

Treatment: Role of the Treatment Worker in the Adoption Process

Case Transfer Prior to Termination of Parental Rights

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Policy

When the goal is adoption, a child's case may be transferred prior to termination or shall be transferred after Termination of Parental Rights to an adoption specialist.

If the treatment worker completes the Termination of Parental Rights process, then the treatment worker will follow the required time frames.

Cross-Reference: For a complete description of the adoption process, please refer to Chapter 48, Adoption.

Decision To Transfer to Adoption Specialist

The treatment worker shall have full responsibility for a child's case through Termination of Parental Rights unless the treatment supervisor decides to transfer the case to the adoption specialist.

The transfer shall be recorded in LINK.

Treatment Worker's Responsibilities Upon Transfer

Upon transfer to an adoption specialist, the treatment worker shall confer with the adoption specialist:

- provide genetic history (DCF-337B and DCF-338B)
- introduce the adoption specialist to the child and the child's caretakers
- be available to testify in court proceedings regarding Termination of Parental Rights.

The following meetings shall be recorded in LINK:

- Initial meeting between the treatment worker, adoption specialist and caretaker
 - Within two (2) weeks of the initial meeting, a meeting with the treatment worker, adoption specialist and child
 - Ongoing meetings between the treatment worker and the child to transition the case to the adoption specialist.
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Gathering Genetic Information

Upon receipt of the case, the assigned treatment worker or adoption specialist shall gather as much genetic information as possible regarding the parents and the child.

Efforts to obtain such information shall include, but not be limited to, speaking with the parents and known relatives and the previously assigned social workers.

Prior to forwarding the case for approval signatures for the purpose of adoption, the worker must file all information gathered in the record and document in LINK those efforts when no information was made available.

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Voluntary Consent

In a Voluntary Consent situation, the role of the adoption specialist or a treatment worker performing the same function will include the following:

- Within fifteen (15) days of transfer of the case, the adoption specialist, or the treatment worker within fifteen (15) days of a decision to file a petition for Termination of Parental Rights, will initiate the following:
 - obtain a copy of the child's birth certificate
 - ascertain who is the legal father or putative father
 - verify marriage and/or divorce
 - (If marriage can't be verified, assume it is valid.)
 - (If divorce can't be verified, assume the marriage is valid.)
 - attempt to locate birth parents, and if unable to locate them, seek advice from legal counsel
 - schedule a termination conference with the parents in which the following should be discussed:
 - review of the Department's efforts
 - lack of progress toward reunification
 - child's need for permanence
 - inability of parents' to meet child's needs
 - parents' right to seek counsel
 - review of meaning of termination
 - collection of information, including photos of parents and completion of DCF-337B, "Genetic Parents Information", and DCF-338B, "Medical Information on Genetic Parents".

Note: The adoption specialist or treatment worker completes DCF-337B, and in a parent's absence, must also complete DCF-338B as fully as possible.

Within five (5) days of parents' signing JD-JM-60 agreement, "Affidavit/Agreement for Termination of Parental Rights", petitions are prepared and forwarded to legal counsel.

The worker must review the case record to assure that the DCF-337B and the DCF-338B are completed and that all other information regarding the child(ren) has been obtained.

Life Book Development

Birth parents shall be encouraged to provide information which will help in developing the Life Book or which can be shared with the child when developmentally and clinically appropriate.

Such information can include photographs, mementos, and a letter to the child explaining the reason for termination of parental rights.

Consideration of Open Adoption

If there is consideration of Open Adoption, arrangements should be approached cautiously and with legal counsel as the Department will not be responsible for enforcing the agreement.

Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights

If Voluntary Termination of Parental Rights is not appropriate, the role of the adoption specialist or treatment worker in pursuing the contested or Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights is as follows:

- Within fifteen (15) days of transfer of the case, the adoption specialist, or within fifteen (15) days of the decision by the treatment worker to pursue Termination of Parental Rights, confer with legal counsel to determine the appropriate grounds and sufficiency of existing documentation.
- Prepare appropriate petitions as advised by the legal counsel and file in court within sixty (60) days.
- Monitor and document the progress of judicial proceedings in court.
- Assist the legal counsel.
- Obtain from the birth parents and/or relatives all information not yet in the child's records, so the child has information regarding their background.

Note: The adoption specialist or treatment worker completes DCF-337B, and in a parent's absence, must also complete DCF-338B as fully as possible.

Cross-Reference: For procedures to file a Petition for Termination of Parental Rights, see Chapter 46, Courts.

Time Frames

The following time frames shall be observed for Voluntary or Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights.

Type of Action	Time Frame
Begin Voluntary TPR	Fifteen (15) days after transfer to adoption specialist or the treatment worker's decision to pursue TPR
Parents agree to Voluntary TPR	Prepare TPR documents within five (5) days from parental agreement
Involuntary TPR	Confer with legal counsel within ten (10) days of TPR conference or fifteen (15) days of decision to pursue TPR
Prepare material for contested TPR	Sixty (60) days after TPR decision

Note: The gathering of genetic information should occur continuously or until completion of the data in the record.