**6900** **Adoption Services**

**6910** **Criteria and Types of Service**

CPS 98-1

*Management Policy*

**Criteria for providing adoption services.** CPS provides adoption services regardless of age, race, or handicap when

  •  a child in DFPS's managing conservatorship needs to be adopted, or

  •  a district court appoints DFPS to complete a social study when a petition is filed to adopt a child.

CPS also provides selected adoption services to children in the managing conservatorship of other states when CPS receives requests for services under the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.

**Cross-reference:** For detailed information about providing adoption services to children in the managing conservatorship of other states, see Section [9400](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_9400.asp#CPS_9400), Placing Children From Another State In Texas.

**Types of service.** Section 6900, Adoption Services, covers most, but not all, of the types of service that CPS provides in conjunction with the adoption of children in DFPS's managing conservatorship. The following chart identifies all major types of CPS adoption services and cross-references the policies and procedures that apply to each.

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| --- | --- |
| **Type of Service**  | **Section or Item**  |
| Recruiting adoptive homes  | [7100](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_7100.asp#CPS_7100)  |
| Assessing and preparing children for adoption  | [6920](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6920)  |
| Selecting adoptive homes for particular children  | [6930](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6930)  |
| Presenting and placing children for adoption  | [6940](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6940)  |
| Supporting adoptive placements  | [6950](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6950) and [6956](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6956)  |
| Contracting for postadoption services  | [8410](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_8400.asp#CPS_8410)  |
| Operating the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange  | [6960](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6960)  |
| Providing financial assistance for adoptive families  | [1700](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_1700.asp#CPS_1700) and [1760](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_1700.asp#CPS_1760)  |
| Producing court-ordered social studies  | [5860](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_5800.asp#CPS_5860)  |

**6920** **Planning for a Child's Adoption**

**6921** **Completing the Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History (HSEGH) Report**

CPS May 2013

The Texas Family Code requires DFPS to complete a health, social, educational, and genetic history (HSEGH) report before placing a child for adoption with anyone other than the child’s stepparent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle by birth, marriage, or prior adoption.

*Texas Family Code* [*§162.005(b)External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.005)

The HSEGH is intended to be a central repository for all known health, social, educational and genetic history of a child for whom DFPS is attempting to find an adoptive placement. It is used to provide potential adoptive parents with information about the child’s history and needs.

See [Appendix 6921](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_px_6921.asp#CPS_apx6921): Requirements for Completing the Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History Report.

**When to Complete the HSEGH**

The child’s caseworker must complete an initial HSEGH report no later than 45 days from the date that all parental rights to the child were terminated.

**Regularly Updating the HSEGH**

The caseworker must also update the report with new information about the child or the child’s placement needs. At a minimum, the caseworker must update the report:

  •  every 24 months if an adoptive placement has not occurred; and

  •  within three months before the adoptive placement is made.

**6922** **Completing the Adoption Readiness Summary**

CPS May 2013

The Adoption Readiness Summary (ARS) is designed to assess the child’s psychological readiness for adoption. In addition, it contains information regarding the child’s eligibility for adoption assistance. The ARS ([Form 2647*Word Document*](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=2647.doc)) is located on the DFPS online repository of department forms. A copy of the ARS must be included in the case record.

**When to Complete the ARS**

The Adoption Readiness Summary must be completed within three months before the adoptive placement is made.

**Supervisor Approval of the HSEGH and ARS**

After the child’s caseworker completes the HSEGH report and the ARS. The caseworker’s supervisor must sign and date it.

**6923** **Assessing the Child's Readiness**

CPS 98-1

*Management Policy*

**Case-record review and interviews.** The first step in planning for a child's adoption is to assess the child's readiness to be adopted. To assess the child's readiness, the child's worker must

  •  review the child's case record (which includes the birth family's record); and

  •  interview

  •  the child;

  •  the child's siblings;

  •  the child's substitute caregiver;

  •  educational, medical, and mental-health professionals who have worked with the child; and

  •  when appropriate, other individuals who have significant relationships with the child.

**Objectives.** The objectives of the worker's case-record review and personal interviews are

  •  to verify that the child is legally free for adoption;

  •  to assess the child's emotional and psychological readiness for adoptive placement;

  •  to assess the child's needs, and determine what parenting characteristics will meet them;

  •  to assess the child's need for placement with his siblings;

  •  to support preparation of the Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History (HSEGH) report (see Item [6282](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6270.asp#CPS_6282)); and

  •  to develop information for recruiting adoptive parents.

**6924** **Preparing the Child**

CPS 96-8

*Management Policy*

Whenever possible, a child's worker must begin to prepare the child for adoption at least three months before placing the child with a prospective adoptive family. Ordinarily, the child's caregiver helps the worker prepare the child.

**Purposes.** The purposes of preparing the child for adoption are to

  •  help the child understand the termination of his parents' parental rights,

  •  help the child understand and accept adoption,

  •  involve the child in planning for the adoption,

  •  help the child adjust to the adoption, and

  •  reduce the possibility of disruption of the adoption.

**What the preparation involves.** The preparation must be based on the child's needs. It must include helping the child

  •  know and understand himself and his history;

  •  understand the difference between biological, foster, and adoptive parents;

  •  express hopes and fears about adoption, including fears of disruption;

  •  separate from people he is close to, and grieve their loss;

  •  form new attachments; and

  •  work on his "life book" in order to address issues of separation and attachment.

**Documentation.** The worker must document the process of preparing the child in the child's case record.

**6925** **Preparing the Child’s Records for Presentation to Prospective Adoptive Parents**

CPS May 2013

**HSEGH Redaction**

The caseworker must arrange for Records Management Group (RMG) to begin redacting copies of the HSEGH report within 5 days of the supervisor’s approval.

**Case Record Redaction**

At the time a selection meeting is scheduled, or if a family is already identified, the caseworker must arrange for Records Management Group (RMG) to redact copies of the case record.

**6930** **Selecting an Adoptive Family**

CPS May 2013

CPS seeks to provide an appropriate adoptive family for every child in DFPS conservatorship whose permanency plan includes adoption, regardless of the child’s or the adoptive family’s location.

**Time Frames for Selecting a Family**

Each child’s caseworker must make a concentrated effort to find a prospective adoptive family for the child after the court terminates the parental rights of the child’s parents.

When a child’s caseworker does not find a prospective adoptive family for the child within the first 60 days, the caseworker must register the child on the [Texas Adoption Resource Exchange](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/adoption_and_foster_care/) (TARE). See [6960](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6960) Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE).

**Reviewing Home Studies**

The child’s caseworker reviews each family’s home study within 30 days of receipt. All home studies received and reviewed are documented in the child’s case file. After the child’s caseworker narrows the pool of families, the supervisor or program director reviews the home studies.

**Providing Home Studies to a CASA**

If a court-appointed special advocate (CASA) is appointed to a child’s case, the child’s caseworker provides the advocate and the CASA supervisor with an opportunity to review the home studies of the families under consideration for adoption.

The advocate and CASA supervisor read the home studies in the DFPS office.

**Providing the HSEGH Report**

When a child’s caseworker has selected possible families to be considered, the child’s caseworker provides a redacted copy of the child’s Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History (HSEGH) report to the prospective family and to the family’s child placing agency (CPA). Review of the HSEGH allows families to gain more insight of a child’s history and functioning so the family and their agency can determine whether the prospective adoptive family possess the skills to meet the child’s needs. A copy can be reviewed by a family before a formal selection meeting but must occur within 48 hours of a family’s selection at a selection meeting.

**6931** **Issues to Consider When Selecting an Adoptive Home**

CPS February 2003

**The Child's Best Interest**

The primary consideration in selecting an adoptive home for a child is the child's best interest. In pursuit of the child's best interest, CPS bases each placement on an informed evaluation and understanding of the child's needs and on the adoptive family's understanding of and potential for meeting those needs. DFPS seeks to address the best interest of children through placements in traditional families with a mother and father or a single individual who can protect, parent and nurture abused and neglected children. Both married couples and single people are eligible to be foster and adoptive parents and must meet the same requirements for protecting and nurturing children.

**Preparation for Placement**

The selection of an adoptive home for a child begins when CPS staff have determined that the permanency goal is adoption. A child may be placed with a family that is dual-licensed as both a foster and adoptive home on a foster care basis prior to the termination of all parental rights. Steps related to selecting the prospective family and providing the opportunity for adequate pre-placement visits consistent with good adoption practice are part of the procedures in legal risk placements. Before the actual adoption placement agreement is signed with the prospective foster/adoptive family, staff should have completed the child's HSEGH report, determined that the child is emotionally prepared for an adoptive placement, and when necessary, de-identified the child's case record to share with the prospective adoptive family.

**Race, Color, National Origin, and Ethnicity**

The race, color, national origin, or ethnicity of a child or of a potential foster or adoptive family should not be a factor in selecting a placement except in rare situations when a child's individual circumstances make it necessary. To avoid violating federal and state laws that sharply limit the use of race, color, national origin, and ethnicity in the placement process and carry significant penalties, staff must read and follow the detailed directions in [Appendix 4120-B](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_px_4120b.asp#CPS_apx4120b), Information to Consider About Race, Color, National Origin, and Ethnicity in Placement Decisions. For further guidance on this complex issue, consult the regional attorney.

*Law*

Federal law prohibits using race, color, national origin, or ethnicity to delay or deny a child's placement or to deny applicants the opportunity to adopt.

*U.S.C. §1996b, the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by the Interethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996*

State law prohibits selecting a placement based on a presumption that placement in a family of the same race or ethnicity as the child is in the child's best interest. State law also prohibits delaying or denying an adoption to locate a family of a particular race or ethnicity unless an independent psychological evaluation indicates that placement with a family of a particular race or ethnicity would be detrimental to the child. A state employee who violates these prohibitions is subject to immediate dismissal.

*Texas Family Code* [*§§162.308External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.308) *and* [*264.108External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.264.htm#264.108)

**Specific Issues**

In addition to Item [4120](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_4000.asp#CPS_4120), Consider Key Issues in Selecting a Caregiver, the CPS staff selecting an adoptive home for a specific child or siblings must consider the issues listed below:

*Note:* The order of the issues on the list does not suggest their relative importance. The consideration and importance applied to each issue varies from placement to placement according to the child's specific short-term and long-term needs.

  •  The appropriateness of continuing the foster parents' relationship with the child through adoption, when the foster parents have made a request to adopt the child.

      **Cross-reference.** For information about assessing the foster parents' request, see Item [6932](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6932), Adoption by Foster Parents.

  •  The child's need for placement with siblings

      *Law:*

      In providing adoptive services, the department is asked to keep siblings together and whenever possible to keep siblings in the same adoptive home.

*Texas Family Code* [*§162.302(e)External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.302)

*Discussion:* Placing a child with siblings maintains the established relationships with the child's family. However, each child (of a sibling group) should be assessed to determine the individual child's particular needs and those of the sibling group. Based on those individual needs and the availability of appropriate adoptive homes willing to address those individual needs, it may not be possible to place all siblings together in the same adoptive home. When it is not possible to place siblings together, or when staff determine that a sibling placement is not in the best interests of the individual children, staff must try to place the siblings with adoptive parents who are committed to helping them maintain their sibling connections (see Item [6315.2](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6300.asp#CPS_6315_2) Sibling Contact).

  •  The child or youth's preferences in an adoptive home

*Discussion:* Every child old enough to express an opinion should be given the opportunity to discuss what kind of adoptive home he or she would like. The age of the child and staff's assessment of the child's needs will determine how much weight the child's preference is given.

  •  The family's understanding and awareness of the following issues:

  •  Recognition of and sensitivity to any social or adjustment problems a particular child may face

  •  Awareness of the kinds of situations that might threaten a child's self-esteem as he or she grows through different developmental levels

  •  The child's history and beliefs that are different from his or her adoptive family

Also consider:

  •  The child's known or predicted needs for special services after the adoptive placement, including therapy or special medical care

  •  The prospective adoptive family's ability and willingness to adapt its discipline practices to the child's needs

  •  The personalities, temperaments, and life styles of the child and of the adoptive family

  •  The family's ability to accept and develop the child's intellectual and scholastic capabilities

  •  The family's ability to accept and provide for the child's religious beliefs and practices

  •  The family's plan for protecting the child's health if, for religious reasons, the family does not believe in medical care

  •  The family's ability and willingness to accept and raise the child

  •  The family's commitment to ensuring that the child has a permanent placement

For detailed lists of topics to consider when evaluating a particular prospective adoptive placement, see:

[Appendix 4120-B](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_px_4120b.asp#CPS_apx4120b), Information to Consider About Race, Color, National Origin, and Ethnicity In Placement Decisions

[Appendix 6931-A](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_px_6931a.asp#CPS_apx6931a), Information to Consider About the Child When Selecting an Adoptive Family

[Appendix 6931-B](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_px_6931b.asp#CPS_apx6931b), Information to Consider About the Prospective Adoptive Family When Placing a Child for Adoption

**6931.1** **Challenges of a Termination Order by Certain Relatives: 90-Day Period Following Termination**

CPS August 2010

When DFPS terminates parental rights, certain relatives may request managing conservatorship of the child. The relative has 90 days to file suit, starting from the day the parent-child relationship is terminated. The suit can be an original suit or a suit for modification.

*Texas Family Code* [*§102.006External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.102.htm#102.006)

Relatives who are eligible to request managing conservatorship are:

  •  an adult sibling of the child;

  •  a grandparent of the child;

  •  an aunt who is a sister of a parent of the child; or

  •  an uncle who is a brother of a parent of the child.

**Adoption Activities**

Staff must continue to complete adoption related activities throughout the 90 days following termination of parental rights. Examples of such activities include:

  •  adoption preparation;

  •  redacting the child’s case record;

  •  requesting the child’s birth certificate;

  •  updating the family’s home screening; and

  •  negotiating adoption assistance.

**Adoptive Placement**

**Kinship Prospective Adoptive Families**

When the prospective adoptive family is a relative or fictive kin (a person not related to the child who has a longstanding and significant relationship with the child or family), the adoptive placement may occur at any time after the termination of parental rights. However, before making the adoptive placement, staff must notify the kinship family about the right of certain relatives to file suit for managing conservatorship of the child.

Staff must inform the kinship family of the legal ramifications of an eligible relative challenging the order, including the risk that the child may be placed with the relative. The kinship family must then decide how they wish to proceed.

**Non-Kinship Prospective Adoptive Families**

When the prospective adoptive family is a non-kinship family, the adoptive placement may occur at any time after the termination of parental rights *unless a suit has been filed by an eligible relative during the 90 days following the termination of parental rights*.

In instances in which the adoptive placement has not been completed and an eligible relative files a suit during the 90 days following the termination of parental rights, DFPS and the prospective adoptive family must not proceed with adoptive placement and must wait until the court makes a ruling to know how to proceed. The suit must be resolved before the adoptive placement can be made and the adoption consummated.

See [6932](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6932) Adoption by Foster Parents.

If the biological parents have filed an appeal of the termination of parental rights, then the child is not legally free for adoption. Consequently, the child cannot be placed in an adoptive placement or have an adoption consummated. In these situations, a legal-risk placement may be appropriate if a prospective adoptive family has been selected for a child. See [7627.2](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_7500.asp#CPS_7627_2) Homes for Legal Risk Placements for details about legal-risk placements.

See:

[6943](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6943) Completing the Placement

[6952](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6952) Consummating the Adoption

**Assessment of the Relative’s Family After Termination of Parental Rights**

If, in the 90 day period after TPR, one of the eligible relatives comes forward and asks DFPS to complete his or her pre-adoptive home screening or files a suit in the case and there has not been a court ruling, staff may *(but are not required to unless ordered by the court)*:

  •  determine if it would be in the child’s best interest to be placed with the relative;

  •  assess if the family would be a safe and appropriate permanent placement for the child; and

  •  complete a pre-adoptive home screening on the relative.

**6932** **Adoption by Foster Parents**

CPS August 2010

Adoption of a child by the child’s foster parents is appropriate if:

  •  the foster home appears to be a good prospective adoptive home for the child in light of the considerations listed in [6931](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6830.asp#CPS_6831) Issues to Consider When Selecting an Adoptive Home;

  •  the foster parents are qualified and approved for an adoptive placement (see [7515](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_7500.asp#CPS_7515) Foster Home Verification);

  •  the foster parents understand the psychological and legal differences between foster and adoptive parenting, and they want to accept a lifetime commitment as adoptive parents rather than a commitment as foster parents; and

  •  it is in the best interest of the child to continue the child’s relationship with the foster parents through adoption.

When these conditions are satisfied and CPS approves the permanency plan for foster-parent adoption, the conservatorship unit gives the foster parents written notice that the plan has been approved.

For details regarding completing the adoptive placement, see [6931.1](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6931_1) Challenges of a Termination Order by Certain Relatives and [6943](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6943) Completing the Placement.

CPS terminates the foster parents’ eligibility for foster care assistance when they sign Form [2226*Word Document*](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=2226.doc), Adoptive Placement Agreement.

See [6952](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6952) Consummating the Adoption.

**6933** **Adoptive Homes Located by Outside Child-Placing Agencies**

CPS 96-8

Before selecting an adoptive home that an outside child-placing agency has located, the worker must determine whether the prospective adoptive parents have a criminal history. If there are other persons over age 17 also living in the home, the worker must determine whether they have a criminal history as well.

If the home is located in Texas, the worker asks the child-placing agency to initiate the criminal history check. If the home is located in another state, CPS initiates the check unless the child-placing agency has already completed one within the last year.

See Item [7400](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_7000.asp#CPS_7400) Checking Criminal Records and Abuse and Neglect History.

**6934** **Adoptive Homes in Other States**

CPS December 2013

Before selecting an adoptive home in another state, the worker must explore the availability of an appropriate adoptive home in Texas. In some instances, recruitment efforts in Texas and in another state should occur concurrently, ideally. The worker evaluates the circumstances of each child’s case to determine whether concurrence is appropriate and necessary.

If a child is placed out of state, the worker must document in the child’s case record:

  •  the efforts made to place the child in Texas; and

  •  the reasons for making the out-of-state placement.

For a child to be placed out of state, the court order must show the court’s determination that the out-of-state placement is appropriate and in the best interest of the child. See also [6944](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6944) Making Adoptive Placements in Other Regions and With Private Agency Adoptive Homes.

Out-of-state homes must be approved for adoption by agencies that are licensed or certified to approve adoptive home studies in the state where the home is located.

**6935** **Considering the Need for an Adoption Subsidy**

CPS 96-8

*Management Policy*

Before placing a child in an adoptive home that needs an adoption subsidy, CPS must try to place the child without a subsidy.

To this end, the worker must

1.   register the child on the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange unless the child is being adopted by his foster parents or other persons whom the child knows;

      (**Cross-reference:** See Item [6960](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6960), Texas Adoption Resource Exchange.)

2.   document in the child's record the child's need for a subsidy and the worker's efforts to place the child without a subsidy;

3.   discuss the following issues with the prospective adoptive parents:

  •  their legal responsibility, as parents, to provide for the adopted child;

  •  their need for an adoption subsidy; and

  •  their immediate and long-term plans for supporting a child if a subsidy is not available.

**Cross-reference:** For detailed information about adoption subsidies, see Item [1700](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_1700.asp#CPS_1700), Adoption Subsidy.

**6936** **Adoption by Military Families Both In the United States and Outside the United States**

CPS October 2007

DFPS supports adoptive placement of children with military families when the family can meet the child’s needs. Military families often have access to services that support an adoptive placement. They include comprehensive health care, child development programs, family advocacy, and other social service programs. The military community often serves as an extended family to its members. The military community offers structure and often a culturally diverse population.

When considering a military family, whether in the United States or not, for adoption of a child, the worker and supervisor must consider the following situations and their impact on the child and prospective family:

  •  The possibility of a transfer from their current station or base before consummation of the adoption.

  •  The likelihood of an assignment where one parent is assigned to a duty station and the remaining family remains behind, that is, the parent is deployed to a battle zone and the family remains behind.

  •  The availability of services for the child and family, especially if the family moves or lives overseas.

  •  If the family is stationed overseas, whether there are sufficient supports to help the family meet the child’s needs.

  •  Plans to meet the child’s medical needs before consummation, as Medicaid coverage is not available outside the United States.

  •  The impact of any relocation by the family on the child’s need to maintain contact with biological siblings or other family members.

  •  Plans for the child’s return to care in the event the adoption disrupts.

For additional information on making out-of-country placements, see [6946](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6946) Making Out of Country Placements.

**6937** **Adoptive Parent Registry**

CPS October 2007

Each region must maintain a list of dual-licensed adoptive homes that are willing to accept children who are in foster care and have a high likelihood of becoming available for adoption. This type of placement is considered a legal risk adoptive placement. Only families and children who meet the following guidelines qualify for a legal risk adoptive placement.

**Requirements for Parents**

1.  The parents meet all requirements for foster and adoptive parents (such as home study, Minimum Standards requirements, mutual assessment process, and so on). DFPS does not consider military service in a negative light when preparing an adoption home study or a social study.

2.  The parents are willing to sign the foster care agreement, which specifies that DFPS may remove the child from the home if DFPS determines it is in the best interest of the child.

3.  Staff have made an assessment regarding the age, sex, and special needs the family is best able to parent.

**Requirements for Children**

1.  Staff have determined that the plan for the child is adoption.

2.  A staff person of program director level and an attorney have reviewed the child's case and determined that termination is more than 75 percent likely to occur based on the facts in the case.

3.  A legal staffing or consultation has been held and an agreement has been reached that the child is appropriate for a legal risk placement.

**Requirements for the Match**

1.  Staff select up to the first five families in the Central Registry who staff have assessed as best able to parent a child of the age, sex, and special needs of the child being placed.

2.  Staff review the cases to determine if there are factors that make a particular family more qualified to take a child than the other families. The factors are listed in [6931](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6931) Issues to Consider.

3.  If it is determined that more than one family is qualified to parent the child or children being considered for placement using the factor in [6931](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6931) the first family is chosen.

**6938** **Meeting to Discuss the Home Studies of Prospective Adoptive Families**

CPS June 2012

After reviewing the home studies of the prospective adoptive families, the child’s caseworker arranges a meeting, known as a staffing, to discuss the results with DFPS staff, the child’s court-appointed special advocate (CASA), and persons outside of DFPS, such as foster parents and therapists.

Foster parents, therapists, and others not employed by DFPS often have first-hand knowledge of a child’s needs and the skills required by a family to best meet those needs. DFPS staff must therefore consider including persons not employed by DFPS in the child’s adoption staffing team.

To protect the confidentiality and privacy of prospective adoptive families, discussions about issues related to the child and issues related to the families are conducted in separate meetings or in separate parts of a meeting.

See:

[6938.1](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6938_1) Holding Separate Discussions About the Child to Protect Privacy

[6938.2](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6938_2) Holding Separate Discussions About Adoptive Families to Protect Privacy

**6938.1** **Holding Separate Discussions About the Child to Protect Privacy**

CPS June 2012

The purpose of the first meeting, or first part of the meeting, held after reviewing the home studies of prospective adoptive families, is to discuss:

  •  the child’s needs; and

  •  the strengths required by a potential adoptive family to meet the child’s needs.

When possible, the following persons attend:

  •  DFPS staff

  •  The foster parents

  •  The child’s therapist

  •  The court-appointed special advocate (CASA)

  •  The CASA’s supervisor

  •  Others who are not DFPS employees

**Protecting Privacy**

To protect the privacy of potential adoptive families, information about specific families is not discussed during this meeting, or first part of the meeting, when persons not employed by DFPS are present.

The need for privacy must be carefully balanced with the need to protect and care for the child.

**6938.2** **Holding Separate Discussions About Adoptive Families to Protect Privacy**

CPS June 2012

The second meeting, or second part of the meeting, is held to discuss the various adoptive families who are under consideration.

Participants either:

  •  select and approve one family as an appropriate adoptive family for the child; or

  •  determine that none of the available families appear able to meet the child’s long-term needs.

When possible, the following persons attend:

  •  The child’s caseworker

  •  The caseworker’s supervisor

  •  The adoption caseworker

  •  The supervisor of the adoption caseworker

  •  Adoption professionals from private child-placing agencies who represent potential adoptive families

  •  The CASA

  •  The CASA’s supervisor

**Protecting Privacy**

To protect the confidentiality and privacy of prospective adoptive families, the second meeting or second part of the meeting is not attended by foster parents, therapists, and other persons not employed by DFPS, other than those listed above.

**6938.21** **Including the Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) in Discussions About Prospective Adoptive Families**

CPS June 2012

The CASA and the CASA’s supervisor attend the second meeting (or second part of the meeting) about home studies, when prospective adoptive families are being discussed. Although attendance at the meetings is limited to DFPS employees and adoption professionals who represent the prospective adoptive families, the CASA and the CASA’s supervisor attend as appointees of the court.

**6938.3** **Confirming Approval of a Prospective Adoptive Family**

CPS June 2012

When a staffing meeting results in the selection and approval of a prospective adoptive family, *both* the child’s *and* the family’s caseworkers and supervisors, as follows:

  •  Confirm the selection and approval in writing.

  •  Obtain copies of criminal histories on all individuals, ages 14 and older, who are living with the adoptive family.

  •  Place the copies in the paper case file.

  •  Ensure that the child’s foster family meets the adoptive family before the first pre-placement visit held before the adoption.

  •  Ensure that the foster family provides information about the child, verbally and directly, to the prospective adoptive family.

  •  Ensure that the prospective adoptive families have an opportunity to ask the foster parents questions about the child.

  •  Ensure that the prospective adoptive family and the family’s caseworker hold a private discussion to allow the family to express concerns or doubts about their ability to handle the needs of the child.

      It is best if the foster parents are not present during this time to allow a private discussion; however, if the family chooses to proceed with pre-placement visits, the foster parents may provide invaluable assistance in helping the child and the prospective adoptive family become comfortable with each other.

  •  Place the child for adoption, as specified in [6940](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6940) Presenting and Placing the Child for Adoption and its subitems.

**6939** **When No Prospective Adoptive Family Is Available**

CPS June 2012

When a staffing meeting results in a determination that none of the available families are able to meet the child’s long-term needs, the child’s caseworker:

  •  registers the child on TARE; and

  •  continues to confer with the adoption services unit whenever the unit forwards new home studies for consideration by the adoption caseworker.

**6940** **Presenting and Placing the Child for Adoption**

CPS 96-8

*Management Policy*

Staff must ensure that each child's placement is approved and meets the requirements for adoptive placement contained in the Child-Care Licensing division's *Minimum Standards for Child-Placing Agencies* and in the Texas Family Code, §§162.005 and 162.006.

*Texas Family Code* [*§§162.005External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.005)*,* [*162.006External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.006)

**6941** **Presenting Information about the Child**

CPS May 2013

Section [162.005*External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.005) of the Texas Family Code requires DFPS to give prospective adoptive parents a copy of a child’s Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History (HSEGH) report before the prospective adoptive parents meet the child. Section [162.006*External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.006) also requires that DFPS let the prospective adoptive parents examine case records relating to the child’s history before the child is placed with them.

Section 162.006 additionally requires the department to give a copy of the HSEGH report to certain other parties on request. See [6952.22](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6952_22) Releasing the Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History (HSEGH) Report and ARS to Other Parties on Request.

*Texas Family Code* [*§162.018External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.018)

Before introducing a child to prospective adoptive parents, the caseworker gives the parents information about the child to help them assess their willingness and ability to parent the child and decide whether to proceed with the placement.

If either party (the parents or CPS) decides not to proceed with the placement, the child’s caseworker must document it in the child’s case record.

**Sharing the HSEGH Report With the Prospective Adoptive Family**

The caseworker must present the redacted copy of the Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History (HSEGH) report that was prepared by RMG to the prospective adoptive parents either before a selection meeting is held or within 48 hours after the selection meeting.

**Documenting That Prospective Adoptive Parents Have Received the HSEGH Report**

To document that the prospective adoptive parents have received the redacted HSEGH report and discussed its contents with the caseworker, the caseworker must:

  •  have them initial each page of the report; and;

  •  sign and date the last page of a DFPS copy of the report when they receive it.

Both the original HSEGH report and the redacted copy that the prospective adoptive parents signed and initialed must both be kept in the child’s case record. To document the presentation and discussion of the HSEGH report, the caseworker must write a specific description of how the HSEGH report was shared and what was discussed.

**Sharing Other DFPS Records With the Prospective Adoptive Parents**

The caseworker must inform the prospective adoptive parents of their right to examine redacted copies of records and other information relating to the history of the child before deciding to proceed with placement.

If the prospective adoptive parents make an initial decision to proceed with the placement after review of the HSEGH report and any other information that DFPS has provided, the caseworker must then give the adoptive parents an opportunity to review DFPS records pertaining to the child’s history. The caseworker provides the prospective adoptive parents 10 calendar days to review the records. This review must take place before the child is placed with the prospective adoptive parents.

Families review redacted versions of the following sections of the case record:

  •  The Child’s Section

  •  The Family Section

  •  The Sibling Section, but only sibling medical information regarding siblings included in the same legal case

  •  Legal

  •  Case Narratives

  •  Previous investigations, including any investigations conducted by Child Care Licensing in which the child to be adopted was an alleged or designated perpetrator or victim

CPS does not give the prospective adoptive parents a copy of these records to keep until the adoption is consummated. See [6952](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6952) Consummating the Adoption.

The caseworker must document the prospective adoptive parents’ review of DFPS’s records pertaining to the child’s history in the child’s case record. To document the presentation and discussion of the record, the caseworker must write a specific description of how the record was shared and what was discussed.

Once the Adoption Readiness Summary is completed, as specified in [6922](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6922) Completing the Adoption Readiness Summary, the family must be provided a copy for review.

**Refusal to Review the Child’s Records**

If the prospective adoptive parents refuse to review the child’s records, the caseworker must confer with the supervisor to discuss their capacity to meet the child’s needs. The caseworker must document this discussion in the case record. If the caseworker and supervisor agree to proceed with the placement, the prospective adoptive parents must sign a statement documenting their refusal to review the child’s records. However, if prospective adoptive parents refuse to review the child’s record, a copy of the redacted record must still be provided to the adoptive family at the time of consummation.

**6942** **Preparing the Family and the Child for the Placement**

CPS November 2009

If the prospective adoptive family and CPS decide to proceed with the placement after the family has received the HSEGH report and reviewed CPS records pertaining to the child's history, the child's worker and the family's worker must take the following actions:

  •  If the child has a disability or is receiving therapeutic treatment, encourage the prospective adoptive parents to talk with the child's physician or therapist in order to understand the implications of the child's disability or need for treatment. A worker must:

  •  attend the adoptive parents' meeting with the physician or therapist; and

  •  document the information shared in the meeting in the case records of both the child and the adoptive family.

  •  Discuss the college tuition waiver (if the child will be eligible). Refer the adoptive family to [10313](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x10300.asp#CPS_10313) College Tuition and Fee Exemption for Youth Who Have Been Adopted for further details.

  •  Discuss how the prospective adoptive parents plan to deal with any behavioral, functional, or medical problems that the child may develop in the future. The workers must document this discussion in the records of both the child and the adoptive family.

  •  Discuss with the family the services the child and family may receive after placement to ensure the placement's success. (See [6951](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6951) Supporting the Adoptive Placement.)

  •  Discuss the frequency and nature of postplacement contacts between CPS and the family. (See [6951](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6951) Supporting the Adoptive Placement.)

  •  Arrange for the child and family to meet each other if they have not already done so.

  •  Schedule as many preplacement visits as necessary. At least one of the visits must take place overnight in the adoptive family's home, unless the program director approves an exception.

  •  Help the child resolve his or her fears and concerns about the placement.

  •  Help the prospective adoptive family resolve its fears and concerns about the child, the child's background, the placement, and the parents' ability to raise the child.

  •  Help the child separate from people he is close to.

  •  Tell the adoptive family how to apply for financial assistance to support the adoption, and document the telling in the case record. For detailed information about getting financial assistance to support the adoption, see [1700](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_1700.asp#CPS_1700) Adoption Assistance Program.

**6943** **Completing the Placement**

CPS August 2010

The worker who places the child must carry out the following tasks with the adoptive family at the time of the child’s placement:

**Providing the HSEGH Report**

The worker ensures that the adoptive parents have an edited copy of the child’s Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History (HSEGH) report and that they have discussed it with the worker and any other appropriate professionals. See:

[1455.5](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_1455.asp#CPS_1455_5) Releasing Information to Prospective Adoptive or Adoptive Parents

[6925](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6925) Preparing the Child’s Records for Presentation to Adoptive Parents

[6941](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6941) Presenting Information about the Child

**Providing Continuing Access to the Child’s Records**

The worker advises the adoptive parents in writing that CPS will give them continuing access to a complete, edited copy of records pertaining to the child’s history. Those records include the child’s own case record and those parts of family and sibling case records that pertain to the child’s history or are significant to his or her health and development.

After the prospective adoptive parents’ initial review of those records, subsequent access is restricted to times and frequencies that are reasonable for both CPS staff and the family. Like the initial review, subsequent reviews must take place in supervised settings with qualified staff available to answer questions.

CPS gives the prospective adoptive parents continuing access to edited copies of the child’s records in order to help them develop a deeper understanding of the child’s history after the child has been placed with them. CPS also encourages the parents to confer with the worker about the child’s history after the child has been placed with them.

See also:

[1455.5](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_1455.asp#CPS_1455_5) Releasing Information to Prospective Adoptive or Adoptive Parents

[6925](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6925) Preparing the Child’s Records for Presentation to Adoptive Parents

[6941](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6941) Presenting Information about the Child

Document in the case record all of the information discussed with the family regarding the child’s history, needs, problems, and potential.

**Providing Written Consent to Secure Medical Services for the Child**

The worker gives the adoptive parents written consent to secure medical services for the child.

**Providing Information about Using the Child’s New Adoptive Name and Its Possible Impact on Medicaid**

Before discussing this with the adoptive family, the worker must confirm whether the child is receiving social security benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (RSDI) benefits. This information is available from the eligibility specialist, billing coordinator or adoption subsidy negotiator. The worker must document the discussions with the other staff in the *Contacts* page in IMPACT.

**If the Child *Is Not* Receiving Social Security Benefits**

If the child is *not* receiving social security benefits, then at the time of the adoptive placement, the worker explains to the adoptive family that they can begin using the child’s new adoptive name. However, due to Medicaid processing issues, it may take several weeks or up to 60 days for the Medicaid card to reflect the new name.

**If the Child *Is* Receiving Social Security Benefits**

If the child is receiving social security benefits, the worker explains to the adoptive family that from the time of the adoptive placement, they can begin using the child’s new adoptive name for non-Medicaid related purposes only.

This is because changing the child’s biological name to an adoptive name at the time of adoptive placement will cause problems with the child’s Medicaid eligibility. Consequently, the child’s Medicaid card will continue to show the child’s biological name until after the adoption is consummated.

**Informing the Adoptive Family of the Availability of Continuing Services**

The worker advises the adoptive parents of the services available to support the adoption, including counseling services and support groups.

**Providing the Child’s Personal Documents**

The worker gives the adoptive parents photographs of the child and personal documents such as life books, pictures, and memorabilia that may help the child understand his past and adjust to the adoption.

The worker must not give the adoptive parents photographs that were taken to document the child’s abuse or neglect.

**Discussing the Adoptive Placement Agreement**

The worker discusses each item on [Form 2226*Word Document*](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=2226.doc) Adoptive Placement Agreement with the adoptive parents, and have them sign it.

**Obtaining Written Acknowledgment That the Adoptive Parents Have Received Information**

The worker has the adoptive parents sign a statement that:

  •  lists all the written information that CPS has given them an opportunity to review;

  •  affirms that they have had opportunities to ask questions about and discuss that information;

  •  acknowledges their responsibility to keep the information confidential; and

  •  stipulates that the adoptive parents must return all the reports, records, and other written materials that CPS has given them if the placement is disrupted.

**Arranging to Forward the Child’s Income**

The worker arranges for any income received by DFPS for the child to be forwarded to the adoptive parents.

**Providing Edited Records to Professionals and School**

The worker arranges for edited copies of the child’s medical, therapeutic, and educational records to be provided to the adoptive family’s doctor, therapist, and school.

**Updating Records**

Immediately after placing the child, the worker must take the following actions to update CPS’s records and to notify adoption exchanges of the child’s placement:

  •  within two workdays, notify the foster care eligibility worker that the child has been placed for adoption;

  •  if the child or family is registered on the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange, notify the exchange of the child’s placement with the family by completing and forwarding [Form 2229*Word Document*](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=2229.doc) Removal of Child or Family from Adoption Resource Exchange;

  •  if the child or family is registered on any other adoption resource exchanges, notify them about the placement; and

  •  combine the child’s and the adoptive family’s case records.

**Procedures for Canceled Placement**

If the placement is subsequently canceled or disrupted, the adoptive parents must return their copy of the HSEGH report to DFPS. The adoptive parents must also return all other written information that DFPS has released to them regarding the child’s history.

*DFPS Rules, 40 TAC* [*§700.1342(f)External Link*](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac%24ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=40&pt=19&ch=700&rl=1342)

*Texas Family Code §§*[*162.018External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.018)*;* [*261.201External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.261.htm#261.201)

For time frames regarding completing adoptive placements, see [6931.1](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6931_1) Challenges of a Termination Order by Certain Relatives.

**6944** **Making Adoptive Placements in Other Regions and With Private Agency Adoptive Homes**

CPS June 2010

**When DFPS Places a Child Outside the Region**

When a DFPS worker places a child in an adoptive home that is outside of the region that has conservatorship, the caseworker or supervisor follows the procedures in [4490](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_4480.asp#CPS_4490) Making Placements Across Regional or Unit Lines.

**When a Family Moves**

When an adoptive family, a foster family that is adopting, or a legal-risk adoptive family moves across regional lines, the worker must transfer the case and all responsibilities to the region where the family is moving.

**Under no circumstances** may a region retain responsibility for an adoptive home that has moved to another region.

**When DFPS Places a Child With a Private Agency for Adoption**

When a child is placed with a private child-placing agency for adoption, DFPS’s contract with the private agency must address supervision.

The private child-placing agency makes the monthly face-to-face contacts with the child for DFPS.

The CPS worker continues to make quarterly face-to-face contacts with the child.

**Monthly Face-to-Face Contacts**

The CPS worker must ensure:

  •  that staff from the private child-placing agency make monthly face-to-face visits with a child in an adoptive placement; and

  •  that a majority of the monthly visits made in a year are made at the child’s residence, according to the standards noted in:

[6311](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6300.asp#CPS_6311) Contact With the Child, and

[6951](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6951) Supporting the Adoptive Placement

**Documenting Contacts in IMPACT**

CPS staff must document monthly face-to-face contacts, including the location of the contacts, upon receiving the information from the contract provider.

The information is documented in the *Contact Detail page* in the IMPACT system.

**Closing Adoption Cases That Cross Regional Lines**

When a child has been placed in an adoptive home across regional lines and it is appropriate to close the case, the worker receiving the child for placement and the worker sending the child for placement take the following steps:

  •  The receiving worker provides the sending worker with copies of any external documents in the adoptive family's record that the sending worker does not already possess.

  •  The sending worker attaches the adoptive family's external record to the child's external record and closes the child's case. See [1476](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_1476.asp#CPS_1476) Retention of Consummated Adoption Case Records.

  •  The sending worker follows the procedures for closing a case in the *ADO* (*Adoption*) stage in IMPACT.

  •  The sending worker documents the location of the adoptive family's original external record in the *ADO* stage.

  •  The sending worker follows procedures for closing a case in the *FAD* (*Foster or Adoption*) stage in IMPACT.

  •  The receiving worker documents the location of the child's original external record in the *FAD* stage.

**6945** **Making Placements in Other States**

CPS 2000-2

*Management Policy*

Before placing a child for adoption in another state, the caseworker or supervisor must take the following actions:

  •  Obtain written approval for the out-of-state travel, from the regional director (or regional director's designee) and the Deputy Director for Field Operations.

  •  Verify that the home meets the Child-Care Licensing division's Minimum Standards for Child-Placing Agencies and that criminal record checks have been completed prior to notifying the family that they were selected to adopt the child.

  •  Obtain approval from the court with jurisdiction over the child.

      **Note:** Whenever possible, the caseworker must secure the court's approval in writing. If the judge approves an out-of-state placement verbally, the caseworker or supervisor must

  •  Draft a letter to document CPS' understanding that the placement has been approved.

  •  Send the original of the letter to the court.

  •  Keep a copy in the child's case record.

  •  Obtain the approval of the Interstate Compact authority. To do so, the worker follows the procedures in Section [9200](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_9200.asp#CPS_9200), Understanding the Interstate Placement Process. To prevent delays, the caseworker initiates those procedures when CPS first begins to consider an out-of-state placement.

If the placement is made through a private child-placing agency, the contract must be executed by the regional contract manager before the pre-placement visits begin.

**Best Practice:**

DFPS usually pays the child's transportation expenses for the adoptive presentation and placement, unless the parents choose to pay. Adoptive parents are encouraged to come to Texas for the presentation and pre-placement.

Good case practice requires that the presentation, pre-placement, and placement be carefully planned to allow:

  •  the child the opportunity to see the current caregiver, the caseworker, and the prospective adoptive family together, sharing information about the child's needs;

  •  making plans for the child's future; and

  •  sufficient opportunity to complete the negotiation of the adoption assistance and enter into the written agreement.

Whenever possible, the adoptive parents should come to the child's foster home for at least one of the pre-placement visits. It is important for the adoptive family to meet the foster family and visit the foster home to exchange information about the child and ease the transition for the child. Seeing the adoptive and foster families working together to make the placement successful is important to the child's adjustment and ability to trust the adoptive parents.

The child's caseworker or someone the child knows and trusts should accompany the child to the adoptive home for the pre-placement visit and the placement. This provides the child a sense of continuity from one living situation to another and eases the transition into adoption. A child or youth should never be sent alone to a pre-placement visit or adoptive placement. **Exception:** If a child is not being accompanied by a CPS caseworker or caregiver, then a waiver to the policy is required with approval by the director of CPS.

**6946** **Making Out of Country Placements**

CPS 2000-2

A child should not be placed in an adoptive placement outside of the United States unless there is a prior relationship between the child and family. Making placements out of the country has implications for a child's eligibility for state and federal support services.

When considering a family who is either living out of the country or who will be moving out of the country during the supervision period, the worker or supervisor must determine the extend of the prior relationship with the prospective adoptive family. If staff determine that the child has a significant relationship with the prospective adoptive family and it is in the best interest of the child to continue that relationship with the adoptive family, then the following actions must occur:

1.   Inform the prospective adoptive parents of the limitations for medical assistance and other support services to the child and determine how the child's medical needs will be met when the child moves.

2.   Require the family to arrange for supervision of the adoption (such as with a military social worker if the family lives on a base).

3.   Obtain information regarding the country where the family will be living and services available to the child and family to meet the child's short and long term needs.

4.   Request written approval from the deputy director for Protective Services for Families and Children. If this approval is obtained, proceed to the next steps.

5.   Obtain written approval from the court with jurisdiction over the child.

6.   Inform Interstate Compact staff of the child's move out of the country.

**6950** **Supporting and Consummating the Adoption**

**6951** **Supporting the Adoptive Placement**

CPS November 2011

**DFPS’s Continuing Legal Responsibility**

When a child in DFPS’s managing conservatorship is placed for adoption, DFPS remains legally responsible for the child until the adoption is consummated.

**6951.1** **Developing an Adoption Services Plan**

CPS November 2011

After placing a child for adoption, DFPS continues to provide services to the child and the adoptive family, based on the services identified in the family’s adoption services plan.

**Objectives of an Adoption Services Plan**

CPS provides services under the adoption services plan to:

  •  help the adoptive family and the child adjust to the adoption, as explained below;

  •  help the child understand his or her personal background and the reason for the adoption; and

  •  help the adoptive parents and their attorney consummate the adoption. (See [6952](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6952) Consummating the Adoption.)

The adoption plan helps the family adjust by giving the adoptive parents an opportunity to:

  •  identify and express any doubts or concerns they have about raising the child;

  •  identify and obtain the support services they may need to raise the child;

  •  identify and obtain services that the child needs; and

  •  develop and formally establish appropriate methods of discipline.

The plan also allows the caseworker to note any changes in the adoptive family’s health, financial condition, or composition that may affect the child’s well being.

**Establishing the Adoption Services Plan**

The adoption caseworker must establish an adoption services plan no more than 30 days after placing the child for adoption.

The caseworker develops the plan with input from the:

  •  adoptive family;

  •  child, if the child can understand and participate; and

  •  child’s conservatorship caseworker.

The adoption services plan must identify the:

  •  services needed by the child and family;

  •  possible resources for securing the services; and

  •  methods of discipline suited to the child’s needs.

The caseworker maintains the adoption plan in the IMPACT case management system by doing as follows under the *Child Plan Guide Topics* section of the *Child Plan Detail* page:

  •  Reviews and records information about service planning (including the progress made in addressing a child’s needs, any newly identified needs, and the plans made to address the newly identified needs)

  •  Ensures that the information recorded addresses the specific issues identified by the prompts for each guide topic

The caseworker must also ensure that the services plan complies with applicable program standards and federal law. See [6240](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6240.asp#CPS_6240) Case Planning.

Although it is the *adoptive family’s* caseworker who is usually responsible for providing the services required by the adoption services plan, sometimes the *child’s* caseworker is responsible. In either case, until the adoption is consummated, the unit that manages the child’s case and maintains the child’s case record is responsible for the child’s well-being and service-planning.

**6951.2** **Contact with the Child and Adoptive Family**

CPS April 2009

When CPS staff provide post-placement services directly, the worker follows the contact policy discussed in [6311](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6300.asp#CPS_6311) Contact With the Child, [6952.1](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6952_1) Conducting Visits With the Child and Adoptive Family, and documentation policy in [6130](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6130.asp#CPS_6130) Documentation Requirements for Substitute Care, with the following adjustments for the adoptive placement:

  •  The worker must make a home visit within two weeks after the child's placement;

  •  The worker must make monthly face-to-face contact with the child and adoptive family until the adoption is consummated;

  •  At least one monthly face to face contact must take place at the residence each month in a majority of the months in a year. See [6311](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6300.asp#CPS_6311) Contact with the Child and [6130](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6130.asp#CPS_6130) Documentation Requirements for Substitute Care for additional requirements.

  •  At least two of the monthly contacts during the first six months must include all family members living in the home.

As noted in [6311](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6300.asp#CPS_6311), the visits must be well-planned and focused on issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child. These visits should focus on the child’s bonding and adjustment to the new adoptive family, the needs of the adoptive family in caring for the child, and the issues identified in the adoptive service plan.

Generally, when a child is first placed in an adoptive home, more frequent contact is needed. The amount and type of contacts will depend on the child and family’s needs.

**Constitutional Requirements**

When visiting a family’s home, DFPS caseworkers must always ensure that they have proper consent to enter a family’s residence.

**6951.3** **Conducting Visits With the Child and Adoptive Family**

CPS September 2007

Staff follow the policies in [6311](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6300.asp#CPS_6311) Contact With the Child, with the following adjustments for the adoptive placement:

**Preparing for the Visit**

The service plan that is referenced is the adoptive service plan.

**Conducting the Visit**

The worker talks with the child and parent separately and together. The worker observes the interaction of the child and the adoptive parents. The separate conversations are important as they allow the child or parents to bring up concerns that they might not share in front of others. If the child is nonverbal, the worker should have some interaction with the nonverbal child.

During the visits in the home the child’s worker discusses with the child and parents the progress since the last visit. The worker asks them about what has gone well, what are the problems or difficulties, and how they have tried to handle these. The worker asks them about their thoughts and feelings about the adoptive placement. The worker asks them about their use of family and community supports and resources, as needed.

During the visit with the child, the worker also asks about and discusses:

  •  the child's thoughts and feelings about living with the adoptive family, and the child’s interactions with other children in the home;

  •  various Life Book issues

  •  the Transition Plan, if youth is 16 years of age or older (this is important, even in an adoptive placement).

**Assessing the Visit**

The worker assesses the adoptive parent’s ability, willingness and efforts to:

  •  care for the child; and

  •  meet the child’s needs, particularly those of safety.

The worker assesses the child’s progress in the home, bonding with the family, and ability to protect him or herself. The worker assesses the quality of the interaction of the child and the adoptive parents.

**Documenting the Visit**

After each contact, the worker documents observations of and discussions with the child and family and any follow-up tasks that are needed. For a discussion of documentation requirements, see *Contact Narrative* in [6130](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6130.asp#CPS_6130) Documentation Requirements for Substitute Care.

**Following Up**

The worker must take steps to ensure that any identified needs for the child or support services needed for the family are addressed. This may include such actions as revising the service plan, setting up additional testing or evaluations, assisting the adoptive parents in setting up appointments with specialists to see the child, or setting up an appointment at the child’s school.

**6952** **Consummating the Adoption**

CPS September 2011

A petition to adopt a child may be heard and the adoption ordered after the child has lived in the family’s home for six months; however, the six-month residence requirement may be waived by the court.

The petition to adopt is filed:

  •  in the county in which the child resides;

  •  in the county in which the prospective adoptive family resides; or

  •  in the county where the authorized agency is located, if the child is placed by an authorized agency.

When the adoption is consummated, the child has the same legal status and inheritance rights in the adoptive home as a child born to the adoptive parents.

*Texas Family Code §§*[*162.017External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.017)*;* [*162.009External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.009)*;* [*103.001External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.103.htm#103.001)

Six months after the initial placement, the caseworker and family must assess the family’s and the child’s readiness to consummate the adoption.

**6952.1** **Time Frames for Consummating the Adoption**

CPS September 2011

While this section outlines the time frames for consummating adoptions, there may be situations in which the court:

  •  determines that it is in the best interest of the child to consummate the adoption in a shorter time frame; and

  •  orders the adoption.

In these situations, DFPS follows the orders of the court.

An adoption should not be consummated within 40 days of the termination of parental rights because of the deadline for parents to file an appeal of the termination. When termination of parental rights is on appeal, the child is not legally free for adoption. In these situations, a legal risk placement may be appropriate if a prospective adoptive family has been selected for a child. See [7627.2](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_7500.asp#CPS_7627_2) Homes for Legal Risk Placements for details about legal risk placements.

**6952.11** **Time Frames for Consummating Kinship Adoptions**

CPS September 2011

Children who are being adopted by relatives or fictive kin may have their adoptions consummated at any point after 40 days have passed since the termination of parental rights, as long as:

  •  they have been living with the relative or fictive kin for at least six months; or

  •  the courts have waived this requirement.

For information about the legal ramifications, see [6931.1](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6931_1) Challenges of a Termination Order by Certain Relatives.

**6952.12** **Non-Kinship Adoptions**

CPS September 2011

There are restrictions regarding when non-kinship adoptions can be consummated because certain relatives of a child have 90 days after termination of parental rights to request managing conservatorship. Consequently, the adoption consummation should occur at least 90 days after the termination of parental rights. (See exception in [6952.13](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6952_13) Foster Parent Adoptions.)

If one of the eligible relatives files for managing conservatorship during the 90 days following the termination of parental rights, then the prospective adoptive family must wait until the suit has been resolved before the adoption can be consummated. (See [6931.1](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6931_1) Challenges of a Termination Order by Certain Relatives: 90-Day Period Following Termination.)

**6952.13** **Foster Parent Adoptions**

CPS September 2011

Children who are being adopted by their foster parents must wait to have their adoptions consummated for at least 90 days after termination of parental rights.

As an exception, an adoption by a foster parent can be consummated at any point after 40 days have passed since the termination of parental rights if all of the following conditions are met:

  •  A case consultation (staffing) is held no later than 14 days after the termination hearing to discuss the possibility of consummating the adoption within 90 days after the termination of parental rights. Attendees must include the child’s caseworker, supervisor, program director, foster parents, and the foster family’s caseworker or supervisor.

      The child’s therapist, guardian ad litem, attorney ad litem, and the CASA caseworker or supervisor must be invited to attend the case consultation. If any of these parties are unable to attend, they must be asked for their input.

  •  During the case consultation, attendees discuss current and past efforts made to search for relatives, as well as the views of the parties about proceeding with consummating the adoption within 90 days of the termination of parental rights.

  •  The conservatorship program director determines that diligent efforts were made to identify relatives including those who have a right to file a suit in the case that includes:

  •  adult siblings of the child;

  •  grandparents of the child;

  •  aunts who are sisters of one of the child’s parents; or

  •  uncles who are brothers of one of the child’s parents.

  •  The conservatorship program director determines that there is minimal risk that a relative will come forward during the 90 days after termination of parental rights.

  •  The conservatorship program director considers the input of the case parties and determines that it is appropriate to proceed with consummating the adoption within 90 days after termination of parental rights.

  •  The child has been in the family’s home for at least six months.

If the program director decides to proceed with consummating the adoption within 90 days of the termination of parental rights, the caseworker must inform the foster parents that the deadline for the parents to appeal the termination is 40 days after termination, so the consummation must occur after the 40 days have passed.

**6952.2** **CPS Caseworker’s Tasks After the Adoption Petition Is Filed**

CPS May 2013

**Prepare a Social Study**

The caseworker prepares and submits a social study on the child and the adoptive home as ordered by the court.

**File the HSEGH Report**

The caseworker files a copy of the health, social, educational, and genetic history (HSEGH) report with the court for its record of the suit to adopt the child. The copy filed with the court must be signed by the adoptive parents.

*Texas Family Code* [*§162.008External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.008)

**Secure Court’s Consent to Adopt**

The caseworker helps the family’s attorney secure consent to the adoption from the judge of the court that terminated the parent-child relationship, if another court is hearing the petition.

**Provide the Child’s History to the Adoptive Parents**

At the time the adoption is consummated, the caseworker provides the adoptive parents with a complete redacted copy of DFPS’s records pertaining to the child.

**Fees for More Than One Copy**

CPS does not require adoptive parents to pay a fee for a single redacted copy of records pertaining to a child’s history. If the adoptive parents ask for more than one copy, CPS charges them for each additional copy at CPS’s standard rates for copying requested records. The current rate can be obtained by contacting the Records Management Group (RMG).

**Provide Information to the Family’s Attorney**

The caseworker gives the attorney a copy of the termination order and of the child’s birth certificate so that the attorney can complete the application to amend the child’s birth certificate.

**Provide Advice on Obtaining Post Adoption Services**

The caseworker advises the adoptive family how to request post adoption services. See [6953](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6953) Post Adoption Services.

**Document the Adoption Decree**

The caseworker files a copy of the adoption decree in the child’s case record and documents all actions described in this section in IMPACT.

**Provide Advice on Applying for a New Social Security Number or Card**

The Social Security Administration (SSA) does not automatically assign a new Social Security number for a child who has a Social Security number after the child is adopted, nor does the SSA automatically change the child’s name on the Social Security card to the child’s new adoptive name.

In addition, even if requested, the SSA will not assign a new Social Security number for the child if:

  •  the child knows he or she is adopted; or

  •  the child receives Social Security benefits or SSI payments; or

  •  the child has worked; or

  •  the child is adopted by a step-parent or other relative.

If any of the above conditions exist, the SSA updates the child’s record with the new identifying information and issues a corrected card with the child’s new name under the same number. Parents should contact the local SSA office for instructions on how to obtain a corrected card.

If none of the above conditions exist, the parents can obtain a new Social Security number for the child with the child’s adoptive name. The caseworker advises the adoptive parents to follow the steps outlined on the Social Security website in the FAQ titled [Getting a Social Security number for an adopted child born in the United States*External Link*](http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/362).

The caseworker files the old Social Security card in the child’s case record.

If the child is receiving Social Security benefits, the adoptive parent sends a copy of the new Social Security card with the new name or SSN, or both, to the adoption assistance eligibility specialist so that the correct name can be entered into IMPACT. This generates a referral to the Medicaid system. However, it may take up to several weeks for the child’s Medicaid card to reflect the new name.

**Establish Relationships in the Family Tree**

The child’s caseworker must update the *Family* *Tree* in the adoption (*ADO*) stage before closing the stage. The update includes:

  •  adding relatives (including biological and adoptive family members) and fictive kin to the *Person List* as needed; and

  •  establishing the relationships for those listed on the *Person List*.

See [1432](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_1430.asp#CPS_1432) Family Tree for details.

**Transfer Income, Benefits, and Assets**

When the adoption is consummated, the accounting staff must arrange for any income, benefits, and assets accruing to the child to be returned to the appropriate issuing entity. In most cases, accounting staff contact the SSI coordinator who coordinates the return of these funds and also notifies the caseworker that these funds have been returned. The caseworker notifies the adoptive parents to go to Social Security Administration (SSA) and become the representative payee, if applicable. Any non-SSA funds are handled on a case-by-case basis.

**6952.21** **Providing Additional Medical, Psychological, or Psychiatric Information to the Adoptive Family**

CPS May 2013

Any DFPS staff who obtains supplemental medical, psychological, or psychiatric information regarding a child who is in the managing conservatorship of DFPS and was subsequently placed into adoption is required by law to provide the information to the adoptive parents.

*Texas Family Code* [*§162.005(f)External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.005)

The caseworker must submit the information to the Records Management Group (RMG) for redaction of confidential information. RMG provides the redacted information to the adoption supervisor for the county that has jurisdiction of the child, who forwards the information to the adoptive parents and works with the regional attorney to file the supplemental medical, psychological, or psychiatric information with the court that consummated the adoption.

The supplemental information in redacted form must also be submitted to the post-adoption contractor if appropriate.

RMG includes the original, unredacted supplemental information in the closed adoption record for retention.

**6952.22** **Releasing the Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History (HSEGH) Report and ARS to Other Parties on Request**

CPS May 2013

In addition to requiring the release of a child’s Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History (HSEGH) report and the Adoption Readiness Summary (ARS) to the child’s prospective adoptive parents (see [6921](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6921) Completing the HSEGH Report, and [6941](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6900.asp#CPS_6941) Presenting Information About the Child), the Texas Family Code also requires DFPS to release the HSEGH report to certain other parties on request. These parties are:

  •  an adoptive parent of the adopted child;

  •  the managing conservator, guardian of the person, or legal custodian of the adopted child;

  •  the adopted child, after the child is an adult;

  •  the surviving spouse of the adopted child if the adopted child is dead and the spouse is the parent or guardian of a child of the deceased adopted child; or

  •  a progeny of the adopted child if the adopted child is dead and the progeny is an adult.

*Texas Family Code* [*§162.006External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.162.htm#162.006)

**Responding to Requests**

When CPS staff receives a request for a copy of the HSEGH report and ARS from one of the parties specified above, the requester must be referred to the Records Management Group (RMG). RMG determines whether the requester is entitled to the information and provides a redacted copy of the records to those entitled to receive the records.

**6952.3** **Termination of DFPS’s Managing Conservatorship**

CPS September 2011

When the adoption is consummated the court terminates DFPS’s managing conservatorship, and DFPS’s responsibility for the child ends.

**Exceptions:** DFPS continues to have limited responsibilities for the child when the child receives adoption assistance or post adoption services as specified in:

[1700](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_1700.asp#CPS_1700) Adoption Assistance Program

[1714.7](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_1700.asp#CPS_1714_7) Reimbursement of Nonrecurring Expenses of Adoption

[6953](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6950.asp#CPS_6953) Post Adoption Services

**6952.4** **Adoption Reporting Requirements**

CPS September 2011

The Texas Family Code sets forth adoption reporting requirements which affect Child Protective Services. The Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS), is the agency responsible for maintaining these records in a central adoption file.

The Certificate of Adoption is used to register each adoption and record statistics on adoptions. This form is used to report all adoptions, request a new birth certificate resulting from an adoption, and provide information for the bureau’s adoption database.

**Staff must ensure all CPS adoptions are registered in order for state statistics to be accurate**. Form [VS-160*Word Document*](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=VS-160.doc), Certificate of Adoption, is used for reporting this information. The form and the directions are located in the CPS Forms Manual.

**6953** **Postadoption Services**

CPS 96-8

*Management Policy*

To help adopted children and adoptive parents adjust to their adoptions, CPS operates a program of postadoption services. Most services provided under the program are provided through contracted providers.

**Cross-reference:** For detailed information about providing postadoption services through contracted providers, see Item [8410](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_8400.asp#CPS_8410), Postadoption Services.

CPS can also provide postadoption services directly (rather than providing them through contracted providers) when an adoptive family needs to receive them directly.

*Approval*

The decision to provide postadoption services directly must be approved by the adoption services supervisor. Before approving the decision, the supervisor must ensure that CPS has enough resources to provide direct services and that providing the services will not impede the delivery of other services of a higher priority.

**6954** **Post Adoption Substitute-Care Services**

CPS 1999-8

**Definition and Purpose:** In limited circumstances the Department provides a service to families who have adopted children directly from DFPS custody and reside in the state of Texas. This service provides out-of-home placement of the adoptive child when the child's therapeutic or behavioral needs cannot be met in a family setting or the child's behaviors are too dangerous to others in the home for the child to live in the home. To access this service the adoptive family must have exhausted all community resources, their insurance benefits, and available post-adoptive services. The therapeutic and behavioral issues of the child should be due to trauma they endured prior to adoptive placement or unpredictable genetic issues. This service is offered in recognition of the fact that needs of children who were severely abused and neglected often do not surface until after consummation of the adoption. This service is offered when through mutual agreement of the family and DFPS, the Department is granted temporary conservatorship of the child and the child is then placed into substitute care with the on-going involvement of the adoptive family.

*Management Policy*

The children that the Department places into adoption come into care with multiple needs. Some needs are obvious prior to and at the time of adoptive placement, some are predicted to occur after placement and at new developmental stages. There is no way to predict every need a child might have in adoptive placement, because not every trauma these children have gone through or the complete genetic history of every child is known to DFPS. Additionally, the long-term effect these variables will have on each child are not predictable.

Examples of the types of behaviors these children might be exhibiting include the following:

  •  sexually or physically abusive behaviors toward others in the home,

  •  severe conduct disorder which present physical safety issues to the family, siblings, or the adoptee,

  •  an inability to function within the structure and supervision provided in a family setting, and

  •  an inability to attach over several years time which results in the child's emotional needs not being met in a family setting and digression in overall functioning of the child.

When an adoptive family contacts DFPS to request placement for their adopted child and they are not currently working with post-adopt services, the family should be referred to post-adopt services for appropriate services. When post-adopt services are nearing exhaustion then the adoptive family can request DFPS file for temporary managing conservatorship of the adopted child. The child and family must be residing in Texas. This must be a requirement for the Department to fund residential treatment services for the child. The permanency plan would most often be reunification. However, other permanency plans may be developed. The adoptive parent(s) would not be documented as perpetrators of abuse/neglect unless actual incidents of abuse/neglect have taken place.

Staffings must be held in order to determine if all possible community resources, insurance benefits and post-adoption contract services have been exhausted. Additionally, it must be determined that the child's needs cannot be met in a family setting and/or the child represents a serious threat to others in the home. This staffing should include the following participants: the post adoption service provider, the adoptive parent(s), the CPS program director responsible for the county in which the family resides, the adoption program director, adoption staff who may have knowledge of the family, CPS staff who may be assigned the case, and the therapist. Other appropriate participants can be included as necessary such as, the worker/supervisor who will be completing the investigation and staff responsible for the adoption subsidy.

  •  The Department provides a service for adoptive families who adopt DFPS children and reside within the state of Texas. This service provides out-of-home placement of the adoptive child when the child's needs cannot be met in a family setting, or the child's behaviors are too dangerous to others in the home for the child to live in the home.

  •  The adoptive parent(s) must have followed through with all tasks addressed on the service plan developed with the post-adoption service provider to the extent the provider assesses as appropriate. This includes exhausting community resources, insurance benefits and post-adopt services. Examples of service plan tasks include: family therapy, group therapy, individual therapy for the parent(s) and/or the child.

  •  The post-adoption service provider and the adoption supervisor must find that it is in the child's best interest for the adopted child to re-enter substitute care, or when the child is already placed out of the home through post-adopt services, to remain in out-of-home care; transferring temporary conservatorship to DFPS.

  •  Abuse/neglect by the adoptive parents towards the adoptive must not be present.

As a result of this staffing, if it is determined that the adoptive child and family do need this service, all minimum standards regarding non-emergency placements must be followed.

**Note:** If abuse/neglect is present towards the adoptive child then a thorough investigation is completed and this process is not utilized. If abuse/neglect is not present and the presenting problems are the therapeutic issues of the child from prior to the adoptive placement, then this is the process to be utilized.

Documentation in CAPS: A referral is made to Statewide Intake alleging refusal to accept parental responsibility. An investigation is conducted, however an abbreviated investigation may be utilized since it is already known abuse/neglect is not present. Refer to Item 2230.1 Types of Investigations for information on how to complete the investigation. The SUB stage and FSU stage are opened using the conservatorship removal window when custody of the child is obtained and then the investigation is closed as "ruled out".

**Legal Documents:** The Original Petition, Affidavit, and Court Orders are entered, as in any other conservatorship case. The Department can be given Temporary Managing Conservatorship for the purpose of protective foster care. The adoptive family can be named Joint Temporary Managing Conservators if desired. After Temporary Managing Conservatorship is granted to the Department, the case is managed as any other conservatorship case, with all the same time frames and expectations. Staff should understand the different issues associated between the child and adoptive family that are unique to that type of parent-child relationship and different from birth parent histories and issues.

Post-adoptive services to the adoptive family/child are terminated when CPS is named Temporary Managing Conservator of the child. An exception to this exists when there are other adoptive children remaining in the home. In this circumstance the adoptive family and children would continue to receive post-adoptive services as needed related to the other children in the home. Therapeutic services related to the child in care are provided through substitute care services.

Adoption subsidy assistance for the child coming into substitute care is terminated as soon as the Department is named as Temporary Managing Conservator of the child. DFPS staff should ensure this change has been reported to the responsible subsidy staff person.

Refer to the Texas Family Code Section [264.101*External Link*](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.264.htm#264.101) for payment issues. The child's eligibility will generally be State Paid Foster Care since there is not a finding of abuse/neglect.

**Note:** There may be circumstances in this process when it is obvious that the adopted child will not be returning to the adoptive home. The child's needs cannot be met within the scope of the post-adoptive services program. In these circumstances it may be prudent not to exhaust limited post-adoptive services placement funds and proceed directly into post-adoptive substitute care services.

Refer to Section 8414.6 for information on post-adoptive services residential treatment placement.

**6955** **Subsequent Placements in the Same Home**

CPS 1999-2

*Management Policy*

Before placing another child for adoption in an adoptive home that has already adopted a child who was in DFPS's managing conservatorship, the adoption worker must update the family's adoptive home study. The new home study must meet the requirements for subsequent placements in the Child-Care Licensing division's *Minimum Standards for Child-Placing Agencies.*

**Appendix:** For detailed guidelines to the completion of home studies, see [Appendix 7260](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_px_7260.asp#CPS_apx7260): Foster/Adoptive Home Study Guidelines.

**6956** **Resolving Problems in an Adoptive Placement**

CPS 94-14

*Management Policy*

**Options.** When an adoptive placement is not proceeding satisfactorily, the adoption worker and supervisor must confer with the conservatorship unit to decide what to do. After conferring with the conservatorship unit, the adoption worker and supervisor must either

  •  establish a new adoption service plan that

  •  extends the placement,

  •  addresses the problems, and

  •  provides for monthly face-to-face contacts with the adoptive family; or

  •  work with the adoptive parents and the child to establish a new service plan for terminating the placement by

  •  removing the child from the adoptive home, and

  •  returning him to substitute care.

**Terminating the placement.** To terminate an adoptive placement, the adoption worker must

  •  record in the case record all information leading to and supporting the decision to remove the child from the adoptive home,

*Approval*

  •  obtain the supervisor's approval to remove the child,

  •  try to help the family and the child adjust to the termination with as little emotional damage as possible;

  •  help the child understand the reasons for terminating the placement and discuss future placement plans with him, and

  •  revise and update the child's service plan.

**6960** **Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE)**

CPS June 2012

The [Texas Adoption Resource Exchange](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Application/TARE/Home.aspx/Default) (TARE) website is the leading recruitment tool for prospective adoptive homes for DFPS.

**Purpose of the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange**

TARE’s purpose is to expedite permanency for available children by increasing the number of prospective adoptive home resources. It strives to remove regional and state boundary barriers to adoption and serves as a recruitment tool for prospective adoptive homes throughout the nation.

**Function**

The TARE website and the databases that support it have multiple functions. The site:

  •  lists waiting children’s photos, profiles, and videos;

  •  provides a way for families interested in specific children to record their interest online and to notify DFPS of that interest;

  •  provides prospective adoptive families with the ability to research requirements and initiate the process of becoming an adoptive home. See [6967](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6967) TARE Inquiries;

  •  provides the ability to review regional calendars for:

  •  foster/ adoption program information meetings,

  •  regional recruitment events, and

  •  [Heart Gallery*External Link*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=heart%20gallery%20of%20texas&source=web&cd=11&ved=0CJcBEBYwCg&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dfps.state.tx.us%2FAdoption_and_Foster_Care%2FTexas_Heart_Galleries%2Fdefault.asp&ei=VH2pT8vpMoaQ9QSuvu2iAw&usg=AFQjCNGjt0P5GxUakUtlVjLeecZvbbn71Q) events;

  •  includes the home screenings of families interested in adopting;

  •  provides information on CPS’s faith-based initiative entitled [Congregations Helping in Love and Dedication (CHILD)*External Link*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=congregations%20helping%20in%20love%20and%20dedication%20(child)%3B&source=web&cd=1&sqi=2&ved=0CFcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dfps.state.tx.us%2FAdoption_and_Foster_Care%2FCHILD%2Fdefault.asp&ei=pHypT_bWGZKy8ASH5NHUAw&usg=AFQjCNHjLIP75Aq3GbrzPFQ10VL7bCn0Kw);

  •  provides information about DPFS’s Adoption Partners by region; and

  •  highlights:

  •  media campaigns,

  •  existing Texas Heart Galleries, and

  •  success stories of adoptive families and children.

**Community Agencies That Support Child-Specific Recruitment**

Community agencies often support DFPS in child-specific recruitment efforts. However, all children should be published on TARE *before* any community agency is brought in to help facilitate national child-specific recruitment activities.

If DFPS suspends recruitment on TARE, then the community agency or program is also expected to suspend their recruitment efforts. Suspending recruitment efforts includes, but is not limited to, removing children’s photos, profiles, and videos from websites or exhibits until DFPS decides to reinstate recruitment efforts.

**Copyright for TARE Photographs**

All photos used on the TARE website are copyrighted. Although the content of state agency websites is public, certain information on some state agency websites may be trademarked, service marked, or otherwise protected as intellectual property. All DFPS content is protected by federal copyright laws.

Photographs of children available for adoption are for **viewing only** and are strictly prohibited from being downloaded, copied, used for any purpose, or published for any reason without the express written permission of the child’s caseworker.

**6961** **Definitions**

CPS June 2012

**Child’s caseworker** is the primary caseworker on the child’s case. This person may be either the conservatorship or the adoption caseworker.

**TARE coordinator** is the designated regional contact for the children registered on TARE.

**TARE program specialist** is the designated state office contact for TARE.

**TARE family registry program specialist** is the designated state office contact for family profiles in TARE.

**The Child Registry** is anautomated support system and database of children registered on TARE.

**TARE ID** is the identification number automatically assigned by the TARE database to each child registered.

**Sibling ID** is the identification number automatically assigned by the TARE database to a sibling group.

**6962** **Databases of the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE)**

CPS June 2012

Three separate databases are used to collect, track, and manage distinct types of information posted on the [TARE](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Application/TARE/Home.aspx/Default) website.

**Child Registry**

The Child Registryis a comprehensive database of all children registered on TARE. This database is used by CPS staff involved in the recruitment of adoptive homes for specific children.

**Family Registry**

The Family Registryis a database of prospective adoptive families who have created a log in account and completed their family profile on TARE. Family profiles include demographic data, household data, and adoption preferences, as well as the most current home screening (if available). This database is used by CPS staff involved in the recruitment of adoptive homes for specific children.

**Foster/Adoption Prospective Inquiry Database**

The Prospective Inquiry database is a listing of families throughout the nation who have requested general information about fostering or adopting a child in Texas. These families have not yet begun the process to become verified or approved. This database is specifically for foster/adoption home development (FAD) staff who handle prospective foster care and adoption *inquiries*. It enables FAD staff to track any follow-up actions and responses sent to the interested family. It also enables FAD staff to track where the family is in the approval or verification process.

Inquiries from families who have created a login account and profile in TARE are automatically logged into the Prospective Inquiry database. If an inquiry is received by telephone, walk-in, or at recruitment or community events, FAD staff are responsible for entering those inquiries into the database within three business days. See [6969](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6969) Prospective Inquiry Database Procedures.

**6963** **TARE Adoption Recruitment Efforts**

**6963.1** **Pre-TARE Regional Recruitment Efforts**

CPS June 2012

Regional recruitment efforts are used to target and identify prospective adoptive home matches for a child during the first 60 days following an Order for Termination of Parental Rights (TPR).

**Pre-Recruitment Discussion With the Current Foster Parents**

Before initiating regional recruitment efforts, the child’s caseworker must talk with the current foster parents. The purpose of this discussion is to inform the foster parents that DFPS intends to begin active recruitment efforts to identify potential adoptive placements and to determine whether they are interested in adopting the child.

Caseworkers are required to have this conversation even if there have been previous discussions with the foster parents about adopting the child and even if the foster parents have declined to proceed with adoption. A summary of this conversation and the foster parents’ decision must be documented in IMPACT.

**Examples of Recruitment Efforts**

Regional recruitment efforts can include but are not limited to:

  •  regional radio broadcasts;

  •  local television, such as [*Wednesday’s ChildExternal Link*](http://www.adoptioncoalitiontx.org/wednesdayschild.asp) segments and videos on television station websites;

  •  discussions with private child-placing agencies;

  •  discussions with regional foster/adoption home development staff;

  •  regional match parties and other events;

  •  statewide (Texas only) radio broadcasts.

**6963.2** **National Recruitment Efforts**

CPS June 2012

If an adoptive family is not identified through regional recruitment efforts by the 60th day after termination of parental rights, the child’s caseworker may initiate national recruitment efforts.

National recruitment efforts can include but are not limited to:

  •  TARE Family Registry email broadcasts;

  •  outreach to adoption coalitions and postings on their websites;

  •  posting on the [Heart Gallery*External Link*](http://www.heartgalleryofamerica.org/Galleries/default.asp) websites;

  •  outreach to [Adopt America Network*External Link*](http://adoptamericanetwork.org/), [AdoptUSKids*External Link*](http://www.adoptuskids.org/), [Adoption.com*External Link*](http://forums.adoption.com/) and other websites that partner with TARE.

**6964** **Time Frames for Registering Children on TARE**

CPS June 2012

Caseworkers must register children on TARE by the 60th day after following an Order for Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) when:

  •  the child’s approved primary or concurrent permanency goal is adoption; and

  •  an adoptive home has not been identified.

Regional recruitment efforts are used to identify prospective adoptive homes for a child during the first 60 days following TPR.

Additionally, each child’s TARE registration must be kept current until the child is placed for adoption *or* CPS changes the child’s permanency plan. See [6966.2](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6966_2) Maintaining TARE Registrations.

**6965** **Court Orders Related to Adoption Recruitment**

CPS June 2012

**Court-Ordered Recruitment for a Legal Risk Placement**

If a court orders the TARE registration of a child or sibling group without an Order for Termination of Parental Rights (TPR), or in stances where an appeal of TPR is ongoing, the caseworker is required to forward a copy of the court order to the TARE mailbox. The subject line of the email should read: Court Order. TARE staff comply with the court order while DFPS legal representatives address the ongoing issue of TPR. Any registrations made during this time result in a listing of a child as a legal risk adoptive placement.

The caseworker completes Form [2228*Word DocumentExternal Link*](http://intranet/application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=2228.doc), which is the TARE Registration / Child Presentation Form. The first sentence of the Child Profile section of the form must read: PLACEMENT FOR THIS CHILD IS CONSIDERED A LEGAL RISK. Include the name of the judge who ordered the TARE registration and the date of the court order. See [6966.1](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6966_1) Initial Registration on TARE.

**Court Orders to Cease or Suspend Recruitment Efforts**

If the court orders DFPS to refrain from initiating recruitment efforts, or to suspend existing recruitment efforts for a child or sibling group, the caseworker is required to forward a copy of the court order to the TARE mailbox. TARE staff comply with the court order while DFPS legal representative addresses the legal issues related to the court’s actions.

When there is an existing TARE registration, the Child Profile section in Form 2228 must display the name of the judge who ordered suspension of recruitment efforts and the date of the court order.

**Court Orders for Placement Only in Texas**

DFPS’s standard practice is to conduct national recruitment efforts for any given child, unless it is detrimental to the child or sibling group for whom these efforts are being made *and* a court orders adoptive placement only in Texas.

If a court orders an adoptive placement only in Texas for a child or sibling group, the caseworker is required to forward a copy of the court order to the TARE mailbox. TARE staff comply with the court order while DFPS legal representative, the regional worker, and the regional chain of command address the legal issues related to the court’s actions.

In Form 2228, the first sentence of the Child Profile must read: TEXAS PLACEMENT ONLY.

The name of the judge who ordered the registration and the date of the court order must also be displayed.

**If DFPS Staff Prefers Placement in Texas**

If the caseworker and the supervisor believe it is in the best interest of a child or sibling group to limit adoptive placement to Texas, but national recruitment is not necessarily detrimental to the child or sibling group, he or she must request approval from the program director to limit recruitment efforts.

**Challenge of Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)**

If TPR is appealed or a relative files a petition within 90 days after the termination  requesting appointment as permanent managing conservator (PMC) of a child or sibling group registered on TARE, then recruitment efforts are to be immediately suspended on TARE until a court order is received to continue recruitment on TARE for the child. If the court does not order continued recruitment, then recruitment on TARE for the child is suspended until the appeal is resolved. See [6966.3](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6966_3) Adoption Status Designations in the TARE Database.

**6966** **TARE Procedures**

**6966.1** **Initial Registration on TARE**

CPS June 2012

**Responsibilities of the Caseworker**

The child’s caseworker is responsible for completing Form [2228*Word DocumentExternal Link*](http://intranet/application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=2228.doc), TARE Registration / Child Presentation Form. The caseworker must submit Form 2228 to the TARE coordinator, along with a recent recruitment-quality photograph of the child. Sibling groups require a recent recruitment-quality photograph of the sibling group, in addition to individual children’s photographs.

Additionally, the caseworker must use Form [2227*Word DocumentExternal Link*](http://intranet/application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=2227.doc) TARE Guidelines for Writing Recruitment Quality Profiles and Form [2225*Word DocumentExternal Link*](http://intranet/application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=2225.doc) TARE Guidelines for Recruitment Quality Photographs, to complete the TARE registration process.

The child’s caseworker is responsible for keeping each child’s TARE registration current until the child is placed for adoption or CPS changes the child’s permanency plan.

Caseworkers consult the TARE coordinator or TARE staff in state office for technical assistance, if needed.

See [6966.2](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6966_2) Maintaining TARE Registrations.

**Responsibilities of the TARE Coordinator**

The TARE coordinator:

  •  receives the TARE registration Form 2228 from staff designated as a child’s caseworker;

  •  reviews Form 2228 for completeness and ensures that all required information such as photographs, profiles, disability levels, and descriptions and contact information is provided;

  •  notifies the child’s caseworker and the caseworker’s supervisor when he or she finds incomplete registrations and provides detail about what information needs to be completed;

  •  tracks and follows up on incomplete registrations;

  •  edits and enters complete registrations in the Child Registry database within five business days of receipt;

  •  reviews and updates the adoption status and reason code in the child’s TARE registration;

  •  receives and responds to inquiries received on children in the TARE database;

  •  requests home screenings from prospective adoptive families’ child placing agencies (if the home screening is not already on file with TARE);

  •  receives, tracks, and routes home screenings to the child’s caseworker; and

  •  ensures TARE listings are shared with to [AdoptUSKids*External Link*](http://www.adoptuskids.org/).

**Responsibilities of the TARE Program Specialist**

The TARE program specialist:

  •  receives TARE registrations for input into the TARE database;

  •  reviews the TARE registration Form 2228 for completeness and ensures that all required information such as photographs, profiles, disability levels, descriptions and contact information is provided;

  •  reviews the quality of photos and performs edits as needed or requests new photos from the TARE coordinator;

  •  alerts the child’s caseworker and the caseworker’s supervisor when he or she finds incomplete registrations and/or missing information;

  •  tracks and follows up on incomplete registrations; and

  •  edits and approves complete registrations in the TARE database within three business days of receipt.

  •  ensures TARE listings are transferred to [AdoptUSKids*External Link*](http://www.adoptuskids.org/).

**6966.2** **Maintaining TARE Registrations**

CPS June 2012

**Responsibilities of the Child’s Caseworker**

The child’s caseworker is responsible for requesting updates or removals of TARE registrations as needed. All updates or removals must be sent directly to the regional TARE coordinator.

In order to request an update a child’s registration, the child’s caseworker must submit a new Form [2228*Word DocumentExternal Link*](http://intranet/application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=2228.doc), TARE Registration / Child Presentation Form.

A child’s registration *must* be updated:

  •  annually in order to keep the posting current;

  •  quarterly when TARE has not received sufficient or appropriate inquiries on the child. The child’s caseworker must also send an updated photo in addition to Form 2228 when requested by the TARE state office staff;

  •  any time there are changes in the child’s circumstances that affect recruitment. The caseworker must notify the TARE coordinator within 14 business days when such a change occurs. Examples include changes to a child’s health, behavioral or emotional characteristics, or changes in the type of placement needed;

  •  if an adoptive match or placement disrupts. The child’s caseworker must renew the child’s TARE registration by filling out a new Form 2228 and providing an updated photo if the previous TARE photo is more than a year old.

**Discontinuing TARE Registrations**

To close a TARE registration, the child’s caseworker must complete Form [2229*Word DocumentExternal Link*](http://intranet/application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=2229.doc) Removal of Child From the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange. The child’s caseworker must also notify the TARE coordinator when the child is no longer available for adoption and provide the reason why within three business days.

For definitions and timelines on when to review and update, depending on the child’s adoption status in TARE, see:

[6966.3](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6966_3) Adoption Status Designations in the TARE Database

[6966.4](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6966_4) Reason to Unpublish in the TARE Database

**Responsibilities of the TARE Coordinator**

The TARE coordinator:

  •  receives the Removal of Child From Texas Adoption Resource Exchange Form 2229 from staff designated as a child’s caseworker;

  •  reviews Form 2229 for completeness and ensures that all required information such as descriptions, contact information, and reason for the removal is provided;

  •  notifies the child’s caseworker and the caseworker’s supervisor of incomplete forms;

  •  tracks and follows up on incomplete forms;

  •  enters and edits TARE adoption status and reasons within five business days of receipt for updates and renewals;

  •  enters and edits TARE adoption status and reasons within one business day of receipt for removals; and

  •  withdraws the child’s listing on [AdoptUSKids*External Link*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=adoptuskids&source=web&cd=1&sqi=2&ved=0CIoBEBYwAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.adoptuskids.org%2F&ei=J5-qT8KhCIq42wXpl62pAg&usg=AFQjCNFB9jG3U84dZpSD5MrXbreg2Ohhdw).

See [6966.3](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6966_3) Adoption Status Designations in the TARE Database for definitions and timelines on when to review and update, depending on the child’s adoption status in TARE.

See [6966.4](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6966_4) Reason to Unpublish in the TARE Database for definitions and timelines on when to review and update depending on the reason.

**Responsibilities of the TARE Program Specialist**

The TARE program specialist:

  •  receives the TARE registration updates and removals for input into the TARE database;

  •  reviews the Removal of Child From Texas Adoption Resource Exchange Form 2229 for completeness and ensures that all required information such as descriptions, contact information, and reason for the removal is provided;

  •  notifies the TARE coordinator, child’s caseworker, and supervisor of incomplete or inadequate information;

  •  tracks and follows up on incomplete information;

  •  rejects or approves TARE adoption statuses within five business days of receipt for updates and renewals;

  •  rejects or approves TARE adoption statuseswithin three business day of receipt for removals; and

  •  publishes, updates, or withdraws the child’s listing on [AdoptUSKids*External Link*](http://www.adoptuskids.org/).

**6966.3** **Adoption Status Designations in the TARE Database**

CPS June 2012

**Draft** is used when the TARE coordinator is in the process of registering a child on TARE, but has not yet completed the registration. A child should not remain in this status for more than five business days.

**Request to Publish** is used for new registrations, re-registration, and updates. Selecting this status places the registration into the *pending approval* file for a TARE program specialist to review, edit, and publish.

Initial registrations and updates are initiated by the child’s caseworker:

  •  annually at a minimum;

  •  quarterly when TARE has not received sufficient or appropriate inquiries; or

  •  at any time there are changes in the child’s circumstances that affect recruitment.

**Published** is used to begin active recruitment on new registrations and updated registrations to be re-activated on TARE. A TARE program specialist reviews, edits and publishes these on the public website.

**Request to Unpublish** is used when a child or sibling group needs to be removed from the publicly accessible portion(s) of the TARE website. The request is initiated by the child’s caseworker. The child’s caseworker must provide a justification for the request to withdraw.

**Unpublished** is used to discontinue registrations on TARE. The TARE program specialist reviews, edits, and publishes all information appearing on the publicly accessible portions of the TARE website.  Selecting this status places the registration in the *pending approval* file for TARE program specialist to review and remove from TARE. The TARE program specialist must approve any removals from the publicly accessible portions of the TARE website.

**Publish for Broadcast** is used by the TARE Family Registry program specialist to initiate a broadcast to specifically selected prospective adoptive families who are registered in TARE. See [6968.2](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6960.asp#CPS_6968_2) TARE Family Registry Broadcasts.

**Need more Information/Approval Pending** is used by the TARE program specialist when a request for more information or a request for photos has been emailed to the TARE coordinator. This status is used when the registration does not have adequate information in the profile or the photo submitted by the child’s caseworker is not of recruitment quality.

**Aged Out** is used to stop recruitment for a child whose plan is adoption but who has turned age 18. The system automatically removes the child from the TARE website when he or she turns age 18 and sends email notifications to the child’s caseworker.

**6966.4** **Reason to Unpublish in the TARE Database**

CPS June 2012

When the TARE coordinator changes the TARE registration status to *Request to Unpublish*, one of the following reasons to remove the child from the TARE database must be selected.

**Pending Adoptive Placement** is a status designation used to suspend recruitment when a prospective adoptive family has been identified.

      The TARE coordinator is required to review children in this status every three months. Additionally, this designation should not be used longer than six months.

**Placed** is a status designation used to suspend recruitment when adoptive placement has occurred.

**Numerous inquiries** is a status designation used when a child or sibling group receives more than 15 inquiries from prospective adoptive families. It is also used even if DFPS has not received 15 inquiries, if regional staff feels sufficient interest in the child or sibling group has been generated.

      This status designation should not exceed 45 days.

**Kin/Fictive Kin Assessment Pending** is a status designation used to suspend recruitment when kin or fictive kin has been identified as a potential adoptive placement.

      The TARE coordinator must conduct a monthly review of children under this status designation in order to ensure that the kin or fictive kin is moving forward in the adoption process. Kin or fictive kin homes must either be assessed or approved to accept placement within the following time frames:

  •  90 days for relatives

  •  120 days for fictive kin

  •  60 days for ICPC (out of state)

**Legal Issues Pending** isa status designation used to suspend recruitment because of pending legal issues or court order. The TARE coordinator is required to review children in this status every month in order to ensure that the status remains accurate.

**Medical or Therapy Needs Changed** is a status designation used to suspend recruitment when a child’s medical or therapeutic needs are not stabilized and the child is unable to move forward with adoption for the next six months.

      If the child will be stabilized within six months, the child should remain registered in TARE.

      The TARE coordinator is required to review children in this status every three months. This status should not exceed six months.

**Permanency Plan Changed** is a status designation used to suspend recruitment when a child’s permanency plan is no longer adoption. However, the court must have been advised of DFPS’s desire to change the permanency plan and must be in agreement with the change *before* this designation can be used.

When using this reason, the TARE coordinator must document the new permanency plan in the within the TARE registration. The TARE coordinator must do monthly reviews of all assigned to him or her in this status to determine whether a child in this status needs to be registered again on TARE.

**Profile and Photo Update Needed** is a status designation used to suspend recruitment for registrations that require updating through a new photo **and** Form [2228*Word DocumentExternal Link*](http://intranet/application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=2228.doc), TARE Registration /Child Presentation Form.

      The TARE coordinator must conduct a review of children in this status once every two weeks until a complete update is received.

**Profile Clarification Needed** is a status designation used to suspend recruitment when there are questions about a profile or when more information is needed.

      The TARE coordinator must conduct a weekly review of children in this status until the TARE coordinator inputs the information needed to clarify the profile. The TARE coordinator must then change the status designation for the profile to Request to Publish.

**Runaway** is a status designation used to suspend recruitment when a child has been on runaway status for at least 30 days.

The TARE coordinator must conduct a weekly review of children in this status until the child is in a placement and the TARE coordinator can change the profile status to either *Request to Publish* or *Request to Unpublish*.

**6966.5** **Managing Home Screenings in TARE**

CPS June 2012

The TARE Family Registry program specialist is responsible for uploading home screenings and updating the home screening status in a family’s TARE profile. When a family working with an adoption agency creates a login account and completes their TARE profile, TARE requests the home screening from the family’s case manager. Once the home screening is received, the TARE Family Registry program specialist uploads and attaches the home screening to the family’s profile.

The TARE Family Registry program specialist is responsible for setting and updating a family’s home screening status as needed.

If a family submits an automated Interest Form in TARE for a child or sibling group who is registered on the website, the TARE coordinator may request a copy of the home screening if:

  •  the family does not have a home screening on file with TARE; and

  •  the home screening has not yet been requested by the TARE Family Registry program specialist.

To request a home screening the TARE coordinator selects the appropriate response from the options in the system and sends the response to the family and the family’s caseworker. After sending the response, the TARE coordinator must update the family’s home screening status to show that a home screening has been requested.

Once the home screening is received, the TARE coordinator changes the family’s inquiry status to *In Review*” The *In Review* status indicates that the TARE coordinator is reviewing the home screening. Inquiries should not remain in the *In Review* status for longer than two months.

The TARE coordinator sends a notification to the child’s caseworker requesting the caseworker review the home screenings for all of the families interested in the child or for the families that the TARE coordinator believes are the strongest matches.

After conducting the review, the child’s case worker must notify the TARE coordinator through the *Home Screening Feedback Form* of their decision regarding each family they reviewed.

**6967** **TARE Inquiries**

CPS June 2012

Families who are approved and ready for adoption, as well as those not yet approved to adopt, may make inquiries into children registered on TARE through an online automated Inquiry Form on the TARE website.

**Types of Inquiries**

DFPS has two types of inquiry: general and child-specific.

A *general* inquiry is when a prospective family is interested in becoming an adoptive parent, but does not have a specific child in mind.

A *child-specific* inquiry is when a prospective or adoption approved family expresses an interest in becoming an adoptive parent for a specific child. The person who makes the inquiry may be one, or any, of the following:

  •  Relative

  •  Fictive kin

  •  Person known to the child but does not fall into either of the above categories

  •  Person unrelated and unknown to the child

Foster/adoption home development (FAD) recruiters must respond to general inquiries within three business days of receipt

The TARE coordinator must respond to a child-specific inquiry within three business days of receipt.

**6967.1** **TARE Child Inquiry Forms**

CPS June 2012

Once the TARE program specialist approves a child or sibling group with a TARE status of *Published*, the child or sibling group’s profile and photo is posted to the public TARE website. Each child or sibling group entry has a link to an inquiry form so families can express their interest in adopting.

**6967.2** **TARE Inquiry Logs**

CPS June 2012

If an individual or family submits a *TARE Interest Form* for a child or sibling group, it is recorded on the child’s inquiry log.

If a child is a part of sibling group, the sibling group log lists all interested families and the individual children’s log within the group is blank.

The inquiry log for each child or sibling group reflects, but is not limited to, the following information:

  •  every family who expressed interest in the child or sibling group;

  •  if the inquiring family is a prospective family or is approved with a current home screening;

  •  the date of the interest or inquiry form;

  •  the home screening status of the family; and

  •  the family’s selection status.

**6967.3** **Responding to Inquiries for Children on TARE**

CPS June 2012

The TARE coordinator must respond to child-specific inquiries within three business days of receipt.

**Families That Inquire Outside of the TARE System**

Occasionally, an interested family may submit a general or child-specific inquiry to DFPS without using the TARE automated *Interest Form* on the website. If that occurs, the TARE coordinator must still respond to the inquiry within three business days of receipt and determine whether the family has a current, approved home screening.

**Approved Families With a Home Screening**

If an interested family is already approved to adopt, The TARE coordinator must determine whether they have created a login account and profile through TARE. If the family has created an account, the TARE coordinator must address the family’s questions and encourage them to submit an online *TARE Interest Form* for the specific child or sibling group that they are interested in.

If the family is approved to adopt but has not created an account, the TARE coordinator must address the family’s questions and encourage them to create a login account and profile in TARE. However, a family is not required to have an account in the TARE database in order to adopt.

**Prospective Families Not Approved to Adopt**

If an interested family is not approved to adopt, the TARE coordinator must determine whether the family has already created a login account and profile through TARE. If the family has created an account and profile, the TARE coordinator should encourage the family to submit an online *TARE Interest Form* for a specific child or sibling group *and* refer the family to the regional recruiter for assistance in becoming an approved family.

**Prospective Families Not Registered**

If the family has not previously created a login account and profile, the TARE coordinator should encourage them to create a login account and profile so that they can submit an online *TARE Interest Form* online for a specific child or sibling group. The TARE coordinator should also refer the family to the regional recruiter for assistance in becoming an approved family.

**Families That Inquire Through the TARE System**

Each time a family submits a *TARE Interest Form* on a specific child or sibling group, the TARE system automatically compares the family’s profile with the child’s profile. The TARE system determines the number of family preferences that match with the child’s characteristics and assigns a percent value to the match. Families see the percent value assigned by TARE. Both the family and the TARE coordinator receive a notification of the status of their inquiry.

TARE coordinators then review the family’s profile and home screening status. The appropriate response is selected from the options in the system and sent to the family and the family’s caseworker (unless the inquiry is from a prospective family who is not yet approved).

The TARE coordinator updates the inquiry status using the approved options in the system. Approved inquiry status designations are:

**Not Selected – System** is a status designation used when a family is not going to be considered for placement with a particular child or sibling group because the match percentage generated by the TARE system shows that they are not a strong match.

**Not Selected – TC** is a status designation used when a family is not going to be considered for placement of a particular child or sibling group because after reviewing their home screening and family profile the TARE coordinator believes the family is not a strong match. This status is also used when a family is not going to be included in a *Selection Staffing* or when the family was included in the *Selection Staffing*, but was not selected as the adoptive family.

**Selected** is a status designation used when a family has been chosen as the adoptive family for the child or sibling group.

**Selection Staffing Pending** is a status designation used to indicate the families that will be considered during a *Selection Staffing*.

**In Review** is a status designation used to indicate when the TARE coordinator or the child’s caseworker is in the process of reviewing the family’s home screening, but the caseworker has not yet determined whether they will be considered at a *Selection Staffing*.

**Family Withdrew** is a status designation used when a family no longer wishes to be considered.

**Pending** is a status designation used to indicate that a family’s home screening is not on file with TARE. The family may not have a completed home screening, or the home screening has been requested but not received.

For families that already have a home screening on file with TARE, the TARE coordinator begins review of the screening. If a home screening is not currently on file, the TARE coordinator must select the appropriate response from the options in the system and request the home screening from the family’s caseworker. A courtesy copy of the response is sent to the family.

Once the home screening is received the family is notified and the TARE coordinator reviews the home screening. Families who are still in the verification or approval process with an agency must remain under *Pending* status until they have completed the process and a home screening is on file with TARE.

As the selection process moves forward, the TARE coordinator exchanges additional information with the family’s caseworker and child’s CPS caseworker. The CPS caseworker is responsible for ensuring that a *Selection Staffing* is scheduled. Upon receipt of *Selection Staffing* results, the TARE coordinator:

  •   updates the family’s inquiry status;

  •   selects the appropriate response option; and

  •  sends the response to the family’s caseworker, who notifies the family as to whether they were selected as the adoptive family.

The TARE coordinator must update the family’s inquiry status as needed and send the appropriate status update to the family.

**6968** **TARE Family Registry Database Procedures**

CPS June 2012

The TARE Family Registry is an automated database of families and individuals across the United States who are interested in adopting a child from Texas. TARE allows each family to create a login account and family profile that records the family’s adoption preferences and centrally collects their home screenings. CPS staff use TARE’s searchable database to identify potential adoptive matches for children assigned to their caseload.

The TARE Family Registry program specialist is the designated state office contact for:

  •  family registrants (and their caseworkers) on TARE waiting to be matched; and

  •  staff seeking assistance with child-specific recruitment efforts to find potential matches.

**6968.1** **Registering Families on TARE**

CPS June 2012

All families within the United States who are interested in adopting a Texas child are encouraged to register on TARE. Families create a login account and are automatically assigned a unique family identification number by the TARE system.

After creating their login account, families can create a profile that allows them to record demographic information relating to their family and their adoption preferences.

**6968.2** **TARE Family Registry Broadcasts**

CPS June 2012

A TARE Family Registry broadcast assists in child-specific recruitment efforts. TARE sends a broadcast by email to selected families registered with TARE, as well as the family’s case manager when their adoption preferences match a particular child’s needs. TARE Family Registry broadcasts can be requested for any child registered on TARE by:

  •  the TARE coordinator;

  •  the TARE program specialist; or

  •  other CPS staff.

Regardless of who requests a broadcast, the TARE Family Registry program specialist is responsible for writing and emailing the broadcast to the selected families.

**6968.3** **TARE Family Registry Broadcasts for Children Age Six or Younger**

CPS June 2012

The number of approved families seeking to adopt children age six or younger is significant. Accordingly, before conducting national recruitment by publishing a child on TARE, a TARE Family Registry email broadcast must be completed for any child whose special needs are listed as none to moderate in his or her TARE profile and who is:

  •  age six or younger; or

  •  a member of a sibling group with at least one child age six or younger.

However, exceptions can be made for children who have severe disability needs on a case-by-case basis.

**Broadcast Process**

The TARE Child Profile specialist or the TARE coordinator change the profile status to *Publish for Broadcast* to notify the TARE Family Registry specialist that a Family Registry broadcast is needed. The TARE Family Registry specialist must make any necessary final edits to the child’s profile and photo. The TARE Family Registry specialist must then issue an email broadcast within five business days to:

  •  selected families;

  •  any case managers;

  •  the TARE coordinator;

  •  the child’s caseworker; and

  •  the caseworker’s supervisor;

The broadcast is time sensitive and recipients only have a limited amount of time to respond. The time allowed for families to respond to a broadcast depends on the particular child’s needs and the number of potential families receiving the broadcast.

Within five business days of a broadcast deadline, the TARE Family Registry specialist and the TARE coordinator must collectively determine whether further recruitment is needed.

If further recruitment is needed, the TARE coordinator must update the child’s adoption status to: *Request to Publish*.

  •  The TARE coordinator puts a comment in the child’s profile that the broadcast did not generate sufficient interest and that posting in TARE is necessary. The child’s profile will then be approved and published to TARE by the TARE Family Registry specialist.

  •  If no further recruitment is needed, the TARE coordinator must update the child’s adoption status to: *Request to Unpublish.*

  •  The TARE coordinator must then select the removal reason of *Removed due to Numerous Inquiries* and add a comment to the child’s profile that the broadcast generated sufficient interest. The TARE Family Registry specialist approves this change and the system no longer allows registered families to view the child’s profile.

**6968.4** **Searching the TARE Family Registry Database for Potential Adoptive Matches**

CPS June 2012

TARE coordinators and other DFPS staff with a TARE login account may use the TARE Family Registry database to identify potential adoptive matches for children on his or her caseload. The database may be accessed from the main TARE page on the DFPS intranet by staff after they have successfully logged in.

To search for a registered family that may be a potential adoptive match for a child on their caseload, staff enter the overall level of special needs, if any, that the family must be willing to accept.

The system generates search results and displays a list of registered families that fit the search criteria, as well as the assigned match percentage between the family profile and the child profile. Staff then select and invite families to view the child’s profile and submit an automated *TARE Interest Form* from the website. Ultimately, these efforts may result in a successful adoptive placement for a child.

**Best Practice Tip:**

The TARE Family Registry database should be accessed regularly by the child’s caseworker to determine whether potential adoptive matches exist.

**6969** **Prospective Inquiry Database Procedures**

CPS June 2012

The Prospective Inquiry database is used to log all inquiries outside of TARE for general information and to track follow-up responses and actions related to those inquiries. General information inquiries must be responded to within three business days using the following procedure:

  •  Foster/adoption home development (FAD) recruiters log in to TARE to receive notification of any new inquiries that have been received through the TARE system.

  •  The recruiter then selects the correct prepared response from the options in the system and sends that response to the family.

FAD recruiters must enter any families that attend a recruitment or community event or attend an Information Meeting into the Prospective Inquiry database. Additionally, after a recruitment, event, or Information Meeting, the FAD recruiter should search the TARE Family Registry to verify whether a family wanting to begin the approval or verification process has already created a login account with TARE. If a family profile is found, the recruiter should update the family’s profile in TARE by selecting the appropriate action item from the options in the system. If a family profile is not found, the FAD recruiter must enter the family into the TARE system as an inquiry and select the appropriate action item from the options in the system.

As the family moves through the verification or approval process, the FAD recruiter must document any contacts with the family by accessing the family’s TARE profile and selecting the appropriate action item in the system.