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**OVERVIEW****Changing Goal to Adoption**

A child's permanency goal cannot be changed to adoption unless one of the following occurs:

- Parental rights of all legal parents are terminated, and the written order of termination has been received by the case manager.
- A judge orders the permanency goal changed to adoption prior to any order terminating parental rights.

**Goal Change to Adoption Prior to Termination of all Parental Rights**

The case cannot be referred for adoption services and the foster care case manager cannot send the adoption referral packet until all parental rights are terminated. If the permanency goal is changed by the court to adoption prior to termination of parental rights, the foster care case manager must begin the adoption preparation case work by:

- Gathering all required information for the adoption referral packet.
- Determining whether the current caregivers or relatives wish to adopt the child.
- Identifying Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) cases and coordinate with the tribe as appropriate.
- Identifying and locating adoptive parents of siblings to assess their interest in adopting the child.
- Determining the need for an Interstate Compact on Placement of Children (ICPC) referral.
- Collecting any family assessments, relative home studies, and/or licensing studies on all interested families.
- Referring all interested parties for licensing and/or training as indicated.

## Referral to Adoption Following Termination

All foster children with adoption as their permanency goal must be referred for adoption services. Foster children become available for adoption once the parental rights of both parents are terminated. For American Indian/Alaska Native children, see Native American Affairs Policy, [NAA 400, Indian Child Adoptions](#).

Adoption referrals are initiated by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) using the DHS-3600, Case Referral and Acceptance - Individual Service Agreement. A child placing agency (CPA) may not transfer adoption cases to another CPA. After acceptance of an adoption referral, the agency may not transfer the case back to MDHHS, except upon the written approval of the county director or the children's services administration senior deputy director.

## NOTIFICATION FROM FOSTER CARE

### Referral Packet

The foster care case manager must provide a referral packet which contains the following documents to the MDHHS or contracted agency adoption case manager within five-business days from the date of the receipt of the order terminating parental rights:

- Initial Service Plan (ISP).
- Last two Updated Service Plans (USP).

**Note:** All service plans (USP/Permanent Ward Service Plans (PWSP)) that are written after adoption referral must also be sent to the adoption case manager.

- All child's and biological parents' physical, dental, medical, and psychological/psychiatric records and assessments, and child's medical passport. A summary of the findings of the records must be included in the adoptive child assessment; see [SRM 131, Confidentiality](#). The biological parents' records **must not be released** to adoptive family.

- School records, including Individualized Educational Planning Committee (IEPC) reports.
- Early On reports and any other developmental assessments.
- Child's original birth certificate. If not available, a copy of the application for the child's original birth certificate must be provided.
- Child's Social Security card or verification of Social Security number; see [FOM 902-16, Social Security Numbers](#).
- Child's placement history.
- Copy of current (dated within the last six months) Assessment for Determination of Care (DOC) for Children in Foster Care.
  - [DHS-470, Assessment For Determination of Care For Children in Foster Care \(Age One Day - Twelve Years\)](#).
  - [470-A, Assessment For Determination of Care \(Age Thirteen Years and Over\)](#).
  - [DHS-1945, Assessment For Determination of Care For Medically Fragile Children in Foster Care](#).

**Note:** Supporting documents **only required** for Level IV DOC.

- Copies of release/termination documents and court orders.
- All court petitions for the case (initial, amended, and supplemental).
- DHS-352, Initial Determination of Title IV-E Eligibility.
- [DHS-987, Relative Documentation](#).
- Death certificate of parent(s) (if applicable).

Additionally, the following documents must be submitted with the adoption referral packet for **all** American Indian/Alaska Native children:

- Documentation of tribal consultation.
- Documentation of tribe's recommendation.

Regardless, if materials are missing or not available, an incomplete referral packet must be sent within the time frame stated.

Incomplete referral packets must be completed within 10-business days of sending the initial packet to the adoption case manager. If a complete referral packet is not received by the adoption case manager within 10-business days, the adoption supervisor must contact the foster care supervisor to request the missing information. The assigned adoption case manager must proceed with adoption planning and must coordinate efforts with foster care to ensure services are provided, and permanency achieved.

The foster care case manager must also provide the following if available and/or applicable:

- A copy of any relative or unrelated caregiver assessments.
- DHS-588, Initial Relative Safety Screen.
- Genogram.
- Pictures of child and other family members.
- [DHS-990, Relative Notification Letter](#).
- Children's Protective Services (CPS) referrals, records or documents; see [SRM 131, Confidentiality](#), regarding information that must be redacted prior to sending this information to a contracted adoption agency.
- A copy of the [CWL-3130, Initial Foster/Adoptive Home Evaluation](#), if the foster parent/relative is interested in adopting the child(ren).
- Foster home licensing complaints and any resulting corrective action plans.
- CPS accepted and screened out referrals, investigations, and disposition reports.

### Case Acceptance and Assignment

Within seven-business days of receipt of the adoption referral from MDHHS, the CPA must accept or decline the adoption referral. Rejection of a referral must include a detailed explanation of the reason for rejection in the electronic case record. If the referral is accepted, the adoption supervisor must assign the case to an adoption case manager within three-business days to initiate the

DHS-1927, Child Adoption Assessment, and identify or recruit a qualified family for adoption.

### Required Adoption Focused Activities

Within three-business days of accepting the adoption case transfer, an adoption case manager must be assigned. Adoption activities must begin. These activities include:

- Determination of whether current foster parent(s) or relative(s) with whom the child is currently placed intend to adopt the child. The [DHS-4809, Intent to Adopt for Current Placement](#), is used for this purpose. If the signed DHS-4809 is not in the electronic case record, adoption case manager must obtain the signed form within 14-business days of assignment.
- For other interested parties who want to be considered for adoption, refer to [ADM 610, Placement Decisions for Adoption of a Specific Child \(Consideration\)](#).
- Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE).
  - For children with an identified family, submit the MARE registration and a copy of the DHS-4809 within 60-calendar days of acceptance of the case.
  - For children without an identified family, refer to [ADM 400, Recruitment Efforts](#), for MARE requirements.
- Initiate evaluation of prospective adoptive home (if not a licensed foster care provider) within seven-calendar days of the acceptance date of referral or identification of prospective adoptive family, whichever is later.

**Note:** See [ADM 500, Preliminary Adoptive Family Assessment](#), and [ADM 510, Adoptive Family Assessment](#).

Documentation of the completion of above requirements must be maintained in the child's electronic adoption record.

### Initial Case Review

When a referral from foster care is made to the adoption unit, a meeting between the foster care and adoption case manager must be held to discuss child history, case information, and adoption planning options. This review must be held within 30-calendar days

of the receipt of the adoption referral and must be documented in the electronic case record.

- Refer to [ADM 510, Adoptive Family Assessments](#), for circumstances requiring additional evaluation and documentation.
  - Consultation with the Michigan Children’s Institute (MCI) office and the child’s attorney is required when circumstances requiring additional evaluation or documentation is needed.
- Case reviews must be held between foster care case manager and assigned adoption case manager at least quarterly following the initial case review and more often, as needed.

**Note:** When the foster care case manager has a dual role as the adoption case manager, **all** case reviews should be held with the adoption supervisor.

### **Adoption Not in the Best Interest of the Child**

If the adoption case manager and supervisor determine that the goal of adoption is not in the best interest of the child after reviewing the electronic case record and meeting with the child and the foster care case manager, the reasons must be documented in the child’s electronic case record. Decisions concerning a change in the permanency goal requires a family team meeting (FTM); see [FOM 722-06B, Family Team Meeting](#), for FTM requirements.

No child should have a determination that adoption is not an appropriate goal based solely on age or special needs. Specialized recruitment is the appropriate action when a child has needs requiring a specific type of home. Specialized recruitment activities include holding case reviews for children who are legally free for adoption for more than three months but do not have a permanent placement identified; see [ADM 0400, Recruitment Efforts](#), for case recruitment requirements.

If it is determined that adoption is not in the best interest of the child, the [DHS-222, Adoption Closing Summary](#), must be sent to the foster care case manager or MDHHS monitor and placement agency foster care (PAFC) case manager for contracted adoption agency cases) along with all other adoption-specific reports.

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**Termination of  
Parental Rights  
Appeals**

An appeal of a court order terminating parental rights may delay adoption finalization but must not delay an adoptive placement. Appeals must not delay referrals to the adoption supervisor.

**Coordination of  
Adoption Planning  
Services**

Coordination of adoption planning services must be part of the concurrent planning process. Preparation of the child for an adoptive placement must include joint planning between foster care and adoption staff. Until the child is placed for adoption by the court, the foster care case manager is the child's primary case manager and the adoption case manager is the secondary case manager. During this time, the adoption case manager must provide the foster care case manager the following:

- DHS-1927, Child Adoption Assessment
- DHS-614, Quarterly Adoption Progress Report

**Note:** See [ADM 0300, Child Adoption Assessment](#) and [ADM 0330, Quarterly Adoption Progress Reports](#).

**POLICY CONTACT**

Questions about this policy item may be directed to [Child-Welfare-Policy@michigan.gov](mailto:Child-Welfare-Policy@michigan.gov).