



Georgia Department of Human Services
Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services

MEMORANDUM

TO: Georgia Licensed Child Placing Agencies

FROM: Carol Winstead, Director

RE: Access to the Child Abuse Registry for Licensing Purposes

DATE: November 21, 2016

Georgia law requires the Department of Human Services' Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) to maintain a registry (Child Abuse Registry) of all substantiated cases of abuse and neglect on or after July 1, 2016 into a centralized Child Protective Services Information System (CPSIS). See O.C.G.A. §§ 49-5-180 et seq. DFCS has begun to enter the names of all persons with a substantiated case of child abuse and/or neglect on or after July 1, 2016 into the Child Abuse Registry.

Your agency will now have access to information available in the Child Abuse Registry for licensing purposes. Child-placing agencies are required to protect the welfare of children by investigating the home and the character and reputation of the persons residing in the home. See O.C.G.A. § 49-5-12(j). Child-placing agencies, in arranging for children to receive care in foster homes or prospective adoptive homes, must assess the placement regarding room, board, and watchful oversight to be provided by the prospective foster or adoptive parent. See O.C.G.A. § 49-5-12(i). Licensing rules and regulations governing child-placing agencies provide that agencies shall comply with requirements of state laws affecting children and/or the operation of the child-placing agency. See CPA Rule 290-9-2-.03(12).

All licensed child-placing agencies may begin submitting screening requests to DFCS' CPSIS Unit for the purpose of complying with the above-mentioned licensing standards.

Screening requests must be submitted through the online portal via the website listed below. The website has a link for the form that must be completed and uploaded along with a request on your agency letterhead and a copy of your Child Placing Agency license from RCCL. Requests will not be processed without the following documents uploaded: a request on your agency letterhead, a completed request form (select 3rd box), and a copy of your child placing agency license issued by RCCL. DFCS estimates that results from the Child Abuse Registry request may take up to 30 days from the date of receipt of the request.

Agencies are expected to consider the results obtained from the CPSIS when making a decision on the approval status of a family for consideration of a foster care or adoption placement. Documentation of those results must be maintained in the applicant's file. Decisions to deny an application to provide foster care or adoption services based on the results of a CPSIS screening should be documented in writing to the applicant and maintained in the applicant's file. Per O.C.G.A. § 49-5-186, information obtained from the child abuse registry shall not be made a part of any record which is open to the public except as provided in the statute.

Please be advised that there is no historical information in the Child Abuse Registry prior to July 1, 2016. Child Protective Services (CPS) historical information remains in the Georgia SHINES data system. Obtaining information from the Georgia SHINES system is governed by strict confidentiality laws. See O.C.G.A. § 49-5-41. There is no provision for the sharing of Georgia SHINES information unless your agency is seeking a placement for a DFCS child or a child is being placed for foster care or adoption from another governmental child welfare agency.

Per Georgia law, information obtained from the Child Abuse Registry cannot be provided to unauthorized persons. You may access additional information regarding the Child Abuse Registry at <https://gacar.dhs.ga.gov/>.