

Title: Child Welfare Manual
Section 6: Resource Development
Chapter 8: Court Requested / Ordered Adoptive Assessment
Effective Date:

Section 6 Overview

This section is developed to guide Children's Service Workers in decision making, the provision and documentation of services to children and their families, development of community resources, and their subsequent assessment and utilization. These resources are designed to enhance and augment services to children and their families in need of preventive, protective, and out-of-home care services.

Procedures contained in this chapter incorporate assessment standards (largely based on licensing rules) which reflect the concern of the agency for those children who must live apart from their families during some part of their minority. The purpose of these standards is to protect those children from abuse, neglect, injury, and exploitation, and to assist in treatment and improved social functioning.

It is recognized that such direction cannot be all inclusive; therefore, staff will still need to exercise judgment in individual case situations. In those situations in which staff do not follow the procedures, they will be expected to document the justification for their actions in the individual case record.

With each procedure, and each step within a procedure, it may be necessary for the worker to secure supervisory assistance in order to make a decision. The procedures do not contain a reference to worker-supervisor conferences, but this joint decision-making activity is understood to be an integral part of service delivery to community resource providers.

Chapter 8 Overview

This chapter will describe the procedure for court requested/ordered adoptive assessments.

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8.1 Court Requested/Ordered Adoptive Assessment

Chapter Memoranda History: (prior to 01-31-07)

Memoranda History:

8.1 Court Requested/Ordered Adoptive Assessment

NOTE: Chapter 453, RSMo, allows the Juvenile Court to request/order Children's Division (CD) to complete assessments on families petitioning to adopt a child. If the child was placed prior to a petition being filed, the court is mandated to order CD to complete the assessment.

1. The Children's Services Worker will receive juvenile court request/order for adoptive family assessment and initiate contact with the family within 48 hours if the court ordered an assessment because transfer of custody occurred without a valid court order.
2. The Children's Services Supervisor will request that the court refer the investigation request to a private licensed agency on those assessments where there was a court order transferring custody.
 - a. The Children's Services Worker will initiate contact within ten days with prospective adoptive family, if court won't refer elsewhere.
3. Begin the assessment process by personal interview with prospective adoptive family.

Related Subject: Chapter 3.2, of this section, Adoptive Family Assessment

4. Compile pertinent historical and current information on the child to be adopted and his/her birth parents.
 - a. Compile information about the circumstances of the child's placement including an interview with the birth parents, especially if the court ordered the assessment because transfer of custody occurred prior to obtaining a court order.
 - b. Interview the child, if age appropriate.
 - c. Interview birth parents, if able to locate.
5. Assess child's physical, mental, racial/ethnic or other conditions pertinent to the suitability for adoption by the prospective family.
6. Assess prospective adoptive parent's suitability to parent the child.
7. Submit a written report to the court within 90 days of the request/order if child was legally placed in the home.

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8. Submit a written report to the court within 30 days of the request/order if assessment was ordered by the court because transfer of custody occurred prior to obtaining a court order.
9. Contact the court, in writing, prior to the date the assessment is due, if after diligent effort, the assessment cannot be completed. Inform court of the reason(s) the assessment could not be completed and when the court can expect it.
10. Provide a copy of the report to family's attorney and child's Guardian ad Litem.
11. Record activities.
12. Close record after submission of the report to the court unless the court requests additional assistance.

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