



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Health and Human Services | Community Based Care Division

Adoption Home Studies

Effective Date: 6/3/24	Aligns with: 65C-16	Operating Guideline: PG-OG06
Supersedes: Policy titled "Adoption Home Studies" dated 12/27/17	Applicable to: Dependency Case Management/ Adoption Specialists	Pages: 1 of 2

Purpose:

It is the policy of Family Integrity Program (FIP) to provide comprehensive foster, adoption and protective services to at-risk children and their families in accordance to 65C-16-16.009, Florida Administrative Code.

With regard to adoption, it is essential to prepare a comprehensive Unified Adoption Home Study to ensure the safety of placed children and an adequate and appropriate environment for the child. Case Management will not utilize a Private Adoptive Home Study as a primary source for the purpose of placement of an adoptive child. The Private Adoptive Home Study can be utilized for the family selection process. FIP will be required to complete an independent assessment of the applicant's home prior to any contact between the applicant and the child. To ensure that this procedure is carried out the following procedure is in effect.

Procedure

Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) Petition

- a. Within 30 days of the TPR Petition being filed, the Dependency Case Manager and/ or the Adoption Specialist will ensure that the child's birth records are requested and obtained within 90 days.
- b. Within 30 days of the TPR Petition being filed, the Dependency Case Manager and/ or the Adoption Specialist will ensure that all health history records, school records, mental health records, hospitalization records and residential setting records are requested and obtained within 90 days.
- c. Within 30 days of the TPR Petition being filed, the child welfare professional will ensure that the following documents are in the Child Welfare Information System:
 - i. Shelter Petition and Shelter Order
 - ii. Dependency Petition and Dependency Order
 - iii. Modification Petition and Modification Order if applicable
 - iv. Original Predisposition Report (Ongoing Family Functioning Assessment)
 - v. Case Plans that address the child's needs
 - vi. Protective investigations identifying the child as a victim

- vii. Guardian ad Litem report filed with the court concerning the child
- viii. Psychological Evaluations and Comprehensive Assessments
- ix. Names of providers who provided services to child while in foster care

Adoption Home Studies

- a. The adoption packet given to prospective adoptive parents to initiate the adoption process 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>.
- b. The Adoption Specialist will adhere to the guidelines and procedures outlined in FAC 65C-16 when completing an Adoption Home Study (AHS) and all related processes.
- c. An adoption home study (AHS) which includes observation, screening and evaluation of the child and adoptive applicants shall be completed by the Adoption Specialist, prior to the adoptive placement of the child. The AHS is valid for 12 months from the approval date. The adoption home study completion date shall be the date the Adoption Specialist submits the adoption home study to their supervisor for review.
- d. Adoption staff must conduct a minimum of two (2) in-home visits with the prospective adoptive parent. The adoption staff must adhere to the requirements as outlined in Section 63.093, F.S., regarding the family’s preparation and home study process.
- e. A written adoption home study, must be prepared for each studied family. The adoption home study must address the issues discussed in subsections (1) through (6), of 65C-16.005.
- f. At the conclusion of the preparation and study process, the Adoption Specialist and their supervisor will make a decision about the family’s appropriateness to adopt. The decision to approve or not to approve will be reflected in the final recommendation included in the adoption home study. If the recommendation is for approval, the adoption home study will be submitted for approval. If the Adoption Specialist and supervisor do not recommend approval for a child specific adoption home study, the case will be reviewed by an Adoption Applicant Review Committee according to the directions provided in subsection 65C-16.005(9), F.A.C.

