



**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**Division of Family and Children Services**

**Nathan Deal**  
Governor

**Bobby D. Cagle**  
Director

August 10, 2015

**Child Welfare Services Manual Transmittal No. 2015-08**

**To:** County Departments of Family and Children Services  
DFCS Regional Directors  
State Office Staff

**From:** Bobby Cagle, Division Director  
Division of Family and Children Services

**Re:** Child Welfare Policy Manual: **Chapter 12: Adoption Assistance**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Child Welfare Services Manual Transmittal is to release Chapter 12: Adoption Assistance, of the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services' (DFCS) **new** Child Welfare Policy Manual.

**Discussion**

DFCS is committed to improving outcomes for the children and families served in Georgia and recognizes that sound policies are the foundation for building and maintaining a solid framework for the practice of child welfare services. DFCS has redesigned and revised all child welfare policies to ensure they are aligned with federal and state statutes and are rooted in child safety, permanency and well-being. The policy development process included the following:

1. Review of existing policies;
2. Inclusion of existing County Letters and Memoranda;
3. Inclusion of federal statutes governing child welfare practice, including the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the Social Security Act, etc.;
4. Inclusion of current state statutes governing child welfare practices;
5. Research of best practices and child welfare trends; and
6. Internal and external stakeholder contribution.

The new structure for each policy includes the following sections:

1. **Codes/References:** Applicable federal and/or state laws.
2. **Requirements** (policy statements): Actions/directives set forth based on the regulations, law or practice.
  - a. Requirements that are set forth by federal statute are stated exactly or as close as possible to the language in the legislation to ensure full compliance.

- b. All *italicized* requirements are those outlined in Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.
- 3. **Procedures:** A series of steps to accomplish the directives set forth in the requirements.
- 4. **Practice Guidance:** Provides staff practical guidance on how to effectively integrate good social work practice into their work to achieve positive family and child outcomes. This section also provides additional information, definitions and clarifications.
- 5. **Forms and Tools:** Relevant forms and tools for the specified policy.

**New features of the Child Welfare Policy Manual include:**

- 1. Consolidation of all Social Services Policy Manuals into a comprehensive Child Welfare Policy Manual.
- 2. All chapters have been organized by program area and subject matter.
- 3. All state and/or federal laws are referenced in the related policy.
- 4. Hyperlinks to related chapters and sections are provided for easy reference.

**NOTE:** Until all policies are uploaded to the Online Directives Information System (ODIS), some hyperlinks to other policies in the Child Welfare Policy Manual may not be operational.

**Chapter 12: Adoption Assistance**

The new Adoption Assistance chapter replaces the former section 109 and now incorporates Title IV-E and Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) requirements. This chapter outlines the eligibility, funding determination, application process and administration of adoption assistance benefits for adoptive children who have been determined to have special needs.

**Implementation**

The policy updates are effective upon the release of this manual transmittal.

Regional and County Leadership shall provide opportunities for staff to review and discuss the updated policies to ensure they are implemented into practice. Please refer to policy [1.3 Information Management: Access, Distribution and Review of Child Welfare Policies](#) for applicable requirements and procedures.

Questions may be directed to the Field Program Specialist in your region. Regional staff may submit questions to [PPPDUnit@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:PPPDUnit@dhs.ga.gov).