

	<b>GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL</b>			
	<b>Chapter:</b>	(11) Adoption	<b>Effective Date:</b>	August 2015
	<b>Policy Title:</b>	Post-Placement Supervision		
<b>Policy Number:</b>	11.10	<b>Previous Policy #:</b>	107.1; 107.3; 107.4	

**CODES/REFERENCES**

N/A

**REQUIREMENTS**

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

1. Have contact with the pre-adoptive family and the child on the day following the Adoption Placement Signing.  
**NOTE:** If contact with the pre-adoptive family and the child the day following the Adoption Placement Signing was by telephone, make face-to-face contact with the pre-adoptive family and the child within the first week following the Adoptive Placement Signing.
2. Conduct monthly face-to-face visits with the child until the adoption is finalized.
3. Conduct all of the monthly visits in the adoptive home to allow for the best assessment of the adjustment of the family as a whole.
4. Determine the effect the change in family composition poses to the child when there is a change to the family composition (births, other additions/subtractions to the family, death, divorce, separation or marriage) during the post-placement period:
  - a. Inform Resource Development and the Adoption Exchange, State Adoption Unit of any change in family composition in writing within five business days DFCS being aware of the family composition change;
  - b. Consult with the Adoption Exchange, State Adoption Unit within 10 business days of DFCS being aware of the family composition change; and
  - c. Complete a family evaluation addendum.
5. Set a tentative time limit with the pre-adoptive family for the length of the post-placement period.
6. Make no new placements in the pre-adoptive family’s home during the post-placement period.  
**EXCEPTION:** New placements are permitted if it is to facilitate the placement of a sibling of a child with the same pre-adoptive family.
7. Obtain written approval from the State Adoption Unit to release for adoption a child who has been in a pre-adoptive home for less than four months.

**PROCEDURES**

The Resource Development Social Services Case Manager (SSCM) or pre-adoptive family’s Child Placing Agency’s Case Worker will:

1. The *day following* the adoptive placement:

- a. Have face-to-face contact with the pre-adoptive family and the child; or
  - b. Make telephone contact with the pre-adoptive family and the child.
- NOTE:** Make face-to-face contact with the pre-adoptive family and the child within the first week following the adoptive placement if the day after contact was by telephone.
2. Have monthly face-to-face visits with the child (see policy [10.18 Foster Care: Purposeful Contacts In Foster Care](#)).
  3. Have the entire pre-adoptive family present for at least three visits during each six months of the post-placement period.
  4. Enter all documentation from monthly visits into Georgia SHINES.
  5. Ensure that the family understands that the SSCM or Case Worker is available to assist as needed.
  6. Provide supportive services to assist in the adjustment of the new family.
  7. Complete a family evaluation addendum or the foster parent adoption consideration evaluation when there is a change to the family composition, during the post-placement period in accordance with policy [14.14 Resource Development: Family Evaluation Addendums](#) or [11.6 Adoption: Post-Placement Supervision](#) which includes but is not limited to:
    - a. A home visit is to gather input from the adoptive parent(s), interview new adult household members (if applicable), observe the family interactions and dynamics, etc.;
    - b. The impact the family composition change will have on the adoption;
    - c. A recommendation as to what action will be in the best interest of the child; and
  - a. Submit a copy of the family evaluation addendum to the Adoption Exchange, State Adoption Unit.
  8. If the post-placement period needs to extend beyond six months:
    - a. Complete a summary of supervision that includes:
      - i. A summary of events that have occurred over the six-month period of supervision;
      - ii. Identify barriers or other issues that have prevented the family from proceeding with finalization;
      - iii. Identify reasons the supervising agency is not ready to recommend finalization;
      - iv. Determine a plan for resolving the barriers/issues identified, and identify services that will be implemented during the extension period which have not previously been provided; and
      - v. A similar summary must be submitted each six months until the recommendation for finalization is made.
    - b. Send a copy to the Adoption Exchange, State Adoption Unit, and the County Director/Designee of the child's legal county.

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

1. Have monthly face-to-face visits with a child during the post-placement period until the adoption is finalized (see policy [10.18 Foster Care: Purposeful Contacts In Foster Care](#)).
2. Conduct all visits in the adoptive placement.
3. When there is a change to the family composition, during the post-placement period:
  - a. Notify Resource Development and the Adoption Exchange, State Adoption Unit of

- the change to the family composition
- b. Consult with the Adoption Exchange, State Adoption Unit within 10 business days of DFCS being aware of the family composition change.
  - c. Review the family evaluation addendum to determine whether another recommendation for the child(ren) will need to be made based on the new family composition.

The Adoption Exchange, State Adoption Unit within five business days will:

1. Review the summary of supervision.
2. Determine if further action or guidance is necessary.

## **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Post-placement is the period of time between the signing of the placement agreement and the legal finalization of the adoption. During the post-placement period, it is important that all visits occur in the home to allow for the best assessment of the adjustment of the family as a whole. During the visits, the SSCM shall continuously evaluate the family and interaction as to the following circumstances:

1. The emergence of factors not previously identified (e.g., critical information not recognized by SSCM or family).
2. Inaccurate assessment of family or child (e.g., capability or readiness of family or child to make an adoptive attachment, type of child family can parent).
3. The emergence of unpredictable circumstances.
4. Lack of preparation for placement of either child, family or both.

It is the responsibility of the SSCM during the post-placement period to assist the pre-adoptive family as follows:

1. Help the family cope with their new interactions within the home and community.
2. Refer to resources in the community (see policy [11.13 Adoption: Support Services: Post Adoptive Placement & Post Adoption](#) for a list of available resources).
3. Make a referral to agency resources and/or initiate wraparound services.
4. Assist with ongoing separation and attachment issues.
5. Assist the family with maintaining connections with siblings, other birth relatives, foster parents and significant others.
6. Help the family recognize, accept and manage the needs of the particular child(ren) in the placement.
7. Assist the family to balance the needs of the child versus the needs of the parents.
8. Help the family understand that attachment will not occur immediately.
9. Help the child express and manage unarticulated fears.
10. Help the family members learn to handle questions from extended family, neighbors, friends or community members, including development of a cover story if needed.
11. Assist the family with methods of discipline for the child
12. Help the family use and maintain the Life Book.
13. Help the parents to learn to separate adoption-related issues from normal issues relating to age and development.
14. Encourage families to participate in ongoing training.

Changes to a family's composition can affect the adoption in various ways. It is imperative

that family composition changes are reported. The family's evaluation will have to be re-evaluated to determine the effect the change in family composition poses to the child and whether another recommendation will need to be made based on the new family composition. In most circumstances, the SSCM who is making routine child visits in the home is the first to be made aware of the changes and should immediately report it to the Resource Development unit. Once a child is placed on adoptive status, no new placements should be made unless it is to facilitate the placement of a sibling of a child in the home.

The length of time a family spends in the post-placement phase varies depending upon the child involved. The length of the post-placement period can be renegotiated at any point as necessary. The usual length of time is six months; however, the length of time will depend on a number of factors, including:

1. Age of the child
2. Issues/concerns identified pre-placement
3. Needs of the child
4. Adjustment concerns during post-placement

The post-placement supervision for an infant that does not have any physical, psychological or developmental needs can be considerably shorter as long as at least two monthly visits are made. Prior to the finalization of the adoption, it is important that the pre-adoptive family inform the agency of any problems that occur.

If a petition seeking adoption of the child is not filed within six months, the court shall then, and at least semi-annually thereafter as long as the child remains unadopted, review the circumstances of the child to determine what efforts have been made to assure that the child will be adopted (see policy [17.2 Legal: Case Review/Permanency Plan Hearings](#) for information on permanency reviews). The court may then enter such orders as it deems necessary to further the adoption including, but not limited to, another placement.

## **FORMS AND TOOLS**

[Creating and Using Life Books](#)