable to me
7. A. Has a malformed hand(s)	_____	_____	_____
B. Has a malformed arm(s)	_____	_____	_____
C. Has a malformed leg(s)	_____	_____	_____
D. Has a malformed face	_____	_____	_____
E. Has a missing limb	_____	_____	_____
F. Has a visible birthmark on face	_____	_____	_____
G. Has a visible birthmark on body, arms or legs	_____	_____	_____
8. A. Has a hare lip	_____	_____	_____
B. Has a cleft palate	_____	_____	_____
C. Has a hare lip and a cleft palate	_____	_____	_____
9. A. Stutters	_____	_____	_____
B. Will always have trouble speaking and being understood	_____	_____	_____
C. Has delayed language development	_____	_____	_____
D. Has a serious speech disorder	_____	_____	_____
10. A. Is hyperactive	_____	_____	_____
B. Is hyperactive – requires medication	_____	_____	_____
C. Is hyperactive – requires medication and some special classroom setting.....	_____	_____	_____
D. Has attention deficit disorder -requires medication ...	_____	_____	_____
E. Has attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity.....	_____	_____	_____
11. A. Is a sickle cell carrier	_____	_____	_____
B. Has sickle cell anemia, but relatively controlled.....	_____	_____	_____
C. Has sickle cell anemia, with frequent episodes.....	_____	_____	_____
12. A. Has Diabetes	_____	_____	_____
13. A. Has arrested tuberculosis (TB)	_____	_____	_____
14. A. Has severe allergies that may limit activities or require a rigid diet	_____	_____	_____
15. A. Has asthma	_____	_____	_____
16. A. Has hydrocephalus with a shunt that may require future surgery	_____	_____	_____
17. A. Has parent(s) who has experimented with marijuana ...	_____	_____	_____
B. Has parents addicted to hard drugs	_____	_____	_____
C. Has parent(s) who has experimented with hard drugs (LSD, heroin, cocaine, etc).....	_____	_____	_____
D. Has a birth mother that used drugs during pregnancy ...	_____	_____	_____
18. A. Has a parent who is an alcoholic	_____	_____	_____
B. Has a birth mother that drank alcohol during pregnancy	_____	_____	_____
19. A. Has fetal alcohol syndrome	_____	_____	_____
20. A. Has a parent who is schizophrenic	_____	_____	_____
B. Has two parents who are schizophrenic	_____	_____	_____
C. Is schizophrenic	_____	_____	_____
D. Has a parent who is bipolar.....	_____	_____	_____
E. Has two parents who are bipolar.....	_____	_____	_____
F. Is bipolar	_____	_____	_____

Adoption Questionnaire – continued

	Acceptable to me	Willing to discuss	Unacceptable to me
21. A. Is a child who has failed to thrive	_____	_____	_____
22. A. Is a child born as a result of incest	_____	_____	_____
23. A. Is a child born prematurely and needs special care ...	_____	_____	_____
24. A. Is a child who has been neglected	_____	_____	_____
25. A. Is a child who has been physically abused	_____	_____	_____
26. A. Is a child who has been sexually abused	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS: _____

II. AGE

	Acceptable to me	Willing to discuss	Unacceptable to me
1. Birth to 4 months old	_____	_____	_____
2. 5 – 12 months old	_____	_____	_____
3. 1 – 2 years old	_____	_____	_____
4. 3 – 4 years old	_____	_____	_____
5. 5 – 10 years old	_____	_____	_____
6. 11 – 13 years old	_____	_____	_____
7. 14 – 17 years old	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS: _____

III. RACE

	Acceptable to me	Willing to discuss	Unacceptable to me
1. African American	_____	_____	_____
2. African American / Caucasian	_____	_____	_____
3. Caucasian	_____	_____	_____
4. Native American	_____	_____	_____
5. Native American / Caucasian	_____	_____	_____
6. Hispanic	_____	_____	_____
7. Hispanic / Caucasian	_____	_____	_____
8. Hispanic / African American	_____	_____	_____
9. Asian	_____	_____	_____
10. Asian / Caucasian	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS: _____

Adoption Questionnaire – continued

IV. PREFERENCE OF GENDER OF CHILD

	Acceptable to me	Willing to discuss	Unacceptable to me
1. Male	_____	_____	_____
2. Female	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS: _____

V. NUMBER OF CHILDREN

	Acceptable to me	Willing to discuss	Unacceptable to me
1. Two children	_____	_____	_____
2. Three children	_____	_____	_____
3. Four children	_____	_____	_____
4. More than four children	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS: _____

VI. BEHAVIOR

	Acceptable to me	Willing to discuss	Unacceptable to me
1. Lies moderately	_____	_____	_____
2. Lies continuously	_____	_____	_____
3. Steals from friends, classroom, stores, etc.	_____	_____	_____
4. Runs away	_____	_____	_____
5. Plays with matches	_____	_____	_____
6. Has a history of setting fires	_____	_____	_____
7. Is a disruptive influence in the classroom	_____	_____	_____
8. Abuses self	_____	_____	_____
9. Abuses other people (hitting, kicking, biting)	_____	_____	_____
10. Kills animals	_____	_____	_____
11. Is destructive to furnishings and property	_____	_____	_____
12. Displays inappropriate sexual behaviors	_____	_____	_____
13. Is often depressed	_____	_____	_____
14. Is often angry	_____	_____	_____
15. Wets the bed occasionally	_____	_____	_____
16. Wets the bed every night	_____	_____	_____
17. Defecates inappropriately	_____	_____	_____
18. Girl who is sexually active	_____	_____	_____
19. Boy who is sexually active	_____	_____	_____
20. Has fears	_____	_____	_____
21. Has nervous habits	_____	_____	_____
22. Is frequently oppositional or defiant	_____	_____	_____
23. Is aggressive	_____	_____	_____
24. Constantly demands attention	_____	_____	_____
25. Exhibits clinging, over affectionate behavior	_____	_____	_____
26. Is rejecting of adults and/or peers	_____	_____	_____

Adoption Questionnaire – continued

	Acceptable to me	Willing to discuss	Unacceptable to me
27. Withdraws	_____	_____	_____
28. Has reactive attachment disorder	_____	_____	_____
29. Has emotional problems that require extensive therapy	_____	_____	_____
30. Has uncontrollable rage	_____	_____	_____
31. Is autistic	_____	_____	_____
32. Functions relatively well, but may need counseling...	_____	_____	_____
33. Has experimented with alcoholic beverages	_____	_____	_____
34. Is an alcoholic	_____	_____	_____
35. Has experimented with hard drugs.....	_____	_____	_____
36. Is addicted to hard drugs.....	_____	_____	_____
37. Has an eating disorder (anorexia, bulimia)	_____	_____	_____
38. Smokes cigarettes or uses other tobacco products	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS: _____

VII. EDUCATION

	Acceptable to me	Willing to discuss	Unacceptable to me
1. May require tutoring	_____	_____	_____
2. Has a learning disability	_____	_____	_____
3. Is in special education.	_____	_____	_____
4. Is mildly mentally retarded	_____	_____	_____
5. Is moderately mentally retarded	_____	_____	_____
6. Is severely mentally retarded	_____	_____	_____
7. Has Downs Syndrome	_____	_____	_____
8. Has one parent who is mentally retarded	_____	_____	_____
9. Has two parents who are mentally retarded	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS: _____

VIII. OTHER

	Acceptable to me	Willing to discuss	Unacceptable to me
1. Child who is not legally free for adoption	_____	_____	_____
2. Child who has been abandoned with no available background information.....	_____	_____	_____
3. Child who needs to maintain contact with a birth parent	_____	_____	_____
4. Child who needs to maintain contact with a birth relative	_____	_____	_____
5. Child who needs to maintain contact with a foster family	_____	_____	_____
6. Child placed from another state in the U.S.A.	_____	_____	_____

IX. SIGNATURE and DATE

Female Applicant _____ Date _____

Male Applicant _____ Date _____

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
ADOPTION QUESTIONNAIRE
CFS-409**

PURPOSE

This form documents the characteristics of a child that an adoptive applicant is willing to accept, discuss, or is not willing to accept. The Adoption Specialist will thoroughly review the completed form with the applicant during the preparation and assessment process for adoption and summarize the characteristics that the applicant is willing to accept or discuss in the adoption home study. The Adoption Specialist and Adoption Supervisor will assess the completed form as part of the process to determine the approval or denial of an applicant for adoption. The Adoption Specialist or Adoption Coordinator will enter the characteristics from the completed form into the computerized system that generates a list of approved applicants that will be considered in selecting an adoptive family for a specific child. In relation to a foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative adoption, characteristics are not entered into the computerized system for the purpose of selecting an adoptive family. If foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative adoption is not the plan for a child, the Adoption Specialist and Adoption Supervisor will assess the completed form in selecting an appropriate adoptive family for a child.

COMPLETION

The adoptive applicant will complete the form during the assessment and preparation process for adoption. The Adoption Specialist may need to assist the applicant prior to the completion of the form in order that all characteristics are understood. The Adoption Specialist will review the completed form annually with an approved adoptive applicant until a child is placed to determine if revisions are needed.

ROUTING

The adoptive applicant will return the completed form to the Adoption Specialist during the preparation and assessment process for adoption. This form will be placed in the adoptive applicant's file. Revisions to the form will be placed in the applicant's file.

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

ADOPTION INQUIRY

Name **Date of Inquiry**

Street or Box **Home Phone**

City **State** **Zip** **County** **Second Phone**

Marital Status **Race** **Age**

Children in Home (Number, Birth/Adopted, Ages, etc.)

Preference of Child (Age, Race, Sex, Number of Siblings, etc.)

Specific Child, if applicable (Name, Registration Source/Agency, Registration Number, etc.)

Home Study Completed? (Yes or No) **Who Completed Home Study?**

Adoption Training Completed? (Yes or No) **Who Provided Training?**

What prompted inquiry? Web Site, Photo-listing, Brochure, Display/Information Booth, Event (specify), Radio, Television, Newspaper, Flyer, Poster, Friend/Neighbor, Adoptive Parent, Foster Parent, Church (specify)

Other Comments

Signature of Person Taking Inquiry, Title **County**

Action Taken to Address Inquiry: _____

Signature of Adoption Specialist, Title **Date**

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
CFS-413
ADOPTION INQUIRY**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this form is to document a prospective adoptive applicant's initial contact with DHS/DCFS to learn about the adoption program and/or to express an interest in completing an application to adopt, including a specific child who is registered with an adoption web site/exchange and/or a photo-listing album. The form also documents how a prospective adoptive applicant learned about the DCFS adoption program.

COMPLETION

An Adoption Specialist and other DCFS employees or DCO employees will complete this form upon receiving an inquiry with a prospective adoptive applicant(s). The following information will be completed:

Name: Enter the name of the prospective adoptive applicant(s).

Date of Inquiry: Enter the date the prospective adoptive applicant(s) inquired about adoption.

Address and Phone Numbers: Enter the home address of the prospective adoptive applicant(s) and telephone numbers.

Marital Status: Enter information if the prospective adoptive applicant(s) is married (state length of marriage), single, or divorced.

Race: Enter the race of the prospective adoptive applicant(s).

Age: Enter the age of the prospective adoptive applicant(s).

Children in the Home: Enter requested information if the prospective adoptive applicant(s) has a birth an/or adopted child living with them.

Preference of Child: Enter the requested information about the prospective adoptive applicant(s)' preference for a child.

Specific Child (if applicable): Enter the requested information if the prospective adoptive applicant(s) is interested in adopting a child who is registered with an adoption web site/exchange and/or photo-listing album.

Home Study Completed: Enter "yes" or "no" to explain if a prospective adoptive applicant(s) has a completed (approved) adoption home study. If "yes" is entered, state the name of the agency that completed the adoption home study.

Adoption Training Completed: Enter "yes" or "no" to explain if the prospective adoptive applicant(s) has completed an adoption training curriculum. If "yes" is entered, state the name of agency that provided the training.

What Prompted Inquiry: Enter information that specifies how the prospective adoptive applicant(s) learned about the DCFS adoption program.

Other Comments: Enter information, if applicable.

Signature of Person Taking Inquiry, Title, Date, County: The Adoption Specialist, other DCFS employee, or DCO employee who has the initial contact with the prospective adoptive applicant will complete this section.

Action Taken to Address Inquiry, Signature, Title, Date: The Adoption Specialist will complete this section to document how the inquiry has been addressed.

ROUTING

If a DCFS employee (other than the Adoption Specialist) or a DCO employee completes the form, it will be routed to the Adoption Specialist who is assigned to the county where the prospective adoptive applicant(s) resides. The Adoption Specialist will retain the completed form.

Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services
Adoption Services

LEGAL RISK ADOPTION PLACEMENT AGREEMENT

The undersigned, having been approved as an adoptive placement for _____
_____ born: _____, by the Division of Children and Family
Services of the Arkansas Department of Human Services, fully understand that this placement is
being made prior to this/these child(ren) being legally free for adoption. It is also understood that
after full disclosure made by _____, as representative(s) of the Division of
Children and Family Services, that should the child(ren) not be legally available for adoption, the
placement may terminate and the child(ren) be returned to the legal custodian, the Arkansas
Department of Human Services. The Division of Children and Family Services will make all the
arrangements for the return.

Adoptive Mother's Name Printed

Adoptive Father's Name Printed

Adoptive Mother's Signature

Adoptive Father's Signature

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Notary's Name Printed

Notary's Signature

My Commission Expires _____.

INSTRUCTIONS

LEGAL RISK ADOPTION PLACEMENT AGREEMENT

CFS-420

Definition

Is the placement of a child, who is not legally free for adoption, with an approved adoptive applicant. This placement may be considered for a newborn that is being relinquished for adoption or for a child whose birth/legal parent has filed an appeal to the termination of parental rights. The prospective adoptive parent must be educated about the risks and challenges inherent in such a placement and they must sign a form prior to placement of the child.

Purpose

To have the prospective adoptive parent(s) acknowledge that they have been told and understand that the children being adopted are not yet legally free for adoption. They also understand that the placement might terminate and the child(ren) be returned to the legal custodian (DHS).

Completion

Insert the name(s) and birthdate(s) of the child(ren) being placed for adoption. Insert the name(s) of the DCFS representative(s) who explained the nature of the legal risk in the adoptive placement. The adoptive parent(s) must print and sign their name(s). The Notary must have observed the adoptive parent(s) signature(s) and must notarize the form in the place provided.

Routing

The original should be given to the Adoption Specialist. One copy should go to the adoptive parent(s).

Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services
Adoption Services
Application For Adoption Subsidy

I (we) hereby apply to the Division of Children and Family Services for adoption subsidy for the following child(ren) with special needs:

Child's Full Adoptive Name	Child's Social Security #	DOB
Child's Full Adoptive Name	Child's Social Security #	DOB
Child's Full Adoptive Name	Child's Social Security #	DOB

Check those that apply:

- Initial Application Amendment

Subsidy is requested for:

- Monthly Maintenance
 Special Subsidy (specify):
 Non-recurring Adoption Expense Subsidy (specify)

(payment limited to \$1,500 per child - attach verification of expenses incurred or paid on or after January 1, 1987, if available)

I (we) understand and agree that an evaluation of eligibility for this subsidy will be made upon filing of this application and that if the subsidy is approved, a review of continued need will be made annually or as necessary (for all but non-recurring adoption expense subsidy). The determination will be based on information currently available regarding the child and information I (we) agree to provide concerning my (our) financial status (for state funded subsidies only) and insurance coverage. [Act 99 of 1987 requires insurers to cover adoptive children from the date of the filing of the petition for adoption (retroactive to birth if the petition is filed within 60 days of the child's birth).]

The child(ren) is a child with special needs and was placed in my (our) home on
Attached is verification of the placement and the special needs of the child.

I (We) certify that all of the information contained in this declaration is true and correct to the best of my (our) knowledge and belief and that the child continues to be dependent upon me (us).

Adoptive Mother's Signature Social Security # Date

Adoptive Father's Signature Social Security # Date

Street/P.O. Box Address City State Zip Telephone Number

Adoption Specialist's or Adoption Agency Representative's Signature Date

Return to: _____

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
STATEMENT OF INCOME AND RESOURCES FOR ADOPTION SUBSIDY**

Adoptive Father's Name	Social Security Number
------------------------	------------------------

Adoptive Mother's Name	Social Security Number
------------------------	------------------------

Street/P.O. Box Address	City	State	Zip Code
-------------------------	------	-------	----------

ADOPTION SUBSIDY REQUESTED FOR: (Dependents)	OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS: (Dependents)
---	---------------------------------------

Name	Date of Birth	Name	Date of Birth	Relationship
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

TOTAL DEPENDENTS [include adoptive parent(s)] _____

We (I) understand that the statement of income and financial resources we (I am) are making below will serve as a basis for determining whether we (I) may receive or continue to receive subsidy payments toward the care and support of our (my) adoptive child(ren).

INCOME

Gross annual income (If no 1040 or 1040A - attach other verification of income)

Adoptive father's gross annual income \$ _____	
Adoptive mother's gross annual income \$ _____	\$ _____
	Total Earned Income

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- A. Non taxable-annual income (VA Benefits, Social Security, AFDC and SSI Payments, Workman's Compensation, Unemployment, Insurance, etc.)
- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|----------|
| Source: _____ | For(Name) _____ | |
| Source: _____ | For(Name) _____ | \$ _____ |

FINANCIAL RESOURCES: (continued)

B. Annual income, if any for whom subsidy requested
ther than money received from the Division of
Children and Family Services. \$ _____

Source:

C. List your savings, stocks, bonds, investments, dividends, etc.:

EXPENSES:

List your debts, monthly payments, household expenses, etc.:

MEDICAL INSURANCE:

A. Name and address of insurance company:

B. Type and amount of coverage (medical and hospitalization):

C. Does the insurance cover any pre-existing conditions, which the adoptive child(ren) may
have? Yes _____ No _____

D. If yes, please explain:

Adoptive Father's Signature Date

Adoptive Mother's Signature Date

Return to: _____

Instructions

CFS-426

Purpose

The CFS-426 form shall serve as a basis for determining the adoptive parent's (s') financial eligibility for an adoption subsidy. The form shall be utilized for initial or for amending an existing adoption subsidy.

Completion

The Adoption Specialist, after an interpretation of the policies and procedures of the subsidy program, shall give a CFS-426 form to the adoptive parent(s). The adoptive parent(s) shall complete the CFS-426 form in triplicate and attach a copy of the latest IRS form 1040 or 1040A, or other verification of income.

Routing

The Adoption Specialist shall forward a completed CFS-426 form to Adoption Services, Central Office, and attach to it a CFS-425 form and a CFS-427 form. The adoptive parent(s) shall retain a completed CFS-426 form and the Adoption Specialist shall also retain a copy in the case record permanently.

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR ADOPTION SUBSIDY**

Adoptive Father's Name

Adoptive Mother's Name

Child's Name Date of Birth Case Number Category

SOURCE OF FUNDING (check one)

Federal (IV - E)

State

INCOME INFORMATION – FOR STATE FUNDED SUBSIDIES

1. Total income from all sources (refer to CFS-426) \$
2. Total dependents (refer to CFS-426)
3. Median income in relation to number of dependents [complete for only a state funded maintenance subsidy request - refer to Subsidy Policy Section (VIII-H1)].
\$. Total income is (check one):

more than median less than median income

MAINTENANCE SUBSIDY REQUEST

1. Maintenance subsidy requested Yes No

If yes, maintenance is requested for monthly payments (not to exceed 12 months) of:

\$ for months

\$ for months (completed is child's birth date causes change in monthly payments.)

SPECIAL SUBSIDY REQUEST

1. Special subsidy requested Yes No

If yes, special subsidy is requested for (check one or more):

Use of agency attorney to legally finalize adoption

(Continuance of Special Subsidy Request #1)

- Use of private attorney (out of state placements) to legally finalize adoption
- Court cost to legally finalize adoption
- Medical services
- Psychological/counseling services
- Corrective appliances
- Therapy services (physical therapy, speech therapy, etc.)
- Other (specify) _____

2. If use of a private attorney is requested to finalize an out-of-state placement, the fees are \$ _____ (attach verification).

3. If court costs are required, the cost are \$ _____ (attach verification).

4. If a special subsidy (other than legal) is requested, describe the child's diagnosis (attach verification) _____

Describe the treatment/service plan (attach verification) _____

Provide cost of treatment/service for up to twelve months (attach verification) _____

TOTAL SUBSIDY COST

Maintenance Subsidy	\$
Special Subsidy	\$
Total	\$

ADOPTION SPECIALIST RECOMMENDATION AND COMMENTS

Adoption Specialist or Designee Signature Date

INSTRUCTIONS

CFS - 427

Purpose

The CFS-427 form is utilized by the Adoption Specialist to determine a child and family's eligibility for adoption subsidy as well as to make a projection about the type and amount of adoption subsidy for a child. The form must be completed for an initial application or an amendment to an existing subsidy.

Completion

The Adoption Specialist shall complete an original and one copy of the CFS-427 form. The CFS-425 form and CFS-426 form must be utilized to complete the form. If a special subsidy is being requested, the Adoption Specialist must secure and attach to the CFS-427 verification of the child's diagnosis, treatment/service plan, and cost of treatment/service for up to twelve months.

Routing

The Adoption Specialist shall forward a completed CFS-427 to Adoption Services, Central Office, and attach to it a CFS-425 form and a CFS-426 form. The Adoption Specialist shall retain a completed CFS-427 form in the case record permanently.

9. This agreement is for the benefit of the subject child, his or her parents and the State of Arkansas and is enforceable by any and all of these parties.
10. Adoptive parents may appeal the division's decision to reduce, change or terminate adoption assistance in accordance with the state's hearing and appeal process.
11. For **special subsidies**, this Agreement will be in effect for no longer than twelve (12) months. If a modification should occur sooner, a new Agreement will be entered.

SUBSIDY NOTE:

Children at high risk for the development of a serious physical, mental, or emotional condition may be considered special needs if documentation of the risk is provided by a medical professional specializing in the area of the condition for which the child is considered at risk, but no subsidy payment will be made without documentation that the child has developed the actual condition.

12. Certification of Adoption Subsidy Eligibility

Re-evaluations for state adoption maintenance subsidies are not required. However, when state funded subsidies extend beyond one (1) year, verification of circumstances to continue the subsidy must be documented annually. To verify a continued need for subsidy in out of state cases the child's school, therapist, physician or clergy can provide verification by submitting a letter which states that the adoptive parent(s) still has the care and responsibility for the child.

The Adoption Support Specialist will forward a cover memo along with the CFS-431 (Notarized Statement on Eligibility for State Subsidy) to the adoptive parents annually. The cover memo will inform the adoptive parents that the local Adoption Specialist will contact them to schedule a visit.

The adoptive parents will complete and submit the CFS-431 to the DCFS Adoptions Unit within ten (10) working days of the date of the accompanying letter.

The Adoption Specialist will have annual face-to-face contact with the child or otherwise verify that the child is still with the adoptive family. The adoption specialist should make the face to face contact a positive experience by exploring any needs for post adoption services. The adoption specialist should also inquire as whether the adoptive parents have added the adoptive child to their medical insurance and if so the family must complete a DCO-662 (Third Party Resource). The adoption specialist is responsible for submitting the completed form to the Medical Services Section of the Medical Services Division.

By: _____
Director, Division of Children and Family Services

Date

Adoptive Mother's Signature

Date

Adoptive Father's Signature

Date

Signed copy of the Adoption Assistance Agreement given/sent to the Adoptive parent(s) on _____
Date

**Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services
ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT
FOR FEDERAL IV-E FUNDED ASSISTANCE**

The following Agreement has been entered into by and between:

Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services, P.O. Box 1437, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203

Adoptive/Adopting Parent(s)' Full Name(s)]

(Address)

(Telephone #)

hereafter called the "adoptive parent(s)," for the purpose of facilitating the legal adoption of

(Child's Full Adoptive Name

Social Security Number

Date of Birth

and to aid the adoptive family in providing proper care for this child, hereafter referred to as "the child" in this Agreement.

This document is the:

Initial Agreement: The prospective adoptive parent(s) agrees that he/she intends to adopt the child and has signed this document prior to finalization of the adoption for the purposes of receiving adoption assistance payments and/or services for the child under Titles XIX and XX from the time of placement.

Amended Agreement: This is an amendment of the Adoption Assist. Agreement for the child adopted on _____
(Date)

This agreement will be effective UPON FINALIZATION and remain in effect until the child's eighteenth (18th) birthday.

(Date of Finalization)

PROVISIONS OF AGREEMENT

I. Assistance

A. Monthly Cash Payment: Yes ___ No ___

\$ _____ for _____ months and \$ _____ for _____ months

Yearly Total \$ _____

The amount of this monthly cash payment (adoption assistance) is based on the needs of the child and the circumstances of the adoptive parent(s) and has been determined by mutual agreement between the adoptive parent(s) and the division. The amount of the payment does not exceed the foster care maintenance payment for the child if he/she were in a foster family home in the State of Arkansas. Adjustments in cash assistance payment may be made with the concurrence of the adoptive parent(s) based upon changes in the needs of the child, changes in the circumstances of the adoptive family, or changes in the maximum allowable adoption assistance payment. Documentation of changes in the child's needs or family's circumstances may be required.

Subsidy Note:

Children at high risk for the development of a serious physical, mental, or emotional condition may be considered special needs if documentation of the risk is provided by a medical professional specializing in the area of the condition for which the child is considered at risk, but no subsidy payment will be made without documentation that the child has developed the actual condition.

B. Medical Care

1. Medical benefits as provided under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (Medicaid) will be available to the child in accordance with the procedure of the State in which the child resides.
2. Medical payments will be provided by the State of Arkansas for

(Specify condition, illness, treatment, etc.)

if not provided by Title XIX, regardless of the State in which the child lives.

Total cost of treatment \$ _____

- 3 Procedures for meeting cost of medical care, including consideration of family's health insurance [Arkansas Act 99 of 1987 requires insurers to cover adoptive children from the date of the filing of the petition if the petition is filed within 60 days of the child's birth].
-
-

C. Social Services

1. Social Services as provided under Title XX of the Social Security Act will be available to the child in accordance with the procedures of the State in which the child resides.
2. Social Services will be provided by the State of Arkansas, if not provided by Title XX, regardless of the State in which the child resides.
3. How to access Title XX services:

Contact your local Department of Human Services county office.

D. Procedures to be followed when moving from the State of Arkansas.

Adoptive parents must follow these procedures in order to receive adoption assistance medical care and social services when moving to or living in a state other than Arkansas. (Arkansas is a member of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance.)

Medical Care

1. At least ten (10) days prior to the planned move the adoptive family should contact their adoption specialist.
2. Upon arrival in the new resident state contact the local state Medicaid office to surrender the Medicaid card issued by the State of Arkansas and make application for Medicaid in the new resident state. Take a copy of this agreement with you.

Social Services

1. Contact the state agency responsible for the provision of social services in your new resident state. Take a copy of this agreement with you.

II. Notification of Change

- A. The adoptive parent(s) will notify the division, in writing, within five (5) days if parent(s) is no longer legally responsible for the support of the child or is no longer supporting the child. A written statement is required.
- B. The amount of the subsidy may be adjusted automatically due to increases in age of the child. These are system-generated adjustments and no notice will be sent.
- C. Adoptive parent(s) will notify the Division of changes of address at least ten (10) days prior to the move.

III. Certification of Adoption Subsidy Eligibility

For federally funded subsidies, verification of circumstances to continue the subsidy must be documented annually. To verify a continued need for subsidy in out of state cases the child's school, therapist, physician or clergy can provide verification by submitting a letter which states that the adoptive parent(s) still has the care and responsibility for the child.

The Adoption Support Specialist will forward a cover memo along with the CFS-431 (Notarized Statement on Eligibility for State Subsidy) to the adoptive parents annually. The cover memo will inform the adoptive parents that the local Adoption Specialist will contact them to schedule a visit.

The adoptive parents will complete and submit the CFS-431 to the DCFS Adoptions Unit within ten (10) working days of the date accompanying the cover letter.

The Adoption Specialist will have annual face-to-face contact with the child or otherwise verify that the child is still with the adoptive family. The adoption specialist should make the face to face contact a positive experience by exploring any needs for post adoption services. The adoption specialist should also inquire as whether the adoptive parents have added the adoptive child to their medical insurance and if so the family must complete a DCO-662 (Third Party Resource). The adoption specialist is responsible for submitting the completed form to the Medical Services Section of the Medical Services Division.

IV. Termination-

Termination will occur in any of the following circumstances:

- A. This Agreement will terminate upon the conclusion of the terms of this Agreement.
- B. This Agreement will terminate upon the adoptive parent(s)' request.
- C. Adoption assistance payments will terminate when the child reaches the age of 18. Adoption assistance will be provided until the child is 21 years of age if the child has a mental or physical handicap, which warrants continuation.
- D. This Agreement will terminate upon the child's death.
- E. This Agreement will terminate upon the death of the adoptive parent(s) of the child (one in a single parent family and both in a two-parent family).
- F. This Agreement will terminate at the cessation of legal responsibility of the adoptive parent(s) for the child.
- G. This Agreement will terminate if the Division determines that the child is no longer receiving support from the adoptive parent(s).
- H. Was deleted

V. Appeal-

Adoptive parent(s) may appeal the division's decision to reduce, change or terminate adoption assistance in accordance with rules and procedures of the State's hearing and appeal process. Information may be requested from the **Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services, Adoptions Unit, P.O. Box 1437, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203-1437.**

This Agreement shall remain in effect regardless of the State in which the adoptive parent(s) are residents at any given time.

This Agreement will expire on the child's 18th birthday unless termination occurs as a result of one or more of the conditions set forth in Section IV, Termination.

Effective date for Titles XIX and XX: **UPON FINALIZATION**

Director's Signature
Division of Children and Family Services

Date

Adoptive Mother's Signature

Date

Adoptive Father's Signature

Date

Signed copy of the Adoption Assistance Agreement given/sent to adoptive parent(s) on _____
Date

Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children & Family Services
Adoption Assistance Agreement
For Non-Recurring Adoption Expense Payment

The following Agreement has been entered into by and between:

Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services, P.O. Box 1437, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203, hereafter called the "Division" and

_____ / _____
(Adoptive/Adopting Parent(s)' Full Name(s)

_____ / _____
(Address) (Telephone #)

hereafter called the "adoptive parent(s)" for

_____ Date of Birth _____
(Child's Full Adoptive Name) Social Security Number (Date)

and to aid the adoptive family in providing proper care for this child, hereafter referred to as "the child" in this Agreement.

The prospective adoptive parent(s) agrees that he/she intends to adopt or has adopted the child and has signed this document for the purposes of receiving non-recurring adoption assistance payments.

PROVISIONS OF AGREEMENT

I. Assistance

- A. Non-recurring Adoption Expenses (For expenses incurred or paid on or after January 1, 1987. Payment limited to \$1,500 per child.)

List specific items and cost of each:

II. Notification of Change

- A. The adoptive parent(s) will notify the division, in writing, within five (5) days if parent(s) is no longer legally responsible for the support of the child or is no longer supporting the child.
- B. Adoptive parents will notify the division of changes of address at least ten (10) days prior to the move.

III. Termination

Termination will occur in any of the following circumstances:

- A. This Agreement will terminate upon the conclusion of the terms of this agreement.
- B. This Agreement will terminate upon the adoptive parent(s) request.
- C. This Agreement will terminate at the cessation of legal responsibility of the adoptive parent(s) for the child.
- D. This Agreement will terminate if the division determines that the child is no longer receiving support from the adoptive parent(s).

IV. Appeal

Adoptive parent(s) may appeal the division's decision to reduce, change or terminate adoption assistance in accordance with rules and procedures of the State's hearing and appeal process. Information may be requested from the **Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services, Adoptions Unit, P.O. Box 1437, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203.**

This Agreement shall remain in effect regardless of the State in which the adoptive parents are residents at any given time.

Total amount authorized for payment \$ _____

Director's Signature
Division of Children and Family Services

Date

Adoptive Mother's Signature

Date

Adoptive Father's Signature

Date

Signed copy of the Adoption Assistance Agreement for non-recurring adoption assistance payment given/sent to adoptive parent(s)/ agency on _____.
(Date)

**Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services
Special Adoption Subsidy Re-Evaluation**

We (I) hereby give consent for the release of medical and/or social information concerning:

Child's Name

for the purpose of re-determining eligibility for the continuation of special subsidy under the Arkansas Subsidized Adoption Program. It is requested that the information be forwarded to the following Adoption Specialist:

Signature of Adoptive Father

Signature of Adoptive Mother

Date

Provider should complete this section:

Diagnosed Condition Covered by Subsidy: _____

Current Treatment Plan: _____

Anticipated Duration of Treatment: _____

Projected Cost (up to twelve months): _____

Provider's Name

Title

Date

Address

Telephone Number

Provider's Signature

INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose

The CFS-429 form is utilized annually to verify the child's continued eligibility for a special subsidy and to project the type and amount of special subsidy.

Completion

The Adoption Specialist shall first secure the signature(s) of the adoptive parent(s). The CFS-429 form shall then be forwarded to the provider of the special subsidy. The provider shall return the completed form to the Adoption Specialist.

Routing

The Adoption Specialist shall have a copy made of the CFS-429 form. The original shall be forwarded to Adoption Services, Central Office. The CFS-425 form and CFS-427 form shall accompany the CFS-429. A copy of the CFS-429 shall be retained in the case record permanently.

Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services
 Central Office Adoptions Unit
 P.O. Box 1437, Slot S565
 Little Rock, AR 72203-1437

CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION SUBSIDY ELIGIBILITY

CHILDREN'S NAMES	BIRTHDATE	DATE OF FINALIZATION
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

I, (we) _____ adopted the above named child(ren) as indicated.
Print adoptive parent's name(s)

The child(ren) remains under my care and the original condition(s) that resulted in the child(ren) being certified for an adoption subsidy continues to exist. YES ___ NO ___

THE FOLLOWING SIGNATURES MUST BE COMPLETED IN THE PRESENCE OF A NOTARY

A. Signature of Adoptive Mother: _____ Date: _____

B. Signature of Adoptive Father: _____ Date: _____

THIS SECTION MUST BE FILLED OUT AND STAMPED BY THE NOTARY

Subscribed and sworn to, before me this _____ day of _____, 20__

My commission expires _____

NOTARY

Printed name of Notary _____

Signature of the Notary _____

IMPORTANT

This certification of eligibility must be completed and returned to the Arkansas Division of Children and Family Services within ten (10) working days of the date on the accompanying cover letter.

INSTRUCTIONS

PURPOSE

The CFS-431 provides a place to formally certify and notarize that adoptive children continue to be eligible to receive a subsidy.

COMPLETION

In the top section of the form, the adoptive parent(s) should print the NAME, BIRTHDATE and DATE OF FINALIZATION of each adoption for each child. The adoptive parent(s) should print their own names, read the following statement and check EITHER "Yes" or "No".

In the middle section of the form, the adoptive parents should sign and date the form, BUT only in the presence of a Notary.

The bottom section of the form should be filled out, signed, dated and stamped by the Notary, who observed the adoptive parents sign the form.

ROUTING

The completed and notarized form should be mailed back to the Central Office Adoption Unit at the address provided at the top of the form.

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

RECOMMENDATION FOR FINALIZATION OF AN ADOPTION

Child's Birth Name _____

Child's Date of Birth _____ Child's Race _____

Child's Place of Birth _____

Termination Date _____

Date Placed in Adoptive Home _____

County of Placement _____

Family's Address _____

Length of Time the Family Has Been At This Address _____

Adoptive Father's Date of Birth _____ Race _____

Adoptive Father's Place of Birth _____

Adoptive Mother's Date of Birth _____ Race _____

Adoptive Mother's Place of Birth _____

Adoptive Mother's Maiden Name _____

Adoptive Parent's Date of Marriage _____

Adoptive Parent's Place of Marriage _____

CHECKLIST OF ATTACHMENTS:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ___ CFS-414 (recommending legal work begin) | ___ Copy of CFS-400 (adoption application) |
| ___ Adoptive parents' adoption home study | ___ Copy of CFS-428 (subsidy agreement, if applicable) |
| ___ Child's adoption summary | ___ Termination court order |
| ___ Post placement narrative | ___ Child's certified birth certificate |
| ___ Results of FBI criminal records check (if applicable) | ___ Other _____ |

Adoption Specialist Signature Date

Adoption Supervisor Signature Date

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
RECOMMENDATION FOR FINALIZATION OF AN ADOPTION
CFS-432**

PURPOSE

This form documents the approval of the Adoption Specialist and Adoption Supervisor for the OCC attorney, or if applicable, an attorney in private practice, to initiate the process to finalize an adoption. It further verifies the information and forms, reports, and documents that are being submitted to initiate the process to finalize an adoption.

COMPLETION

The Adoption Specialist will complete and sign the form to approve that the process to finalize the adoption should be initiated. The following information will be completed:

Child's Birth Name: Enter the complete name of the child as documented on the child's birth certificate.

Child's Date Of Birth: Enter the birth date of the child that is documented on the child's birth certificate.

Child's Race: Enter the child's race.

Child's Place Of Birth: Enter the city and state that are documented on the child's birth certificate.

Termination Date: Enter the date on the court order when the birth/legal parent(s) rights were terminated.

Date Placed In Adoptive Home: Enter the date that the child was placed in the adoptive home.

County Of Placement: Enter the name of the adoptive parent's resident county.

Family's Address: Enter the complete address of the adoptive family.

Length Of Time The Family Has Been At This Address: Enter the length of the time the family has resided at their current address.

Adoptive Father's Date Of Birth: Enter the birth date of the adoptive mother that is documented on the mother's birth certificate.

Race: Enter the adoptive father's race.

Adoptive Father's Place Of Birth: Enter the city and state where the adoptive father was born.

Adoptive Mother's Date Of Birth: Enter the birth date of the adoptive mother that is documented on the mother's birth certificate.

Race: Enter the adoptive mother's race.

Adoptive Mother's Place Of Birth: Enter the city and state where the adoptive mother was born.

Adoptive Mother's Maiden Name: Enter the maiden name of the adoptive mother.

Adoptive Parent's Date Of Marriage: Enter the date of marriage as documented on the marriage license.

Adoptive Parent's Place Of Marriage: Enter the place of marriage documented on the marriage license.

Attachments: (1) Change of Status (CFS 414), (2) adoptive parent's adoption home study (including all updates), (3) child's adoption summary, (4) post placement narrative, (5) results of FBI criminal record check if applicable, (6) copy of Adoption Application (CFS-400), (7) copy of the Adoption Subsidy Agreement (CFS-428) if applicable, (8) termination of parental rights court order, (9) child's certified birth certificate, and (10) any other documents that the court may require.

The Adoption Supervisor will sign the form to approve the recommendation to finalize the adoption.

ROUTING

The Adoption Supervisor will forward the original completed form and the attachments to the OCC Attorney, or attorney in private practice (if applicable). The Adoption Specialist will retain a copy of the completed form and the attachments for the child's file.

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

INDIVIDUALIZED ADOPTION RECRUITMENT PLAN

CHILD'S NAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ RESIDENT COUNTY _____

ADOPTION SPECIALIST _____ DATE ASSIGNED _____ DATES REVISED _____

STRATEGY	NAME OF CONTACT	DEADLINE	COMPLETED	RESULTS / COMMENTS
DCFS Photo-listing				
DCFS Website				
Adopt US Kids				
Other Exchange				
Present Foster Care Provider				
Past Foster Care Provider				
Maternal Relative				
Paternal Relative				
Friends				
Neighbors / Community				
Professionals				

STRATEGY	NAME OF CONTACT	DEADLINE	COMPLETED	RESULTS / COMMENTS
Newspaper				
Radio				
Television				
Flyer				
Mailer				
Newsletter				
Poster				
Personal Video				
Recruitment Booth				
Adoption Party				
Presentation				
Support Group				
Other				

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
INDIVIDUALIZED ADOPTION RECRUITMENT PLAN**

PURPOSE

This form develops a plan to recruit an adoptive family for a child and to document the progress. It is not required for a child with a plan of foster parent or kinship foster parent adoption.

COMPLETION

The Adoption Specialist will complete the following:

Child's Name: Enter the child's name.

Date of Birth: Enter the child's date of birth.

Resident County: Enter the child's resident county.

Adoption Specialist: Enter the name of the child's Adoption Specialist.

Date Assigned: Enter the date that the child is assigned to the Adoption Specialist

Dates Revised: Enter the dates that the plan is revised.

Strategy: Select the strategies that are to be implemented to recruit an adoptive family.

Name of Contact: Enter the name of the person, who is to be contacted to achieve the strategy.

Deadline: Enter the proposed date that the strategy is to be achieved.

Completed: Enter the date that the strategy is completed.

Results/Comments: Enter results of the strategy to recruit an adoptive family or related comments.

The Adoption Specialist will periodically assess and revise the recruitment plan when appropriate.

ROUTING

The Adoption Specialist will retain the completed recruitment form.

5. Name and address of adoptive mother and father (include name even if deceased).

Mother _____
 Last First Middle Maiden

Father _____
 Last First Middle

_____ Mailing address _____ Zip code

6. Siblings and/or 2nd degree relatives with whom you would like to be in contact.

Name and Relationship	Date of Birth	Last Known Address (include zip code)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

7. Provide any other information you feel will be helpful in processing this application (use page 4 if additional space is necessary).

C. 1. Name and address of birth mother

_____ Last First Middle Maiden

_____ Mailing address _____ Zip code _____ () Phone

2. Name and address of birth father

_____ Last First Middle

_____ Mailing address _____ Zip code _____ () Phone

3. Name(s) given to child(ren) at birth with whom you would like to be in contact.

Name	Date of Birth	Birthplace Hospital/City/State	Date Released For Adoption
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

4. **Provide any other information you feel would be helpful in processing this application.** (Use page 4 if Necessary.)

D. COUNSELING STATEMENT (To be completed by counselor for persons who are registering to receive identifying information only.)

I hereby confirm that _____
Name of Registrant
of _____
Address
_____ completed a one hour counseling session on _____ as
Date of Birth Date
required for registration with the Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry of the State of Arkansas.

_____	_____	_____
Signature of Counselor	Title	Date
_____	_____	_____
Agency name	Agency address	
_____	_____	_____
Phone Number	License Number	Effective Date

E. IDENTIFICATION AND NOTARIZATION OF AFFIDAVIT/REGISTRATION (ALL REGISTRANTS MUST COMPLETE SECTION E.)

State of _____)
County of _____)

I _____
Name of Registrant
solemnly attest that all of the information provided on this affidavit
Is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge under the penalty of perjury. I have provided proof of
identification to the notary public whose signature appears below.

Signature of Registrant
(Signature must be notarized)

SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS

_____ day of _____ 20__

mailing address of registrant

Notary Public
My commission expires _____

**NOTARY
SEAL**

Space for Additional Comments

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

ADOPTION RECRUITMENT AGREEMENT

I, _____, _____, agree to the
Child's Name Date of Birth
following activities for the Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services (DHS/DCFS) to find a family to adopt me:

ACTIVITY	Yes	No
DHS/DCFS photo listing album (Photograph and brief description of me)	_____	_____
DHS/DCFS computer web site (Photograph and brief description of me)	_____	_____
Adopt US Kids national computer web site (Photograph and brief description of me)	_____	_____
Poster (Photograph of me)	_____	_____
Brochure/Flyer (Photograph and/or brief description of me)	_____	_____
Newspaper (Photograph and/or brief description of me)	_____	_____
Newsletter (Photograph and/or brief description of me)	_____	_____
Radio (Brief description of me)	_____	_____
Video (About me for television)	_____	_____
Video (About me for families to see)	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____

I understand that only my first name will be used in these activities and my address will not be given to anyone.

Child's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness Signature and Title: _____ Date: _____

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
CFS-467
ADOPTION RECRUITMENT AGREEMENT**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this form is to document a child's permission to use his/her photograph and a brief description in activities to recruit an adoptive family. If it is necessary to recruit an adoptive family for a child, this form is required if the child is ten years of age or older.

COMPLETION

The Adoption Specialist will present and explain the form to the child for completion and signature. If the child is not mentally competent to sign the form, it will be presented and explained to the child's attorney ad litem for completion and signature. It is necessary to secure the signature of a witness to the child signing the form. The Adoption Specialist will help the child understand each activity before the form is completed. The child will check "Yes" or "No" to each activity.

ROUTING

The Adoption Specialist will retain the completed form and send a copy to the child's Family Service Worker for the child's record. The Adoption Specialist will send a copy to the Adoption Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit, in order for information to be registered about the child on an adoption web site or photo listing.

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
CFS-468
ADOPTION---DATA MATCHING**

PURPOSE

This form is included in the process to select an appropriate adoptive family for a child or sibling group. Significant characteristics about a child or sibling group are identified on the form. The characteristics are entered into a computerized data matching system. A list of approved adoptive applicants, who will accept or consider the characteristics, is produced. The home studies and completed forms on the approved adoptive applicants are forwarded to the child's Adoption Specialist to determine if an appropriate adoptive family can be selected.

COMPLETION

The Adoption Specialist for a child will complete the following information on the form:

Date: Enter the date the form is completed.

Adoption Specialist: Enter the name of the Adoption Specialist for the child.

Name and Date of Birth: Enter the child's name and date of birth. Note: The number by the child's name will correspond with number in the column of characteristics about the child.

Characteristics: Enter information about the child's sex and race and identify up to six additional significant characteristics. Enter a "M" or "F" in the column for the sex of the child. Enter the following code in the column for the race of the child: 1-Caucasian, 2-Native American, 3-Caucasian/Native American, 4-African American, 5-Caucasian/African American, 6-Hispanic, 7-Asian.

ROUTING

The Adoption Specialist will forward the completed form to the Adoption Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit, and Central Office. The Adoption Coordinator will enter the identified characteristics of the child into the data matching system and will forward the list of approved adoptive applicants to the Adoption Specialist. The home studies and completed forms on the approved adoptive applicants will be forwarded with the list.

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
SELECTION OF ADOPTIVE FAMILY**

<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Foster Care Category</u>	<u>Special Need Category</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Legal Status: () Custody () Termination of Parental of Parental Rights

SELECTION OF APPROVED APPLICANT:

Name and Address: _____

Reason(s) for Selection: _____

Subsidy Considerations (if applicable): _____

Special Comments: _____

_____	_____	_____	_____
Adoption Specialist	Date	Adoption Supervisor	Date
		() Approved	() Denied

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
CFS-470
SELECTION OF ADOPTIVE FAMILY**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this form is to document the selection of an adoptive family for a child by providing specific information about the child, name of the selected approved adoptive applicant, the reason(s) for the selection of the approved applicant, and information for adoption subsidy eligibility (if applicable). The form is not required for a foster parent, kinship foster parent, or relative adoption.

COMPLETION

The Adoption Specialist for a child will complete the form if an approved adoptive applicant is determined to be an appropriate adoptive family after assessing the adoption home study and completed adoption forms of approved adoptive applicants.

The Adoption Specialist will complete the following information on the form:

Name of Child: Enter the name of the child.

Date of Birth: Enter the date of birth of the child.

Foster Care Category: Enter if the child is in category IV-E, Non-IV-E, IV-E/SSI, or Non-IV-E/SSI.

Special Need Category: Enter the appropriate code to describe if a child is in a special need category for adoption planning: C—Caucasian child nine years of age or older, CC—Child of color two years of age or older, S—Sibling group of three or more children being placed together, M—Severe medical need that requires ongoing rehabilitation or treatment, P—Severe psychological need that requires ongoing rehabilitation or treatment, and/or HR—High risk for the development of a serious medical, mental, or emotional condition. Enter N/A (not applicable) if the child does not qualify for a special need category.

Legal Status: Enter custody if termination of parental rights has not been granted and a legal risk adoption is planned, or enter termination of parental rights if it has been granted.

Selection of Approved Applicant: Enter the name and address of the family that is being recommended as an appropriate adoptive family for a child. Enter the reason(s) for the selection of the approved adoptive applicant.

Subsidy Consideration: Document efforts to select an approved adoptive applicant who does not require an adoption subsidy. Enter N/A (not applicable) if a child does not qualify for a special need category.

Special Comments: Enter information to explain special situations, needs, or facts such as siblings being separated and ongoing contacts are recommended, ongoing contacts with significant others, special resources the child needs, financial resources the child has beyond foster care board payment, etc.

Signature: Enter signature and date of signature.

The Adoption Supervisor will complete the following information on the form:

Signature: Enter signature and date of signature and approve or deny the selection.

ROUTING

The Adoption Specialist for the child will retain the completed form. If the selected approved adoptive applicant does not have the same Adoption Specialist, the child's Adoption Specialist will keep a copy of the form and route the original form to the approved applicant's Adoption Specialist with the child's disclosure packet (child's adoption summary and attachments). If an adoption subsidy application is filed for the child, a copy of the completed form will be included with the initial application packet that is forwarded by the Adoption Specialist to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit, Central Office.

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

DISCLOSURE FOR ADOPTION

The following non-identifying information has been provided to me in relation to the proposed adoption of:

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

___ Adoption Summary Dated: _____ Adoption Summary Update(s) Dated: _____

___ Photographs _____

___ Hospital Birth Records _____

___ Medical Evaluation Reports: _____

___ Immunization Record _____

___ Dental Evaluation Reports Dated: _____

___ Eye Evaluation Reports Dated: _____

___ Psychological Evaluation Reports Dated: _____

___ Counseling Progress Reports Dated: _____

___ Speech Evaluation Reports Dated: _____

___ Educational Reports Dated: _____

___ Other: _____

Date Reviewed by Adoption Supervisor: _____ Signature: _____

Date Received: _____ Prospective Adoptive Mother's Signature: _____

Date Received: _____ Prospective Adoptive Father's Signature: _____

Adoption Specialist's Signature/Date: _____

Date Reviewed with Adoption Specialist: _____

Prospective Adoptive Mother's Signature: _____

Date Reviewed with Adoption Specialist: _____

Prospective Adoptive Mother's Signature: _____

Adoption Specialist's Signature/Date: _____

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
CFS-471
DISCLOSURE FOR ADOPTION**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this form is to document that specific non-identifying information and reports about a child have been received by a prospective adoptive parent(s). It further documents that the Adoption Specialist has reviewed the information and reports with the prospective adoptive parent(s). It is required for all adoptions.

COMPLETION

The Adoption Specialist for a child will complete the form after the child's adoption summary and packet have been completed and an adoptive family has been selected. In relation to a foster parent or kinship foster parent adoption, the Adoption Specialist will complete the form after the child's adoption summary and packet have been completed and before the assessment/adoption home study is completed.

The line near the left margin of the form must be checked by the Adoption Specialist to verify what is being disclosed and the line to the right must be completed to verify the date of each report that is being disclosed.

ROUTING

The Adoption Specialist for a child will forward the completed form to the Adoption Supervisor, who will sign and date the form, to confirm the adoption summary and packet and the form have been reviewed and are accurate.

The Adoption Specialist for the prospective adoptive parent(s) will present the adoption summary and packet and form to the prospective adoptive parent(s). The Adoption Specialist will sign and date the form to verify when the information is received by the prospective adoptive parent(s). The prospective adoptive parent(s) will sign and date the form to verify when the information is received.

The Adoption Specialist for the family will sign and date the form to verify when the information is reviewed with the prospective adoptive parent(s), who will sign and date the form to verify the information has been reviewed.

The child's adoption summary and packet and the form must be presented to the prospective adoptive parent(s) prior to initiating the pre-placement visits. In relation to a foster parent or kinship foster parent adoption, the child's adoption summary and packet and the form must be presented to the prospective adoptive parent(s) during the assessment/adoption home study process.

The original signed form must be filed in the child's record and a copy must be given to the prospective adoptive parent(s).