



<b>Series</b>	300: Child and Family Assessment and Services
<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Preparation of the Child and Case for Adoption</b>
<b>Policy Number</b>	312
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<b>References</b>	65C-16.002, F.A.C., 65C-16.004, F.A.C., 65C-16.009, F.A.C.

### **Related Documents**

**Policy**

It is the policy of Partnership for Strong Families (PSF) to strive to individualize services to meet the needs of children and families, including those involved in the process of adoption. PSF recognizes the significant bearing that trauma and abuse, termination of parental rights, and ultimately adoption have on the development and well-being of a child. PSF values the importance of adoption competent services to prepare children and families for adoption and understands the importance of preparing a detailed record of the child's history to guide decision-making and adoptive family preparedness. PSF believes in an approach which promotes the inherent dignity of children and respects their heritage through child-centered approaches to a child's prospective adoption transition and preservation of their history. It is also the policy of PSF to maintain and utilize procedures to implement this policy. PSF embraces a collaborative, strategic approach to risk management, which includes identifying and addressing threats and opportunities the organization faces at every level. This policy is written in accordance with the PSF Risk Management Plan.

### **Procedure**

#### **A. Preparation of the Child for Adoption**

1. At the time that a child's goal is changed to adoption, adoption activities will begin toward gathering information to be used for the assessment of the child and planning for the preparation of an adoptive family to be able to meet the needs of the child and provide permanency through adoption. These activities will include:
  - a) Review of the child's developmental, medical, and family history by the adoption case manager;
  - b) Review of the child's experiences, including abuse history, traumas, and placements the child has had prior to and since his/her dependency case;



- c) Review of the child's educational history; and
- d) Review of the child's relationships, especially siblings to the child's case as well as siblings not involved in the present case such as those previously adopted.

## 2. The Study of the Child

Using information gathered from the review of the child's record and interviews with persons familiar with the child, and the child, if age-appropriate, the adoption case manager will prepare a Study of the Child. This study will detail the child's history and will provide an assessment of the current and projected needs of the child based on all available information. The study will assist in the assessment of the best placement of the child for permanency through adoption, will document the child's status as "difficult-to-place" for subsidy purposes, and will serve as a vehicle for sharing the child's history with the adoptive family. The Study of the Child will be completed within 90 days of the assignment of the adoption case manager as secondary.

## 3. Pre-Adoptive Psychological and Psychiatric Evaluations

Children known or suspected of having mental health needs must have a psychological or psychiatric evaluation prior to adoptive placement. This evaluation should be current within twelve months of the child's placement for adoption.

## 4. Pre-Placement Physical Examination

Prior to adoptive placement a child must have had a current well-child check-up as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. No child may be placed without a physical current within twelve months of adoptive placement. For children with a known or suspected medical condition, a physical current within six months of placement is required.

## 5. Adoption Competent Services

Whenever possible, a child whose goal is adoption, who is in need counseling to address concerns surrounding termination of parental rights and adoption readiness, should be referred for adoption competent clinical services. Adoption competent clinical services should also be considered when available to support the preparation of children and approved adoptive families for adoption transitions, especially those resulting from match selection.

## **B. Preparation of the Child's Case for Adoption**

1. At the time that a child's goal is changed to adoption, adoption activities will begin toward preparing the child's case for adoption. This will include:
  - a) Birth verification of children
    1. A copy of a birth certificate or birth verification shall be obtained for each child under court ordered in-home supervision within 15 days after the case transfer conference.



2. A copy of a birth certificate or birth verification shall be obtained for each child entering out-of-home care within 15 days of initial placement.
  3. For children born out-of-state, verification of the child's birth shall be requested within 15 days from initial placement and documented in the case file. Refer to subsection 65C-30.007(12), F.A.C., regarding the necessary actions when it is determined that a child was born in another country and has not established legal status.
  - b) A child's birth record will be requested within 30 days and obtained within 90 days of the Petition for Termination of Parental rights being filed.
  - c) A child's health history records, school records, mental health records, hospitalization records, and residential setting records will be requested within 30 days and obtained within 90 days of the Petition for Termination of Parental rights being filed
  - d) Creation of the child's Adoption Tab in FSFN;
  - e) Entering relevant developmental, medical, and psychological history on the child's Medical/Mental Health Tab to populate the child's status as "difficult-to-place" on the Adoption Tab in FSFN; and
  - f) Obtaining confirmation of the child's social security number;
  - g) Ensuring completion of all fields required in FSFN for the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)
  - h) A child's case record will be verified in FSFN within 30 days of the Petition for Termination of Parental rights being filed to ensure the following documents are in the Child Welfare Information System:
    1. Shelter Petition and Shelter Order
    2. Dependency Petition and Dependency Order
    3. Modification Petition and Modification Order if applicable
    4. Original Predisposition Report (ongoing Family Functioning Assessment)
    5. Case Plans that address the child's needs
    6. Protective Investigations identifying the child as a victim
    7. Guardian ad Litem report filed with the court concerning the child
    8. Psychological Evaluations and Comprehensive Assessments
    9. Names of providers who provided services to child while in foster care
  - i) Adoption packet will be provided to prospective adoptive parents to initiate the adoption process and shall only include the "Adoptive Home Application" form CF-FSP 5071, July 2021, which is available online at <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-13385>
2. Upon termination of parental rights (TPR), adoption activities will include:
- a) Completion of the child's Adoption Tab within ten days of TPR;
  - b) Registration of the child on the Explore Adoption website within thirty days of TPR. For a child without an identified adoptive family, the child must be made available, with photo and web-authorized within thirty days of issuance of the signed order terminating parental rights after obtaining consents to post web authorization for children 12 years and older, and;
  - c) Review of documents available in Perceptive Content—for completeness for adoption subsidy and prospective full-disclosure purposes.



### **C. Lifebooks**

1. Each child with a goal of adoption should have a Lifebook consisting of photos and documents available from the child's FSFN record and, whenever possible, additional resources such as family members and other significant adults in their lives, foster parents, and schools. Some Lifebook documents may be maintained as physical copies for inclusion in a book format, while all available content should be copied into the PSF electronic records system (Perceptive Content) for later release to the child and adoptive family on removable digital media.