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DOCUMENT DATE/RANGE: (Required Field)	July 1984
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CHAPTER 36

ADOPTION SERVICES

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CHAPTER 36

ADOPTION SERVICES

36.00 PROGRAM AUTHORITY

Federal: CFR Title 45 1392.40

State: RCW Chapters 13, 26.32, 26.36, 26.37, 74.13
WAC 388-70-410 through 388-70-480
388-71-005 through 388-71-055

36.10 POLICY

36.11 Purpose of Service

The purpose of adoption services is to provide opportunities for children to achieve permanent, nurturing families through adoption. Any child who has no legal parents is considered to be an adoptable child, regardless of age, racial background, or physical, mental, or emotional disability. Adoption planning should begin as soon as possible once it is evident that the child will be unable to return home.

36.12 Service description

Adoption is a legal and social process provided for by law, to establish the legal relationship of child and parent when they are not so related by birth. The following types of adoption services are provided by the department:

A. Services to Children Prior to Adoptive Placement

The CSO foster care or permanent planning worker provides adoption services to all children whose permanency plan is adoption. Service includes staffing to develop an adoptive plan, preparation of the child for adoption, registration of the child with the adoption exchange, participation with child-specific recruitment activities, selection of the adoptive family, registration of the child for adoption support, and culminates with placement of the child into the adoptive home.

B. Services to Adoptive Family Applicants

1. The CSO adoption worker provides adoption services to the following:

   a. Families who want to adopt a child who has special needs.

   b. Department foster parents who have been determined to be a possible adoptive resource for a child who is in their care.

   c. Relatives who want to adopt a legally free child who is in the permanent custody of DSHS.

2. Services include family recruitment, intake, orientation, home study, preparation of preplacement report, exchange registration, consideration of child referrals, and when appropriate, application for adoption support (see Manual G, Chapter 38).

3. The department refers to private child placing agencies those families who want to adopt a child who does not have special needs.

C. Services to Adoptive Families and Children

1. The CSO adoption worker provides casework services to families upon placement of a child with a family, continuing through 90 days beyond the date of the finalization of the adoption, and, in situations approved by the CSO administrator, as needed following the finalization of the adoption. Services include placement, post placement supervision, disruption services, legal activities, and archiving.

2. The department provides adoption-related information and referral services for families who completed their adoption through the department until the child reaches the age of 18.

D. Services Involving Interstate Adoptions

1. The CSO adoption worker provides interstate adoption services for families who want to adopt a child with special needs when requested by the program manager for the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (see Manual G, Chapter 30).

2. Requests for interstate adoption services which involve the adoption of a single, healthy, caucasian child aged 5 or under will be referred to private agencies by the program manager of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children.

E. Services to ensure the development of adoption resources for special needs adoption including recruitment and community education.

36.13 General Policies Related to this Service

A. Children

The department will:

1. Acknowledge the unique vulnerability of every child on whose behalf parental rights have been terminated and the child is in the permanent custody of the department.

2. Provide for adoption planning reviews for each child for whom termination of parental rights is the case plan.

3. Place sibling groups in the same adoptive family unless it would be emotionally damaging to the children to do so, or unless exchange and recruitment resources for siblings have been exhausted. Placement plans to separate siblings must be made at the adoption planning review, and are to include specific means by which contacts between the children will be maintained.

4. Unless contrary to the expressed and written wishes of the parent or child, make a documented effort to provide the opportunity for children to be adopted by parents who have the same or a similar racial background.

5. Place a child for adoption in a nonrelated family only when that family has been selected through the registration and referral process, or has been the child's foster family for at least six months.

B. Adoptive Families

1. Applications are accepted for the department's adoption program from families or single persons who want to adopt a child who has special needs. Priorities for acceptance are based upon the department's most pressing needs, and are updated as needed.

2. Applications are accepted only from families who want to adopt:

   a. A child of any age who exhibits a seriously disabling condition which is not correctable or which requires extensive treatment.

   b. A child of a minority race if at least one member of the family is of the same race as that of the child desired. In the case of a nonenrolled Indian family, one member of the local ICWAC or the regional Indian consultant must substantiate the Indian status of the family (see 36.38 C).

   c. A sibling group in which each child is at least six years of age.

   d. A single child 10 years of age or older.

3. Adoptive applicants who want to be considered for a "foster-adoptive placement" must also be prepared to be licensed as foster parents (see 36.34).

4. Applications will not be accepted from persons receiving adoption services from another agency.

5. Families applying for adoption services must have obtained an adoption decree on any previous adoptive placements.

6. CSO staff applying for adoption services will be assigned to a CSO other than that of their work location by mutual decision of the CSO administrators.

C. Biological Parents

1. Consideration will be given to requests of the biological parent(s) regarding religious or other general characteristics of the adoptive family for their child when those requests have been put in writing by the biological parent.

2. Indian parents will be informed of the federal/state law requirements regarding the adoption of Indian children and of the department's goals and procedures regarding Indian children (see WAC 388-70-093, 388-70-450, and Manual G 1.04E.)

   a. If the Indian child's parent(s) does not wish the CSO Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee (LICWAC) to staff the case, or has other preferences regarding adoptive planning for his/her child, a statement of wishes, signed by the parent(s), will become a part of the child's record. Parental preference regarding this issue will be respected.

   b. When the CSO LICWAC does not staff the case, an Indian consultant appointed by the Regional Director will be requested to staff the case. (See Manual G, 1.04)

D. Confidentiality and Release of Information

1. Children

   a. All identifying information relating to a child is confidential and is not to be shared with adoptive parents, with media personnel, or with any other person not professionally participating in the case.

   b. Nonidentifying information about the child's behavior may be shared, with discretion, with potential adoptive families and with media for purposes of recruitment.

   c. All available nonidentifying information about the medical and psychosocial background of the child and the child's parents must be shared with the adoptive family prior to adoptive placement.

   d. All information about the child which is shared among professionals involved in the case must be handled in such a manner as to ensure the confidentiality of the child.

   e. Information from archived records shall be handled in the manner outlined in Manual G, 02.12 F.

2. Adoptive families

   a. Information gathered during the adoption home study and utilized for purposes of preparing the preplacement report is confidential, and closed to public inspection except upon an order of the court.

   b. Information in the preplacement report shall be shared with other adoption personnel only with the written consent of the adoptive family.

      (1) The entire preplacement report may be shared when this information is being utilized to assess the family's capacity to adopt a child who has been registered with the state, regional, or national adoption exchange.

      (2) Background information and medical information only may be shared when this information is being used for purposes other than that described in 2.b.(1) above.

   c. A copy of the complete preplacement report on a family shall be made available to that family, upon request, only after that report has been filed with the court.

   d. The identity of the adoptive family of any given child is confidential, and can be released only upon an order of the court.

3. Biological families

   a. The identity of the biological parents of the adopted child is confidential, and can be released only upon an order of the court.

   b. Nonidentifying information about the background and medical history of the biological parents must be shared, as available, with the adoptive parents.

E. Recruitment

1. Department staff will actively recruit families suitable for the adoption of children who have special needs.

   a. Minority and mixed race adoptive applicants will be recruited for adoption of minority and mixed race children.

   b. Child specific recruitment will be utilized to develop adoptive resources for children who are registered with the WARE and for whom no suitable adoptive resources have yet been identified.

   c. Community education and outreach activity will be used to develop interest and awareness of special needs adoption.

2. The CSO Administrator must grant approval for child specific recruitment prior to the initiation of that recruitment (see 36.36 D 3).

3. All child-specific recruitment activities shall be initiated by the Program Manager of the Washington Adoption Resource Exchange (WARE).

4. All information provided to the media shall be governed by confidentiality policy and the best interest of the child. Use of a child's first name and/or picture is allowable when that use will not be detrimental to the child.

5. Information provided in child specific recruitment shall be descriptive in nature, with an emphasis on the child's current behavior, abilities, and functional level. Generally, only information the child feels comfortable in sharing should be used.

F. Interstate Adoption

Interstate adoption services must be approved by the Program Manager of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children, and may result from the exchange referral process or at the request of an out-of-state public or private agency.

G. Intercountry Adoption

Families who want to adopt a child from another country shall be referred to private agencies providing this service.

36.14 Priorities Related to Adoption Service

A. All children for whom parental rights have been terminated.

B. Children who are not legally free and who meet the guidelines for foster adoptive placements.

36.15 Eligibility

A. Children: Any child in need of the service is eligible without regard to income.

B. Families: Families applying for adoption services are resources for children and not subject to service eligibility requirements. There is no fee for adoption services provided to families.

C. Medical Coverage: Children are eligible for medical coverage prior to finalization on an as needed basis under the categorically needy category.

D. Post Adoption Services: Casework services are available to adoptive families for 90 days following the finalization of an adoption and, upon request and with administrative approval, until the 18th birthday of the adopted child. Services will focus on issues specific to the adoption.

E. Purchase of service eligibility

1. Eligibility of a child for placement through purchase of service contract is determined by the Program Manager of the WARE, and is based upon a standardized rating system.

2. All Washington State licensed child-placing agencies are eligible to sign a contract to provide purchased adoption services.

36.20 PROGRAM STANDARDS

36.21 Program Expectations

A. Adoption planning reviews shall occur at the time a decision has been made to terminate parental rights and at the time the child becomes legally free (see 36.32).

B. A relative or foster parent adoption home study, when requested at the initial adoption planning review, shall be completed by the adoption worker within 60 days of that request.

C. Each legally free child shall be registered with the state office within 60 days following the second adoption planning review.

D. Approved adoptive families, when available, will be referred to the CSO by the Program Manager of the WARE within 15 days of a child's registration with the WARE.

E. Child-specific recruitment will be initiated by the Program Manager of the WARE within 90 days of exchange registration if no appropriate families have been identified through the WARE.

F. The filing of the adoption petition will be accomplished:

1. Within nine months following an adoption placement made through the WARE.

2. Within six months following termination of parental right when the plan is a relative or foster parent adoption.

G. The adoption home study for adoptive family applicants shall be completed within 90 days of the receipt of all portions of the application.

36.22 Program Outcomes

A. Adoption by Foster Parents

B. Adoption by Relatives

C. Adoption by Exchange Adoptive Home

D. Disruption

36.30 SERVICE PROCEDURES

36.31 Services to Children Prior to Adoptive Placement

At the point at which adoption is identified as the permanent planning outcome of choice, and steps are being taken to terminate parental rights, adoption planning is considered to have begun. Adoption services provided prior to adoptive placement are provided by the CSO foster care or permanent planning worker. Adoption services will be authorized on DSHS 14-154/159, using code 3601, Adoption Planning and Code 3652, Adoption Counseling.

36.32 Adoption Planning Reviews

A. There shall be two adoption planning reviews conducted on behalf of each child for whom termination of parental rights is being sought or has been achieved.

1. The goals of these reviews are as follows:

   a. To explore all possible adoptive resources for each legally free child. To ensure that a child, who has been deprived of his/her parents has every opportunity for placement as the legally adopted child either with relatives, foster parents or with a family located through the exchange process.

   b. To determine whether adoption or another permanent planning outcome is in the continuing best interest of the child.

   c. To expedite the adoption plan or to implement the chosen permanent plan.

2. These reviews shall be attended, at a minimum, by the child's worker, the child welfare supervisor, and the CSO adoption worker. The Program Manager of the WARE will, at the request of the CSO Administrator or RO, either provide consultation or furnish information for the review.

3. These reviews shall occur at the following times:

   a. The Initial Adoption Planning Review shall take place within 30 days of the decision to terminate parental rights.

   b. The Second Adoption Planning Review shall take place within 30 days of the order of termination of parental rights.

4. For Indian children, the recommendations of the most recent LICWAC or Indian consultant staffing must be included in each Adoption Planning Review.

B. Initial Adoption Planning Review

1. The purposes of this review are as follows:

   a. To initiate a social and medical assessment for each child for adoption planning (see 36.35).

   b. To conduct an initial exploration of all possible adoptive resources for the child, including adoption by relatives, foster parents, or by a family registered with the WARE.

   c. To decide whether to initiate an adoption home study, as needed, for a relative or foster parent who appears to be a strong candidate to be the adoptive parent (see 36.32 B 2)

   d. To determine whether the child should be considered for a foster adoptive placement (see 36.34).

   e. To determine an alternative permanent plan for the child if adoption has been ruled out as the placement of choice for the child.

   f. To determine the case plan for the child pending the termination of parental rights.

2. The following criteria shall be utilized to determine whether a relative or foster parent adoption home study should be initiated:

   a. Relative Adoption

      1) The relative has expressed an interest in adoption of the child.

      2) The relationship between the relatives and the child's biological parents will not provide a negative influence on the adoption.

      3) If the relatives are known to the child, a positive relationship exists.

b. Foster Parent Adoption

1) When there is a good reason to believe, by virtue of a full exploration of other types of adoptive resources available, that adoption by foster parents is the most appropriate placement.

2) The child has been in the foster home for at least six months.

3) The foster family has personal characteristics which make them an adoptive placement of choice for the child.

4) The family has expressed an interest in adoption in general or in adoption of the specific child.

5) Adoption by this family is consistent with department policy regarding sibling placement and/or placement of children of minority background (see 36.13 A 3 and 4).

3. If the decision is made to initiate a relative or foster parent adoption home study, the adoption worker will be requested to do this.

4. Criteria for determination of whether the child shall be considered for a foster-adoptive placement are found in 36.34 C.

5. If adoptive planning is not being considered for the child, there must be an evaluation of the benefit to the child of continuing to pursue the petition to terminate parental rights.

6. Upon the conclusion of the review, the child's worker shall complete the Initial Adoption Planning Review portion of the DSHS 15-174, Adoption Planning Review Report. The adoption outcomes explored and the case plan developed must be indicated. The form is to be retained in the child's case record with the remainder of the form to be completed at the Second Adoption Planning Review.

C. Second Adoption Planning Review

1. The purposes of this review are as follows:

a. To review the child's social/medical status as indicated by information compiled since the initial adoption planning review.

b. To evaluate the relative or foster parent adoption home study if one was requested at the initial review, and to make recommendations regarding the advisability of the placement (see 36.32 C 2).

c. To explore the availability of other adoptive and/or recruitment resources if an adoptive plan has not been developed.

d. To develop an alternative long-term plan if adoption is not being considered as an option for the child; to document the rationale for not pursuing an adoptive placement.

e. To register the child with the Registry for Legally Free Children (see 36.32 C 5).

2. The following criteria will be utilized to evaluate the relative or foster parent for whom an adoption home study has been completed and to recommend the advisability of this placement for the child:

a. The family has maintained a positive attitude about the adoptive placement throughout the home study process.

b. There has been ample opportunity for the family and the child to get to know one another and to develop a positive relationship.

c. The family is fully aware of any special needs the child may have, and is willing to accept the responsibility for those short and long-term needs.

d. The family has the parenting skills and motivation necessary to meet the needs of the child.

e. The community in which the family resides has the resources necessary to meet the special needs of the child.

3. Each child for whom adoption is the plan, but not by relatives or foster parents, must be registered with the WARE to initiate the following activities:

a. Referral of approved adoptive families to the child's worker;

b. Child specific recruitment;

4. The DSHS 15-174, Adoption Planning Review Report, is used during the Second Adoption Planning Review, and provides the basic criteria for selection of adoptive placement with relatives or foster parents. The form is completed by the child's worker and must indicate the adoption or other permanent plan for the child. A copy of the form is retained in the child's case record. The original is attached to the DSHS 9-235, Registry of Legally Free Children, and sent to the Adoption Program Manager.

5. Registry of Legally Free Children

a. All legally free children must be registered with the State Adoption Program Manager on the DSHS 9-235, Registry of Legally Free Children. A copy is also sent to the Office of Support Enforcement as notice of termination of natural parents' support obligations.

b. The purposes of registration are as follows:

(1) To maintain a current and central listing of each child in the state who is legally free and in the permanent custody of the department.

(2) To provide the Adoption Program Manager the identity of relatives or foster parents adopting a legally free child.

(3) To provide the Program Manager of the WARE, as needed, information to register the child with the WARE (see 36.36 B).

(4) To provide for a tracking system for each legally free child, beginning with registration and terminating with the submission of the record for archiving.

D. Mandatory Court Review

1. A court review is mandatory for all children whose adoption has not been finalized within six months following the order of termination of parental rights (see RCW 13.34.210). This is only true if the order of termination is entered in superior court.

2. For a child who is in an adoptive placement, this report shall be completed by the adoption worker who is supervising the placement. It shall be mailed directly to the court which has jurisdiction over the child, with a copy sent to the CSO administrator in the county which retains court jurisdiction of the child.

3. For a child who is not in an adoptive placement, the court report should include a statement about the following:

a. The identified permanent plan for the child;

b. Efforts undertaken to identify an adoptive family for children for whom adoption is the case plan.

36.33 Foster Parent Adoption

A. Foster parent adoption is adoption of a legally free child by the foster parent(s) with whom the child has been living. Foster parent adoption is distinguished from other types of adoption by the fact that, at the time the child was first placed with the family, the child was not legally free and it was not anticipated nor planned that the foster parents would adopt.

B. Criteria for determining whether a foster parent adoption should be approved are found in 35.32 B 2 and 36.32 C 2.

C. Procedures to follow once a foster parent adoption has been approved are found in 36.39 C.

36.34 Foster-Adoptive Placement

A. A foster-adoptive placement is the placement of a nonlegally free child with an adoptive family who is also licensed to provide foster care. The adoptive family is informed of the legal status of the child and the potential for removal of the child from placement should legal termination not be accomplished.

B. The purpose of foster-adoptive placement is to move the child into a permmanent home as soon as possible without jeopardizing the legal or social well-being of the child.

C. Foster-adoptive placement should be considered for children who meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. Termination of parental rights has been granted and is under appeal, or

2. Termination of parental rights for one parent has been established and termination of parental rights for the other parent awaits only publication by the court to notify the absent parent of the termination proceedings. Documentation of attempts to locate the absent parent must be available.

3. Parents have signed the petition to terminate parental rights; the court has not yet acted upon the signed petition; or

4. A petition for involuntary termination of parental rights has been initiated but not yet acted upon; the attorney general or the prosecuting attorney has been consulted and agrees that termination is likely and that the foster-adoptive placement would not jeopardize the outcome of the termination hearing.

D. Selection of foster-adoptive family

1. Document that the child meets the criteria for foster-adoptive placement.

2. Register the child with the WARE for a foster-adoptive family. Include specifications for geographic placement and visitation; document rationale for those specifications.

3. Follow the procedures for preplacement and placement services. (See 36.37 and 36.39.)

36.35 Child Assessment

A. Prior to the final termination of parental rights, the child's worker shall complete a social/medical assessment of the child to aid in the development of the adoptive plan. The assessment shall consist of the following items:

1. Life story book.

2. Psychiatric and/or psychological evaluations as needed.

3. Medical evaluation.

4. School records.

5. Birth information/verification of birth.

   a. In-state.

   b. Out-of-state.

B. Information from the child assessment shall be used in the following ways:

1. Provided to adoptive parent prior to placement.

2. Included with WARE registration material.

3. Evaluated in the Second Adoption Planning Review.

C. Life Story Book

1. The life story book is a scrap book developed by the child and the child's worker, in preparation for the child's adoption, using pictures, drawings, writing, etc., which outlines the sequence of events in the child's life. Information may be collected from the case record or from outside resources (i.e., foster parents, relatives, school personnel, etc.).

2. The purpose of the life story book is to help the child understand and integrate the events in his/her life, and to understand the reason for his/her pending adoptive placement.

3. The life story book is ideally begun at the time of the child's initial foster care placement; it must be begun no later than the time at which the decision is made to terminate parental rights. The book is kept by the child after the adoption placement as a permanent document of his/her childhood experiences; a copy of the contents of the book is maintained in the child's record.

4. Confidential information from the child's case record shall not be placed in the life story book. Information already known and shared by the child may be included.

36.36 Interface with Adoption Exchanges

A. The Washington Adoption Resource Exchange (WARE) is the single adoption exchange operated by the department. The purpose of the WARE is to refer approved and registered adoptive families for the adoption of children

who are registered with the exchange and to initiate child specific recruitment for those children for whom no adoptive families are readily identified.

B. Children are registered with the WARE using the following documents:

1. DSHS 15-18, Adoption Exchange Child Registration;

2. DSHS 13-41, Child's Medical and Family Background Report;

3. Copies of psychiatric, psychological and significant medical reports; and

4. A minimum of three pictures of the child suitable for copying.

C. Adoptive child and family registrations are accepted from both the CSOs and the private agencies in Washington. Children registered will be referred in the following way depending upon whether they are readily placed children or children with special needs.

D. Readily Placed Children

1. Children registered by the CSO's and meeting all the following criteria will be referred by the WARE to Washington licensed child-placing agencies:

a. Birth through five years of age; and

b. Caucasian; and

c. No disabling physical, emotional or mental condition; and

d. Legally free or voluntarily relinquished with pending court action; and

e. Not a member of a sibling group.

2. Registration information on the child will be referred to a maximum of three agencies selected by the WARE. Specific family names will not be listed on the DSHS 15-26, Adoption Referral Notification. Only the names of the agencies selected will be listed.

3. Each agency selected will refer a maximum of two adoptive family home studies to the child's worker for consideration.

4. The child's worker will review all families referred and will evaluate the appropriateness of the placement with the worker for each family referred. Additional information may be requested when necessary.

5. Additional referrals may be requested by contacting the Program Manager of the WARE.

E. Children With Special Needs

1. WARE Referral

a. All children with special needs (i.e., those children who are not readily placed as identified in 36.36 C.1.), will be referred by the Program Manager of the WARE, utilizing the following priority:

(1) Children registered by the CSOs will first be referred to CSOs having registered families and, if no appropriate families are available through the CSOs, then referred to private agencies.

(2) All children registered by private agencies will be first referred to private agencies having registered families and, if no appropriate families are available through private agencies, then referred to the CSOs.

b. Only families registered with the WARE will be selected and referred. Family registration information will be sent to the child's worker with the DSHS 15-26, Adoption Referral Notification. The child's registration information will be sent to the family's adoption worker.

c. The child's worker will review all families referred, and will evaluate the appropriateness of the placement with the worker for each family referred.

d. The registration information for families not receiving further consideration must be returned to the WARE within 15 days of the receipt of the referrals, using the DSHS 15-26, Adoption Referral Notification. The comments section will be completed stating the reason(s) the referral was not considered appropriate.

e. The Adoption Referral Notification form for families under consideration must be returned to the WARE within 30 days of the receipt of the referrals. Additional referrals may be requested from the Program Manager of the WARE.

2. Regional and National Exchange Referral

a. The Northwest Adoption Exchange (NWAE) and the National Adoption Exchange (NAE) are adoption exchanges which work to identify adoptive families outside of the state of Washington.

b. Referrals of children to the NWAE or the NAE is initiated by the Program Manager of the WARE with the concurrence of the CSO which is responsible for the child.

c. Referral of a child to the NWAE and to the NAE is considered when no appropriate adoptive family within the state of Washington has been identified for the child.

3. Child Specific Recruitment

a. The Program Manager of the WARE will initiate child specific recruitment when no registered adoptive family resources can be identified.

b. Recruitment resources include the WARE Bulletin, the Northwest Adoption Exchange, and a variety of media recruitment resources.

c. The DSHS 9-611, Release and Consent for Child Specific Recruitment, must be completed by the CSO and sent to the Program Manager of the WARE prior to the initiation of any recruitment activities.

d. Media child specific recruitment

(1) Media child specific recruitment is the publicizing of children awaiting adoptive placement in a newsletter, newspaper, or television feature designed to inform the public about the adoptive availability of those children.

(2) Media recruitment for a given child may be considered only when no family already registered with the WARE can be identified for that child.

(3) Media child specific recruitment may only be initiated by the Program Manager of the WARE after a thorough discussion with the child's worker of its appropriateness.

(4) To gain necessary approval for media child specific recruitment, the child's worker will initiate the following actions:

(a) Obtain written administrative approval on the DSHS 9-611, Release and Consent for Child Specific Recruitment.

(b) Inform the court and the guardian ad litem in writing of the intent to initiate media recruitment for those children for whom the court has retained wardship. Give the court 15 calendar days for an opportunity to respond prior to proceeding further.

(c) Obtain written parental approval for media recruitment on the DSHS 9-611, Release and Consent for Child Specific Recruitment, for children who are not yet legally free.

(5) Once approval has been obtained, the WARE will contact media personnel and refer them to the child's worker for scheduling and presentation of information.

(6) All information shared with media personnel shall be governed by adoption policies regarding confidentiality (see 36.13 D and E).

4. Purchase of Service

a. Purchase of adoption services from licensed child-placing agencies may be considered by the Program Manager of the WARE as an option for those special needs children registered with the WARE who meet the following eligibility criteria:

(1) Documented lack of placement resources.

(2) Placement history involving numerous placements.

(3) Special needs relating to disabling condition and/or age and/or race and/or membership in a large sibling group.

b. At the request of the Program Manger of the WARE, the child's worker will register the child by completing the DSHS 10-38, Adoption Purchase of Service Child Registration and forwarding it to the Program Manager of the WARE. This registration constitutes the CSO's agreement to participate in the activities related to purchase of service, as defined on the back page of the registration form.

c. The Program Manager of the WARE will determine eligibility of the child for purchase of services. Private agencies will be notified of child's eligibility status through the WARE Bulletin and/or through the referral process.

d. Services purchased will include recruitment of a family, preplacement planning, post-placement supervision and legal finalization.

36.37 Preplacement Services

A. Family Selection

1. Foster families or relatives may be selected as the adoptive placement of choice at the Second Adoption Planning Review using criteria outlined in 36.32 C 2.

2. Final placement selection for families referred from the WARE shall be made by the child's worker in conjunction with the child welfare supervisor. Families referred for a legally free child or for a foster-adoptive placement will be evaluated to determine which of the families can best meet the needs of the child. The following criteria will be used:

a. The family's ability to meet the physical, emotional, and mental needs of the child.

b. The compatability between the child's personal characteristics and the expectations of all members of the adoptive family.

c. The specific experiences and/or training the family has had which prepare them to provide for the special needs of the child.

d. The resources in the family's community which are available to meet the special needs of the child.

e. The degree to which the family is willing to initiate and participate in medical and/or therapeutic treatment.

f. For Foster-Adoptive Placement the family's signature on the DSHS 15-175, Agreement with Foster-Adoptive Family, must be obtained. This signifies the family's understanding of and agreement with the mutual rights and responsibilities of the family and the department in a foster-adoptive placement.

3. The child's worker may request a copy of the family's preplacement report if additional written information is needed.

4. The child's worker may involve the child in the family selection process by sharing general information and/or pictures of families referred.

5. A case staffing involving the child's worker, the supervisor, adoption workers for the families referred, and the adoption program manager may be requested when needed to make a family selection decision regarding the child's placement.

6. The child's worker shall inform the family's worker once a placement decision has been reached. The family worker shall inform the family of their selection. The family worker then shares all nonidentifying information about the child which is recorded on the DSHS 13-41, Child's Medical and Family Background Report, and initiates a discussion with the family regarding their interest in adopting the child referred for them.

7. The family signs the DSHS 13-41, Child's Medical and Family Background Report, signifying their knowledge of the child's condition.

8. Direct contact between the child's worker and the adoptive family, prior to the final placement decision, may take place using the following guidelines:

   a. The family has already been identified as the most likely placement for the child.

b. The purpose of the contact is to evaluate the family's unique ability to meet the special needs of the specific child.

c. No contact shall take place without the consent of all parties involved.

9. In situations in which a child being placed for adoption is to maintain contact with relatives, the child's worker in conjunction with the family's worker must complete an agreement with the prospective adoptive family prior to the beginning of visitation. The agreement should state the extent of the contact to be maintained. A signed copy of the agreement must remain in the child's case record.

B. Visitation and Placement Planning

1. The purpose of visitation is to initiate contact between the child and the family selected as the most likely family to adopt the child, and to allow the child's caseworker an opportunity to observe the relationship as it develops.

2. The needs of the child shall be the primary consideration in planning for visitation and placement.

3. The child's foster parents may be consulted in planning and implementing the visitation and placement.

4. When consistent with meeting the needs of the child, there may be a contact between the child's foster parents and the prospective adoptive parents. The purpose of the contact shall be a sharing of information about the child. The contact shall be arranged by the child's worker and shall be done only with the consent of all parties involved.

5. The child's worker will select a suitable location for visitation and accompany the child on the initial visit. (Care will be taken to provide a suitable location familiar to the child and/or based on the child's needs.)

6. After each visit the family and the child will be given the opportunity to express their feelings and concerns to their respective workers regarding the possible placement.

7. The child's worker and family's worker will evaluate visitation reactions and discuss with each other to assist in planning future visits and/or make a decision on whether or not to proceed with the placement.

8. Based on the child's age and level of development, he/she will be given an ample opportunity to provide input in the decision-making process.

9. Once the adoptive family selected has given final agreement to the placement, the child's worker has the responsibility for making the final placement decision.

36.38 Adoptive Planning for Indian Children

A. The child's worker will ensure that all procedures are followed and notices filed as required in Manual G, 23.38, Indian Child Welfare.

B. The child's worker will document the child's Indian status in the service record and on the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) DSHS 4-220(X), Family Ancestry Chart (see Manual G, 32.33), using the following criteria:

1. Any person who is enrolled or eligible for enrollment in a recognized tribe; or

2. Any person determined, or eligible to be found, to be an Indian by the Secretary of the Interior; or

3. An Eskimo, Aleut or other Alaskan native; or

4. A Canadian Indian: Any person who is a member of a treaty tribe, Metis community or nonstatus Indian community from Canada; or

5. An Unenrolled Indian: A person considered to be an Indian by a federally or nonfederally recognized Indian tribe or urban Indian/ Alaskan Native community organization.

C. An adoptive family shall be considered Indian if one or both parents are Indian by the above criteria. Each applicant shall be required to complete a copy of DSHS 15-128(X), Verification of American Indian Ancestry, to provide the department with documentation for compliance with WAC 388-70-450. If the applicant is unable to provide documentation, the Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee (LICWAC or local Indian consultant) is available for consultation.

D. In adoptive planning for Indian children, the unique tribal, cultural and religious sovereignty of Indian nations, tribes and communities shall be recognized. When not inconsistent with the wishes of the biological parents and/or the child, the adoption of Indian children by Indian families is the primary goal.

E. Foster Parent Adoptions

1. The child's worker will ensure that all procedures in Manual G, 32.33 have been followed in the selection of the foster parent.

2. As a part of the total evaluation in approving the foster parent adoption of an Indian child, the case record shall contain documentation of the foster family's past performance, and future commitment in exposing the child to his/her Indian tribal and cultural heritage. It shall also contain documentation of the child's wish to be involved in his/her Indian culture.

F. Adoption Exchanges

1. In the referral of families for an Indian child, registered adoptive families having the following characteristics shall be given preference in the following order. Each major category being given 30 days before proceeding to the next.

   a. An Indian family residing in Washington who is of the same tribe as the child.

   b. An Indian family residing in Washington considering tribal cultural differences.

   c. Other Exchanges: Attention shall be given to matching the child's tribal culture to that of the family.

      (1) An Indian family from the Northwest through the Northwest Adoption Exchange.

      (2) An Indian family from elsewhere in the U.S. through the National Adoption Exchange.

   d. Any other family who can provide a suitable home to an Indian child, as well as instill pride and understanding in the child's tribal cultural heritage. The suitability of such home to be determined in conjunction with the LICWAC or local Indian consultant.

G. Out-of-State Agency

When an Indian child in the custody of an out-of-state agency is referred for placement with adoptive parents residing in Washington, documentation shall be obtained that assures compliance with the department's standards for planning for Indian children.

36.39 Placement Service

A. Placement services which are provided by the child's worker are intended to allow for the physical placement of the child into the adoptive home and provide for a transfer of case records and responsibility from the child's worker to the family's worker.

B. Foster-Adoptive Placement

1. The child's worker in a foster-adoptive placement will continue to maintain full case responsibility for the child. The family's adoption worker may provide courtesy supervision to the child and the family until the child becomes legally free, at which time the adoption worker assumes full case responsibility.

2. Upon placement of a child in a foster-adoptive home, the child's worker will initiate the following activities:

   a. Transfer foster care payment from the foster family to the foster-adoptive family on the DSHS 14-159 continuing to use service code 3210.

   b. Ensure that the child's clothing, toys, pictures, life story book, and other personal possessions are sent with the child to his or her foster-adoptive family.

   c. Coordinate for the provision of courtesy supervision with the family's adoption worker as needed.

   d. Complete and submit the DSHS 15-21, Change of Status Report (Rev. 11/82), to the Program Manager of the WARE, OB 41-C, Olympia, WA 98504.

   e. Continue to provide foster care services regarding visitation and legal activities.

   f. Follow procedures outlined in 36.39 C for transfer of the child's record to the adoption worker once the child is legally free.

3. The adoption worker may provide courtesy supervision to the foster-adoptive family authorizing the service on the DSHS 14-154/159 using service code 3254.

C. Adoptive Placement of a Legally Free Child

1. The child's worker will transfer full care responsibility to the family's adoption worker once a child in foster-adoptive status becomes legally free or once a legally free child is physically placed with his or her adoptive family. When the child is to be adopted by foster parents, the child's worker may, with administrative approval, continue to provide post-placement and finalization services to the family.

2. The child's worker will initiate the following actions:

   a. Provide the adoptive family with a letter to permit them to obtain medical care for the child (see sample format in 36.99).

   b. Ensure that the child's clothing, toys, pictures, life story book, and other personal possessions are retained by the child if moving to his or her adoptive family.

   c. Complete the DSHS 15-21, Change of Status Report, and submit to the Program Manager of the WARE, OB 41-C, Olympia, WA 98504.

d. Immediately terminate all foster care services and payment by submitting the DSHS 14-159.

e. Complete the DSHS 2-305(X), Service Episode Record.

f. Ensure that the child's case record includes the following documents:

(1) Certified copies of all legal documents terminating parental rights.

(2) Signed copy of the Agreement with Foster-Adoptive Family, DSHS 15-175, when applicable.

(3) Copy of child's original Washington State birth certificate or a completed DSHS 16-24, Request for Verification of Birth, when the child was born in another state.

(4) A cover memo to the adoptive family worker stating the due date of the six-month court review and the address of the court holding jurisdiction.

g. Immediately transfer the child's case record to the CSO adoption worker in all cases in which a transfer of responsibility is to occur.

3. When a child in the custody of DSHS is placed with a family from another agency, the child's worker sends a case summary including copies of legal documents to the supervisor's agency. An open case file will be maintained in the CSO until the adoption is final. The supervising agency is appointed next friend and works with the family's attorney in completing the adoption. The CSO service worker obtains a copy of the final decree, closes the case and archives as usual.

36.40 Services to Adoptive Family Applicants

Services to the adoptive family applicants are provided by the adoption family worker.

36.41 Recruitment

It is the responsibility of the adoption caseworker to participate in efforts to recruit families who want to adopt children who have special needs. This includes both general recruitment and child specific recruitment. The Adoption Program Manager and the Program Manager of the WARE are available to provide consultation and recruitment tools.

A. General Recruitment

General recruitment is designed to acquaint the public with issues involved with the adoption of children with special needs, and to interest families in providing this type of service. General recruitment may include the following types of activities:

1. Hold public adoption interest meetings on a regular basis.

2. Speak at various group meetings to discuss adoption.

3. Develop support group of existing adoptive parents to participate in recruitment activities.

4. Develop adoption booth for placement at fairs, libraries, and other public places.

5. Work with media to present prepared Public Service Announcements.

B. Child Specific Recruitment

Child specific recruitment is designed to identify a family for a waiting child (see 36.36 E 3). It may include the following activities:

1. Present information about children from the WARE Bulletin and the NWAE photolisting to families expressing interest in adoption of a child with special needs.

2. Show slide presentations of waiting children at public adoption interest meetings.

3. Work with media to develop regular features of waiting children.

36.42 Intake

A. All family inquiries regarding adoption should be referred directly to the CSO adoption worker who will:

1. Respond to general inquiries (i.e., families calling to inquire about adoption in general) as follows:

   a. Families should be given information regarding special needs adoption, and the types of children for whom the department is currently accepting adoptive applicants (see 36.13 B 2).

   b. Families should be offered the opportunity to discuss special needs adoption with the CSO worker before they make the decision that they do or do not want to pursue this type of adoption. They should be invited to an adoption orientation.

c. Families who decide that they do not want to pursue special needs adoption may be referred to private child placing agencies which provide services for families who want to adopt readily placed children.

2. Respond to specific inquiries (i.e., families calling to inquire about a child for whom they have seen child specific recruitment) as follows:

a. The CSO adoption worker learns of the child's current placement status from the NWAE or from the WARE, and provides this information to the family.

b. If the child is still awaiting an adoptive family, the adoption worker provides the inquiring family with nonconfidential information about the child.

c. The family is informed that pursuing an adoption home study does not guarantee their adoption of the identified child; their interest in adoption of other special needs children is solicited.

d. The family is invited to an adoption orientation meeting.

B. All CSO requests to initiate an adoption home study for a foster parent, relative or interstate adoptive placement should be referred to the CSO adoption worker.

1. The CSO adoption worker will initiate contact with the family when:

a. The request for a foster parent or relative home study is the result of the Initial Adoption Planning Review.

b. The request for a home study for an interstate adoptive placement has been approved of by the Washington State Program Manager of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). See Manual G, Chapter 30.

2. The CSO Adoption Worker will provide the following services:

a. Initiate contact with the family and invite them to an adoption orientation meeting as per Manual G, 36.43. Additional clarification may be given regarding the ICPC, procedures for relative and foster parent adoptions, or the differences in roles for both the department and the family when a foster care placement becomes an adoptive placement.

b. Inform the family that pursuing an adoption home study does not guarantee their adoption of the identified child(ren).

c. When appropriate, make contact with the worker or CSO/Agency requesting home study services to review information of the child being considered for placement.

36.43 Orientation

A. Orientation meetings may be held either with individuals or with a group of families, depending upon the number of people who are waiting.

B. The purpose of orientation is to provide a family with a sufficient amount of information regarding adoption through the department to enable them to decide whether or not to enter into agreement to work toward adoption.

C. The orientation meeting shall include information regarding the following issues:

1. The significance of adoption in permanency planning for children in foster care, and the department's position that the child is the primary client in adoption services.

2. Adoption of children with special needs, including the types of children awaiting adoption through DSHS and the resources available to help families who adopt children who have special needs.

3. The procedure for a family to follow in pursuing adoption through DSHS, the differences between foster care, adoption, and foster-adoptive placements.

4. The legal procedures involved in adoption, the roles and responsibilities of the family and the department in adoption.

36.44 Adoption Home Study

A. The purposes of the adoption home study are as follows:

1. To facilitate prospective adoptive parents in a personal evaluation of their readiness and capacity to adopt a child who has special needs.

2. To educate prospective adoptive parents in issues concerning adoption of children with special needs:

a. Behavior and ability typically associated with various types of medical and emotional disabilities.

b. Behavior frequently associated with children who have been abused and/or neglected and who have experienced numerous foster care placements.

c. Specific community and other resources available to address the needs of children who have a variety of disabilities.

3. To provide the adoption worker with an opportunity to evaluate the family with respect to their capacity to parent the types of children waiting to be adopted.

4. To gather all necessary information to complete the preplacement report.

B. Procedures to Complete the Adoption Home Study are as follows:

1. The applicant shall complete the DSHS 10-33, Adoption Application, including information regarding the type of child the family wants to adopt.

2. The adoption worker accepts the application if the family meets the criteria for acceptance as defined in 36.13 B.

3. If the family has had a home study completed by another agency, a DSHS 14-12(X), Authorization to Release Information, should be obtained from the adopting parents and a summary of the study requested of the other agency. If the previous study was done by another CSO, transfer of service records should be requested.

4. The adoption worker authorizes the home study service on the DSHS 14-154/159 using service code 3653, Adoption Application.

5. The adoption worker and the family participate in a minimum of four contacts, including at least one home visit, during which the following issues will be explored:

a. The family's interest in adoption, and the characteristics of child(ren) they want to add to their family.

b. The types of training and/or experiences which the family has had which have prepared them to parent the child(ren) they want to adopt.

c. The emotional maturity of the family.

d. The nature of the marital relationship, if a married couple is applying to adopt, or the nature of relationships with the opposite sex if a single person is applying to adopt.

e. The family's activities, interests, and life style.

f. The family's expectatons regarding children in their family.

g. The adjustment of children in the family; the expectation the children have of a sibling.

h. The experiences the family has had in coping with problems; the nature of the family's personal support system.

i. The family's attitude toward termination of parental rights, adoption, and open adoption.

6. The adoption worker contacts at least three personal references whose names have been furnished by the adoptive applicants.

7. The family submits a copy of the DSHS 13-01, Adoptive Applicant Medical Report, which has been completed by their physician.

36.45 Preplacement Report

A. The preplacement report is submitted to the court to provide information about a family who has petitioned to adopt a child.

B. The preplacement report consists of two parts:

1. A report on the adoption home study, as reported, on pages 1-6 of the DSHS 10-43, Adoption Preplacement Report.

2. The agency's specific recommendations to the court regarding the suitability of the family for adoption, as reported on page 7 of the DSHS 10-43, Adoption Preplacement Report.

C. Information from the preplacement report may be shared with the family in the following manner:

1. Any part of the home study as reported on pages 1-6 may be shared at any time.

2. The agency recommendation, which completes the preplacement report, may only be shared in writing with the family after the preplacement report has been filed with the court (see RCW 26.32.220).

36.46 Acceptance/Denial

A. If the results of the home study indicate that the family is a good candidate for the adoption of a child with special needs, the worker should register the family with the WARE (see 36.47).

B. If the home study gives evidence that the family is a good candidate for adoption of a readily placed child but not adoption of a special needs child, the family may be referred to a private agency for service.

C. If the home study gives evidence that the family is not a good candidate for adoption, the worker should inform the family of specific problem areas identified. If the problem areas appear to be amenable to treatment, the family may be encouraged to secure the needed help and again proceed with the home study.

D. If the problem areas do not appear to be amendable to treatment, the family should be encouraged to withdraw or the service request may be denied.

36.47 Registration with the Washington Adoption Resource Exchange (WARE)

A. Upon satisfctory completion of the home study, the adoption worker registers the family with the WARE.

B. Families registered with the WARE are listed by date of receipt of their registration, and by the characteristics of child(ren) for whom they have been approved. Both of these criteria are used by the Program Manager of the WARE when referring families.

C. Procedures for WARE registration are as follows:

1. The adoption worker completes the DSHS 15-22, Adoption Exchange Family Registration. This form is typed and is then signed by the adoption worker's supervisor. The form is mailed to: Program Manager, WARE, MS OB 41C, Olympia, WA 98504.

2. The DSHS 15-22, Adoption Exchange Family Registration, is updated by the adoption worker whenever the circumstances or interests of the adoptive family change.

3. The adoption worker notifies the program manager of the WARE if a registered family is transferred to another CSO for service.

36.48 WARE Withdrawal (See WAC 388-70-460)

A. Families must be withdrawn from the adoption exchange under the following circumstances:

1. Upon the adoptive placement of a child with the family.

2. Upon the worker's learning of the pregnancy of the potential adoptive mother.

3. Upon the family's choosing to receive adoption services from another agency or through an independent placement.

4. Upon the family's physically leaving the state.

5. Upon the family's or worker's decision that adoption is no longer an appropriate plan for the family.

B. Withdrawal from the WARE is accomplished by the adoption worker submitting the DSHS 15-21, Change of Status Report. Families are also withdrawn from the WARE when the DSHS 15-21 is forwarded to the WARE by a child's worker at the time of placement. The family's worker shall inform the family at any time the family is withdrawn from the WARE.

C. Families who want to be reregistered with the WARE following their withdrawal from the exchange must reapply for adoption services and have their home study updated. The adoption worker then submits an updated DSHS 15-22, Adoption Exchange Family Registration.

36.49 Information Sharing, Visitation and the Placement Decision

A. Information about children for whom a family is being considered should be shared with that family by their adoption worker using the following guidelines:

1. General information about a referral may be shared with a family each time a referral is made.

2. Specific information about a child referred should be shared with a family each time they are being strongly considered as the adoptive family for the child.

3. The family's receipt of information about a child, contact with a child's caseworker, contact with a child's foster family, etc., must be governed by procedures outlined in 36.37 A 6, 7 and 8.

B. Visitation

1. The purposes of visitation are as follows:

   a. To allow the prospective adoptive parents and child(ren) an opportunity to begin to know one another.

   b. To allow the prospective adoptive family, the adoption worker, the child and the child's caseworker an opportunity to make a continuing evaluation of whether or not adoptive planning should continue.

2. Preplacement planning and visitation procedures are outlined in 36.37.

3. The final decision of whether or not to place a child with any adoptive family is made by the professional staff of the CSO which has administrative responsibility for the child.

36.50 Services to Adoptive Family and Child

The adoption worker assumes caseworker responsibilities for the adoptive family and child upon the placement of the child into the adoptive home.

36.51 Case Management/Post Placement Support Services

A. Prior to the adoptive placement, the adoptive family worker will file a copy of the preplacement report with the court, indicating the name of the child on whose behalf the report is being filed. Maintain a record of the date on which this report was filed.

B. Upon receipt of the child's record, the family worker shall:

1. Review the child's record to ensure that all required forms and documents are present (see 36.39 C).

2. Initiate the DSHS 14-139(X), Social Services Application, with the child as head of the household, and using the child's new name and case number.

3. Authorize adoption services for the child on the DSHS 14-154/159, utilizing code 3602, Post Placement Services, and utilizing the child's new name.

4. Authorize medical services on an as needed basis, identifying the child as categorically needy. These services may continue until the adoption is finalized.

5. Open DSHS 2-305(X), Service Episode Record.

C Post-Placement Support Services

1. Post-placement services may be provided directly to the family by the adoption worker and/or by referral to community support services.

2. The purpose of post placement services is to support the continuing placement of the child in the family, and to provide services to the child and family which will promote that goal.

3. Post-placement support services may include the following:

a. Casework services designed to assist the family and child during the initial adjustment period. Contacts should be maintained, at a minimum, on a monthly basis. They may be more often, as needed.

b. Information and referral to community resources.

c. Formation of and leadership in adoption groups:

(1) Parent support groups;

(2) Adopted child support group.

4. At the time when the family, the child, and the adoption worker mutually agree that finalization of the adoption is in the best of all persons involved, the worker shall encourage the family to retain an attorney to file the petition for adoption. Children fourteen years of age or older by law must consent to their adoption (see RCW 26.32.030).

36.52 Adoption Petition and Next Friend Report

A. Filing of the adoption petition is accomplished by an attorney retained by the adoptive family. The adoption worker shall provide the attorney with the necessary documents and information when the worker is satisfied that finalization is in the best interest of the child and the family.

B. The following documents and information will be provided to the attorney by the adoption worker:

1. Certified copy of the legal order of termination of parental rights.

2. Release and Consent to Adoption (see suggested format in 36.99), signed by the CSO administrator or information indicating where to obtain consent if that responsibility does not lie with the CSO administrator.

3. A completed DSHS 9-465, Application for Adoption Re-Registration, Adoption Information Form, for the issuance of the child's revised birth certificate.

4. The date the preplacement report was filed with the court.

5. The request to be named next friend.

6. A request for a copy of the decree of adoption.

C. The adoption worker authorizes services for Adoption Finalization Activity on the DSHS 14-154/159 using service Code 3651.

D. Next Friend Report

1. The court, accepting a petition for adoption, orders a next friend report to advise the court as to the propriety of the adoption.

2. The department shall be named as next friend for a child for whom it provided post-placement services.

3. The next friend report shall include the following:

a. The suggested format for the next friend report, found in Section 36.99, includes the following information:

(1) Statement indicating the child's legal status, remaining parental rights or other court's jurisdiction.

(2) Information regarding the child, the child's birth parents, and the petitioning adoptive family.

(3) Statement indicating the child's adjustment in the family.

(4) Recommendation to the court of the advisability of approving the adoption peititon. If the recommendation is against approval of the adoption petition, complete documentation of the reasons for that recommendation must be included.

b. The completed DSHS 10-114, Adoption Card (12/78).

c. The DSHS 9-54, Waiver of Notice of Further Hearing, or the DSHS 9-56, Acknowledgment of Notice of Hearing and Declaration of Intent Not to Appear, provided:

(1) The departmental recommendation is positive.

(2) The parental rights of the child to be adopted have been terminated.

4. If the next friend report is negative, the department will want to be represented at a hearing on the matter. In this case, the DSHS 9-54 and the DSHS 9-56 should not be included with the next friend report.

36.53 Action Following Decree of Adoption

Upon notification that the final decree of adoption has been granted, the adoption worker will do the following:

A. Terminate all medical and/or support services on DSHS 14-154/159.

B. Complete and submit to the Adoption Program Manager the DSHS 15-21, Change of Status Report.

C. Notify the State Office Trust Fund Unit, MS OB-24, in those situations in which the department has received trust monies for a child. Indicate the date the final decree was granted and the court order number.

D. Inform the adoptive family in those situations in which trust money is available and instruct the family to apply at the agency providing benefits if they wish to receive the trust. The adoptive family must be made aware that their confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if application for these benefits is made. The family will be requested to confirm in writing if they do not wish to apply for either type of benefit.

36.54 Archiving of CSO Records

A. Archiving of CSO records shall be done on behalf of all children who have been made legally free and placed in the permanent custody of the department. The purpose of archiving is to ensure that a permanent record of the child's past be maintained.

B. Archiving shall take place at the following times:

1. Upon finalization of the adoption, for children who have been adopted.

2. Upon termination from foster care for all legally free children in DSHS custody who have not been adopted.

C. In Washington State, each agency independently stores in archives the records of children placed through their agency.

D. No central location exists to furnish information about where a child's record is archived when the child has been adopted through a private agency or independently.

E. Record Preparation

1. For children who have been adopted, case records are to be prepared individually with all paperwork to be placed in an envelope marked "Confidential" in the following order:

a. A cover memo to the Adoption Program Manager, stating: the child's birth name; adopted name; caseworker's name and CSO; and date of final decree.

b. Face sheet.

c. Narrative recording and/or DSHS 2-305 SER.

d. The final decree and any legal documents or court summaries.

e. A copy of the DSHS 13-41, Child's Medical and Family Background Report, signed by the adoptive family.

f. Psychological, psychiatric or medical reports.

g. Copies of all adoption exchange registration forms including registation, change of status, registry of legally free children.

h. Closure copies of service and financial authorization forms.

i. Copies of forms for documentation of Indian status, i.e., DSHS 4-220(X), Family Ancestral Chart, and/or any statements from Indian parent(s), LICWAC or local Indian consultants.

2. For children who have not been adopted, case records to be archived should include the following information:

   a. All pertinent information about the child, the biological parents, and the child's placement adjustment.

      (1) Face sheet

      (2) Narrative from child protective services and foster care services

      (3) Legal documents or court summaries

      (4) Psychological, psychiatric or medical reports

      (5) Copies of Adoption Exchange forms, if applicable

      (6) Documentation of Indian status (see 36.54 E 1 i).

   b. Closure copies of service and financial authorization forms.

36.55 Post Adoption Services

A. Post adoption services are provided to the adoptive family after the finalization of the adoption when those services are needed to support the adoption and to identify community resources necessary to maintain the placement.

B. The adoptive family worker will authorize post adoption services on the DSHS 14-154/159 using Service Code 3606.

C. Nonidentifying information contained in the child's archived record may be obtained for medical or emotional treatment when requested by a treating professional, accompanied by a signed release from the family or adult adoptee. All requests are sent to the Adoption Program Manager, OB 41-C, Olympia, WA 98504.

D. For an Indian child, the family and/or child should be informed that the LICWAC and/or local Indian consultant are available for consultaton related to the adoption.

E. Adoptee's seeking identifying information will be requested to consult with the clerk of the court granting the final decree. The court may at its discretion, issue an order directing the opening of any records of the adoption.

36.56 Disruption Services

A. Disruption services are services designed to develop a new placement plan for a child when it becomes evident, prior to finalization of an adoption, that the adoptive placement should not continue.

B. The decision to disrupt a placement may be made either by the adoptive family or by the adoption worker.

1. The decision to disrupt an adoption should be made only when it is evident that no further services are available that might facilitate the continuation of the placement.

2. A child shall not be removed from an adoptive placement against the family's wishes without consulting an assistant attorney general and the Adoption Program Manager.

C. The procedures for providing disruption services are as follows:

1. The supervising adoption worker shall inform the placing CSO of the pending disruption.

2. Workers from each CSO shall mutually decide whether the child should be returned to the community served by the placing CSO or should remain in the current community. In cases of disagreement, the CSO which has custody of the child retains ultimate responsibility for the child.

3. The decision to seek a new adoptive placement or to place the child in foster care shall be made based upon the individual needs and expectations of the child.

4. The DSHS 15-21, Change of Status Report, must be completed and sent to the Adoption Program Manager when the child is removed from the adoptive home.

5. When the child is ready for a subsequent adoptive placement, he or she must be reregistered with the WARE updating the DSHS 15-18 and the DSHS 13-41.

D. Disruption services are authorized by the adoption worker utilizing Service Code 3603, and are initiated at the time the decision is made that the child will be removed from the adoptive family. The child's biological name should be used.

E. Following removal from the adoptive home, services should be authorized utilizing whatever service code reflects the service being provided (i.e., foster care, adoption planning, adoption post placement service, etc.). The child's biological name should be used on all records and documents following removal from the adoptive placement.

36.57 Protective Service Referrals

A. Child protective services will investigate protective service referrals about children in adoptive placements. (See Chapter 26, Child Protective Services.)

B. Referral allegations and findings will be documented in the adoptive family's record per Manual G, 25.40.

C. Upon completion of the investigation, the child protective service worker, the family adoption worker and their supervisors will review the findings to determine a service plan. (See 36.56 if removal is recommended.)

D. The incident report will be completed by child protective services according to procedures outlined in Manual G, Chapter 26.

36.97 Interface with Other DSHS Services

A. The CSO child's service worker will coordinate and confer with the following DSHS services providers:

1. CSO adoption workers for the purposes of adoption planning.

2. CSO foster care homefinders for services to foster-adoptive families.

3. Adoption Support Program, for purposes of eligibility determination of their child.

4. Previous workers for the child, for the purpose of developing a complete life story book.

5. Child Protective Services where there is a protective services referral regarding a child under their supervision.

B. The CSO adoption worker will coordinate and confer with the following DSHS service providers.

1. The CSO child's worker, for the purpose of coordinating adoptive planning and placements.

2. CSO foster care homefinders for services to foster adoptive families.

3. Adoption support program, for purposes of providing services to families who adopt a child with special needs.

4. Developmental Disabilities case managers for purposes of providing services to families who adopt a developmentally disabled child.

5. Crippled Children's Services (CCS), for purposes of providing services to families who adopt a child eligible for CCS.

6. State Office Trust Funds Unit, for purpose of enabling a family to apply for benefits for which their child is eligible.

7. Child Protective Services where there is a protective services referral regarding a family under their supervision.

36.98 INTERFACE WITH NON-DSHS SERVICES

A. The CSO child's services worker will coordinate and confer with the following service providers:

1. Juvenile courts for the purpose of legally freeing a child for adoption.

2. Licensed child placing agencies to facilitate placement when referrals are made through the adoption exchanges.

3. Media personnel for the purpose of providing information for a child to be featured in child specific recruitment and in coordination of the filming of the child.

4. Regional and National Adoption Exchange personnel for the purpose of providing information for recruitment activities.

B. The CSO adoptive family worker will coordinate and confer with the following service providers:

1. Attorneys and superior courts to complete the decree of adoption.

2. Community resources and parent support groups for the purpose of providing services to support the special needs of a child in an adoptive placement.

3. Media personnel and community resources for the recruitment of adoptive homes for special needs children.

36.99 REQUIRED FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

A. See Chapter 99, Forms, for instructions on these forms:

DSHS 2-305(X)	Service Episode Record (10/78)
DSHS 2-306(X)	Communication/Referral (Rev. 9/78)
DSHS 2-306A(X)	Communication/Referral page 2 (Rev. 9/78)
DSHS 4-220(X)	Family Ancestry Chart (Rev. 3/78)
DSHS 9-54(X)	Waiver of Notice of Further Hearing (Rev. 9/78)
DSHS 9-56(X)	Acknowledgement of Notice of Further Hearing and Declaration of Intent Not to Appear (Rev. 9/78)
DSHS 9-235	Registry of Legally Free Children (Rev. 11/82)
DSHS 9-465	Application for Adoption ReRegistration (Rev. 3/80)

DSHS 9-611	Release and Consent for Child Specific Recruitment (11/82)
DSHS 9-612	Request for Copy of Birth Certificate (Rev. 11/82)
DSHS 10-33	Adoption Application (Rev. 11/82)
DSHS 10-34(X)	Birth History (Rev. 9/78)
DSHS 10-43	Adoption Preplacement Report (Rev. 11/82)
DSHS 10-114(X)	Adoption Card (12/78)
DSHS 10-138	Adoption Purchase of Service Child Registration (Rev. 11/82)
DSHS 13-01(X)	Adoptive Applicant Medical Report--Confidential (Rev. 10/72)
DSHS 13-41	Child's Medical and Family Background Report (Rev. 11/82)
DSHS 14-24(X)	Face Sheet (Rev. 9/78)
DSHS 14-139(X)	Social Services Application (Rev. 12/79)
DSHS 15-18	Adoption Exchange Child Registration (Rev. 11/82)
DSHS 15-21	Change of Status Report (Rev. 11/82)
DSHS 15-22	Adoption Exchange Family Registration (Rev. 11/82)
DSHS 15-26	Adoption Referral Notification (Rev. 11/82)
DSHS 15-128(X)	Verification of American Indian Status, Foster Care and Adoptive Applicant (5/79)
DSHS 15-174	Adoption Planning Review Report (11/82)
DSHS 15-175	Agreement With Foster-Adoptive Family (11/82)
DSHS 16-24(X)	Request for Verification of Birth (Rev. 3/78)

B. See the remainder of this chapter for these suggested formats:

Medical Authorization

Next Friend Report

Release and Consent for Adoption

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION

_____ has been
Child's Name

placed for adoption in the home of _____.
Adopting Parents

The Department of Social and Health Services who has permanent custody

of _____ grants
Child

permission to _____ to obtain
Adopting Parents

medical care and treatment for _____.
Child

The department is to receive copies of medical reports and be immediately

informed of any extraordinary conditions.

_____
CSO Administrator

_____
Date

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR NEXT FRIEND REPORT

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

FOR THE COUNTY OF _____

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF	)	NO. NEXT FRIEND REPORT

BY PETITIONERS:

	CHILD	NATURAL MOTHER	NATURAL FATHER
NAME			
BIRTHDATE			
BIRTHPLACE			
RACE			
HEALTH (Attach copy of signed DSHS 13-41(X))			
RELIGION			

REASON FOR RELINQUISHMENT AND/OR DEPRIVATION:
(Give court and order number)

WHO HAS AUTHORITY TO CONSENT; DO THEY CONSENT

DATE CHILD PLACED IN PETITIONERS' HOME:

ADJUSTMENT OF CHILD IN THE HOME:

ADJUSTMENT OF FAMILY TO CHILD:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

_____ Service Worker	_____ Supervisor	_____ CSO Department of Social and Health Services

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR RELEASE AND CONSENT FOR ADOPTION

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR
RELEASE AND CONSENT FOR ADOPTION

STATE OF WASHINGTON)
) In the Matter of the Adoption of
COUNTY OF)

The Department of Social and Health Services, having heretofore been awarded the permanent care, custody and control of the minor child named in the above entitled cause (Court Order No. , County Superior Court, on), does hereby give its consent to the adoption of said child in accordance with the petition filed by in said cause. The Department of Social and Health Services, subject to the granting of said petition for adoption, does hereby release the care, custody and control of said child and surrenders all of its rights in said child to the petitioners therein.

This consent, surrender, and release is executed subject to the approval of the Court, shall have no force or effect until the same has been approved by said Court, and this consent is irrevocable except as provided by law.

Dated this day of

OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

By _____
Administrator

This is to certify that on this day of , 19 there personally appeared before me _____, known to me to be the duly appointed representative of the _____ Office, Department of Social and Health Services, State of Washington, the agency that executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged the same to be the free and voluntary act and deed of said agency for the uses and purposes therein mentioned, and on oath stated that he was authorized to execute said instrument for the uses and purposes therein stated.

WITNESS my hand official seal the day and year first hereinabove written.

_____
Notary Public in and for the State
of Washington, residing at

CHAPTER 36

ADOPTION SERVICES

36.00 PROGRAM AUTHORITY

Federal: CFR Title 45 220.40

State: RCW Chapters 13, 26.32, 26.36, 26.37, 74.13.

WAC 388-70-410 through 388-70-480
388-71-005 through 388-71-055

36.10 POLICY

36.11 Purpose of Service

The purpose of adoption services is to provide opportunities for children to achieve permanent, nurturing families through adoption.

36.12 Service Description

Adoption is a legal and social process provided for by law, to establish the legal relationship of child and parent when they were not so related by birth. The following types of adoption services are provided by the department:

A. Agency placement

1. The department has legal responsibility for the child's adoptive placement and provides services necessary to complete the adoption.

2. A child is placed with an approved family, who has requested department services, through the referral process from the exchanges in which the department participates.

3. Community Services Office (CSO) staff provides all services, including home study, preplacement report, next friend, placement and postplacement services.

B. Independent placements

1. An independent placement is one arranged by other than a licensed child placing agency or the department.

2. A pre-placement report is required prior to placement of a child and a next friend is appointed by the superior court when the adoption petition is filed. (See 36.42 and 36.43 C.)

3. Adoption services by department staff in independent adoptions are available when alternate community resources have not been designated by the Regional Office (RO).

4. A CSO not providing service on independent adoptions shall refer families to the appropriate resources.

C. Stepparent adoptions

1. A staff person appointed next friend by the superior court in a stepparent adoption will complete the required report.

2. When an RO has designated alternate community resources for the next friend in stepparent adoptions, close coordination and cooperation with the local superior court and the bar association is required to assure that the alternate resources are appointed.

D. Intercountry adoption services

1. The State Office (SO) reviews requests for these services and forwards accepted requests to appropriate CSOs providing the service.

2. When an RO designates alternate community resources, a CSO refers families seeking service to those service resources.

3. The international agency having custody of a child will provide complete financial and social planning services if a child is to be removed from placement.

E. Interstate placements

1. The requested adoption services are provided when an interstate compact agreement or equivalent has been approved. (See Chapter 30, Interstate Compact on Placement of Children.)

2. Interstate adoption services may result from the exchange referral process or at the request of an out-of-state public or private agency.

36.13 General Policies Related to this Service

A. Children

The department will:

1. Provide the service when parental rights are terminated to enable the child to be adopted as soon as possible.

2. Review the case planning for children in foster care and determine the need for adoptive planning. (See 36.31.)

3. Place siblings together unless it would be emotionally damaging to them. If siblings are to be separated, placement plans are to include future contacts for the children.

4. Provide the opportunity for mixed or minority race children to grow up with parents of similar backgrounds, if possible.

5. Not place a child with a nonrelated family, when the plan is adoption, unless selection of the home has been made through the registration and referral process.

B. Adoptive families

1. Applications are accepted for the department's adoption program from families or single parents who want to adopt:

   a. A physically or mentally handicapped Caucasian child under age 4 years,

   b. Sibling groups,

   c. A minority race child of any age, or

   d. Any race child over age 4.

2. Department staff will actively recruit minority and mixed race adoptive family applicants.

3. Applications will not be accepted from persons receiving adoption services from another agency.

4. Families re-applying for adoption services will have obtained an adoption decree on any previous placements.

5. Department staff applying for adoption services will be assigned to a CSO other than their work location by mutual decision of the CSO administrators.

C. Biological parents

1. Service will be provided to assist parents in developing permanent plans for their child(ren).

2. Consideration will be given to parent's requests on the religious, racial or general characteristics of an adoptive family for their child. Indian parents will be informed of the federal/state law requirements and the department's goals and method of implementation in respect to Indian children. (See WAC 388-70-093, 388-70-450 and Manual G, 1.04 E. and 36.33.) If the Indian child's parent(s) does not wish the CSO Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee (ICWAC) to staff the case or has other preferences in regard to the adoptive planning for his/her child, a statement of his/her wishes, signed by the parent(s) will be a part of the child's record and those desires will be respected.

D. Confidentiality

1. All material relating to a child, foster home placement(s) and adoptive placement is confidential.

2. Communications about the child either within or without the department shall be handled in a manner to assure confidentiality.

E. Interstate and Intercountry Inquiries

When a person or agency contacts a CSO for information about interstate/intercountry adoption in this state, the inquirer should be directed to the SO, adoption program manager, for reply. The same procedure is followed if an out-of-state inquiry is made about the adoption of a specific child residing in Washington.

36.14 Priorities Related to this Service

A. Children whose parents have had their legal rights terminated by court action.

B. Children whose parents wish to relinquish their legal rights.

C. Children who have remained in foster care for two years.

D. Single parents, school age parents and parents of children in or entering foster care will be counseled about a child's need for permanency and the availability of adoption services.

E. Families applying for adoption will be processed in relation to the types of children known to be waiting for placement.

36.15 Eligibility

A. For complete eligibility requirements, see Chapter 03, Social Service Eligibility.

B. Children: Any child in need of the service is eligible. The child's income is to be used to determine the service funding source.

C. Families: Families applying for adoption services are resources for children and not subject to service eligibility requirements.

D. Post-Placement Services: Major medical coverage is available on an "as needed" basis prior to finalization of adoption.

E. Post Adoption Services: Services to an adoptive family or individual are provided upon request. Services will focus on problems relating to adoption and time limited to 90 days. Family income is used to determine whether funding is from Title XX or IV-B.

36.20 PROGRAM STANDARDS

36.21 Program Expectations

A. Legal termination of parental rights is requested within 30 days after the department or the parent(s) so decide.

B. Adoption planning is provided every child within 30 days after parental rights are terminated.

C. A social and medical evaluation on the child will be completed prior to the selection of the appropriate adoptive resource for the child.

D. The child will be transferred from foster care status to adoptive placement status within 6 months of the termination of parental rights when placement through the exchange is the plan.

E. The child's adoption decree is granted within nine months following an adoptive placement made through the exchange.

F. A child's adoption decree will be granted within 6 months after the termination of parental rights when the plan is a relative or foster parent adoption.

36.22 Program Outcomes

Adoption finalized.

36.30 SERVICE PROCEDURES

36.31 Termination of Parental Rights

A. Voluntary or involuntary termination of parental rights will be pursued when adoption planning will be implemented following the termination, and

   1. The parents wish to relinquish, or

   2. Services to reunite the child and his/her family have not been successful. (See RCW 13.34.130, 13.34.180.)

B. The service record must document:

   1. The parents decision, or

   2. Agency efforts to locate and/or reunite the family (especially when a child has been determined to be dependent by a juvenile court.) Documentation may consist of:

a. Written, mutually developed/signed contracts between the department and the parents to facilitate the return of the child(ren).

b. Case narrative, DSHS 2-305(X), Service Episode Record (SER), documenting progress (or lack of) on these plans and any services which have been offered to the parents.

c. Registered letters of attempts to locate parents.

d. DSHS 14-154(X), Social Services Authorization, and DSHS 14-159, Change of Service Authorization, showing all services provided to the parents.

C. Relinquishment (Voluntary Termination)

1. The juvenile courts are authorized to terminate parental rights only under the conditions of RCW 13.34.180.

2. Anticipated uncontested relinquishments are to be processed through the Superior Courts. The appropriate forms in the series DSHS 9-402(X) through DSHS 9-406(X) and DSHS 9-411(X) through DSHS 9-414(X) are initiated by the service worker and submitted to the court. (See 36.80 for instructions for these forms.)

3. The service worker will authorize the payment of court filing fees and publication fees on the child's DSHS 14-154(X).

D. Assistant attorney generals provide legal services to staff in King, Snohomish, Spokane and Pierce Counties. Prosecuting attorney's offices provide the service in all other counties.

E. The CSO service worker will submit DSHS 9-235(X), Registry for Legally Free Children to SO Adoption Program Manager, MS OB-41C, when parental rights are terminated. A copy will be sent to Office of Support Enforcement as notice of termination of natural parents support obligation.

F. Non-DSHS cases of termination of parental rights in King, Snohomish, Spokane and Pierce Counties.

1. RCW 13.04.040(4) requires DSHS to prepare predisposition studies in the above counties in all terminations of parental rights cases.

2. When a licensed voluntary child-placing agency is requesting termination of parental rights, the following procedures apply:

a. The licensed agency will provide DSHS the documentation required by RCW 13.34.180 to terminate parental rights, copies of previous predisposition studies and the plan to be implemented for the child if rights are terminated.

b. Each CSO in these counties will have designated staff to review the voluntary agency's requests for termination of parental rights.

c. The designated staff will coordinate with the court and the voluntary agency to avoid duplication of work and to meet the court requirements.

G. A court review is mandatory for children not adopted within two years following the order of termination of parental rights. (See RCW 13.34.210.) CSOs will establish systems with their control file of the DSHS 9-235(X) to meet this requirement.

36.32 Information Furnished All Adopting Parents

All adoptive families must review and sign DSHS 13-41(X), Child's Medical Report, prior to adoptive placement. One signed copy is permanently retained in the child's service record (RCW 26.36.050). Adopting foster parents will sign the DSHS 13-41(X) when the CSO and foster parents have agreed to the adoption plan.

36.33 Adoptive Planning for Indian Children

A. Document the child's Indian status in the service record and on the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) DSHS 4-220(X), Family Ancestry Chart (see Chapter 32.33), using the following criteria:

1. Any person who is enrolled or eligible for enrollment in a recognized tribe; or

2. Any person determined, or eligible to be found, to be an Indian by the Secretary of the Interior; or

3. An Eskimo, Aleut or other Alaskan native; or

4. Canadian Indian: a person who is a member of a treaty tribe, Metis community or non-status Indian community from Canada; or

5. Unenrolled Indian: a person considered to be an Indian by a federally or non-federally recognized tribe or urban Indian/Alaskan Native community organization.

B. An adoptive family shall be considered Indian if one or both parents are Indian by the above criteria. Each applicant shall be required to complete a copy of DSHS 15-128(X), Verification of American Indian Ancestry, to provide the department with documentation for compliance with WAC 388-70-450. If the applicant is unable to provide documentation, the Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee (LICWAC) is available for consultation.

C. In adoptive planning for children, the unique tribal, cultural and religious sovereignty of Indian nations, tribes and communities shall be recognized. When consistent with the wishes of the biological parents and/or the child, the adoption of Indian children by Indian families is the primary goal. (See 36.13 C. 2.)

D. Standards implementing the policy are:

1. Adoption exchange.

In the referrals for an Indian child, adoptive homes having the following characteristics shall be given preference in the following order, each category being allowed 30 days before proceeding to the next:

a. The Indian child's relatives will be the first priority for an adoptive family. (See 36.35 A.)

b. An Indian family of the same tribe as the child.

c. A Washington Indian family considering tribal cultural differences.

d. An Indian family from elsewhere in the United States or Canada through the Adoption Resource Exchange of North America (ARENA). Attention shall be given to matching the child's tribal culture to that of the adoptive family.

e. Any other family which can provide a suitable home to an Indian child, as well as instill pride and understanding in the child's tribal and cultural heritage.

2. Foster parent adoptions.

a. As part of the total evaluation for approving a foster parent adoption of an Indian child, CSO service staff shall document the foster family's past performance and future commitment in exposing the child to his/her Indian tribal and cultural heritage. The child's wish to be involved in his/her Indian culture shall be considered.

b. Obtain psychiatric and/or psychological evaluations of the child's relationship with the foster parents if the child has been in the foster home for two years or more. When the evaluation(s) shows it would be detrimental to the child to move, approval of the adoption plan should be the goal.

E. When an Indian child, in the custody of an out-of-state agency, is referred for potential adoptive parents residing in Washington, documentation shall be obtained that assures compliance with the department's standards for planning for Indian children.

F. CSO staff shall consult with the local ICWAC in planning for placement of Indian children when the appropriate consents have been signed. Both relinquishing and deprived parents will be informed of the local ICWAC and a signed statement from the parents will be obtained, granting or denying the committee access to identifying information.

36.34 Prepare the Child for Adoption

As soon as any service worker working with a family has determined that efforts to reunite a child and his/her parents have failed, adoption planning will take place. (See Chapter 32.22 for criteria.)

A. Adoption services will be authorized on DSHS 14-154/159.

B. The service worker will complete a social/medical assessment of the child to determine the adoptive placement plan.

1. Base the social assessment on case record information and the worker's own observations of the child.

2. Request psychological and/or psychiatric consultations when needed to complete a child's assessment. (See Chapter 32, Child Foster Family Care, for procedure.)

3. Request a medical examination or EPSDT screening based on the child's age and/or physical condition.

4. Include in all requests for consultation, examination or other communication about the child the following statement: "All information about (child's name) is confidential and not to be released without the signed consent of the Department of Social and Health Services."

5. Verify birth information:

a. If child was born in Washington State send DSHS 16-24(X), Request for Verification of Birth, to: Health Services Division, Vital Statistics Section MS LB-11.

b. If child was born out-of-state request a certified copy of the birth certificate from the appropriate vital statistics agency. (See Chapter 02, Social Service Delivery System, for procedure.)

C. The adoptive plan should be explained to the child in concepts appropriate to his/her age. In discussing adoption, the child needs to know specifically what this means and why he/she will not be returning to his/her biological parents. The service worker should help the child express what he/she feels and understands about the original home situation. Pictures and scrapbook along with a review of the child's placements out of the

parents' home are helpful tools. The worker's plans for adoptive preparation will be recorded as part of the Individual Service Plan (ISP) on DSHS 2-305(X), SER.

D. The child must know that while his/her wishes are of concern to the worker, it is the worker who determines the most appropriate adoptive family. Children over age 14, by law, must consent to their adoption.

E. Child's service record will contain:

1. Recording and documents supporting the total evaluation of the child.

2. Pertinent information about biological parents, relatives and past placements, including social summaries prepared for court hearings.

3. Narrative recording on the SER describing the child's preparation for adoption.

4. Copies of all DSHS 14-154/159s.

36.35 Selection of an Adoptive Family

A. Child's relatives

1. First priority is given to the child's relatives.

2. Consider the following factors in evaluating the appropriateness of a relative adoptive placement:

a. Do they have the parenting skills necessary to meet the needs of the child?

b. What is the attitude and relationship of the biological parents and the relatives?

c. Will integration of the child and family be possible or will the biological parents be disruptive?

d. What is the emotional relationship between the child and proposed relatives?

e. Do the child and the child's relatives want the placement?

B. Approved waiting families (Exchange Registration). (See 36.41 for procedures for applicant families applying and for additional resources).

1. Complete and send DSHS 15-18(X), Adoptive Child Registration, and DSHS 13-41(X), Child's Medical Report, and three pictures to State Office, Attn: Adoption Program Manager, MS OB-41C. Attach copies

of psychological, psychiatric or significant medical reports. The service supervisor will review and sign/initial the typed registration materials.

2. Children may be registered at the exchange prior to final termination of parental rights or when the termination order is under appeal. The adoptive family selected will be licensed for foster care prior to placement. No foster care payments are made. Medical coverage is authorized on the basis of need.

3. Referral information will be sent from the exchange to the child's worker and to the worker for each family selected. The workers will mutually evaluate the appropriateness of each referred family for the child by telephone or case staffing. Staffing will include supervisors if possible and the adoption program manager. A family's home study may also be requested.

4. The family worker will obtain any additional information needed by the child's worker to make a placement decision. The child's worker does not meet with an adoptive family to further evaluate them.

5. The child's worker and supervisor will determine which of the referred families will best meet the needs of the child by considering the following areas:

   a. The families' ability to meet the needs of the child.

   b. For older children, the mutual compatibility of child and families' personalities/life style.

   c. The availability of community resources the child will need, i.e., special education classes, medical facilities.

6. The child's worker will request the selected family's worker to discuss the child with the family.

7. Referrals will be returned within 30 days, noting the family selected and the reasons for the decision.

8. If none of the referred families were available or appropriate, additional referrals will be made. Registration at the other exchanges may be considered. (See 36.42 B.)

9. Subsidy is not available unless a child has been registered with the Adoption Support Program. (See 38.15 F.)

C. Foster Parent Adoption

1. While foster care is to be a temporary, time-limited treatment plan, circumstances may have contributed to a child remaining in one foster home for several years.

2. If adoption by the foster family is being considered, evaluate the following factors:

   a. Will the biological parents' knowledge of the child's whereabouts be detrimental to them, the child or adoptive parents?

   b. Are the race and culture of the child and foster family the same?

3. The foster parents must meet the standards for adoptive families in the following areas:

   a. Have the parenting skills necessary to meet the current and future needs of the child.

   b. Have a satisfactory marital and community relationship.

   c. Have an emotional acceptance of biological parents.

4. Prior to the worker's discussion with a foster family about the adoption of a particular child, there will be a CSO staffing which includes the social service supervisor, adoption family worker and casework supervisors to determine if a foster parent adoption is the appropriate plan for the child. The CSO administrator will be informed of such a staffing in advance. Summaries of these staffings will be maintained in the child's record, initialed by the social service supervisors.

   a. For an Indian child, consult the local ICWAC, if such action is consistent with biological parents wishes. Notify the department's Office of Indian Affairs of cases when the local ICWAC is not consulted.

   b. When the staffing is to consider the adoption by Caucasian foster parents of a minority race child (non-Indian), the DSHS Office for Equal Opportunity (OEO) Technical Assistance Section in SO is to be notified in advance by the CSO Social Service Supervisor. If OEO chooses not to participate in the staffing, the decision of the staffing will prevail.

5. DSHS 13-01(X), Adoptive Applicant Medical Report-Confidential, need not be completed on foster parents whose medical reports have been submitted to the CSO within one year preceding the petition to adopt.

6. An adoption worker will complete the pre-placement report for foster parent adoptions. Final approval and consent is contingent upon this report.

7. Immediately terminate foster care payments when CSO foster parent adoption is planned and the pre-placement report is positive, unless adoption support is necessary. (See Chapter 38, Adoption Support.)

36.36 Pre-Placement Planning

A. When the child is to be moved from a foster home to an adoptive placement, the worker will provide service to the foster parents to enable them to emotionally support the child's move.

B. The child's worker and the family's worker will schedule the pre-placement visiting based on the child's needs.

C. The child's worker will bring the child to the family at a pre-arranged location.

D. The home of the foster parents should not be used for pre-placement visiting without the approval of the social service supervisor.

E. If it is in the best interests of the child for the adoptive and foster family to meet, a meeting may be arranged after agreement between both child and family workers and with approval of the social service supervisor.

F. After the pre-placement visits the family will contact their worker with their final decision. The child who is old enough will be allowed to express his/her feelings to his/her worker.

G. The child's worker and family's worker will evaluate their clients' reactions to the pre-placement visits to assist in reaching a final decision whether or not to proceed with placement.

H. In working with the child, the child's worker will assume full responsibility for the decision-making process, rather than informing the child a family did not choose him/her.

36.37 Placement

The child's worker will:

A. Make certain that the child's clothing, toys, pictures, scrapbook, and other personal possessions are sent with the child to his adoptive home.

B. Give the adoptive family a letter to permit them to obtain medical care for the child. The letter refers to the child by his/her new name and is provided by the agency having permanent custody of the child. (See sample letter at end of 36.80).

C. Immediately terminate all services and payment by submitting the completed DSHS 14-159; complete DSHS 2-305(X), SER; complete and submit the DSHS 15-21(X), Change of Status Report, to: State Office, Adoption Program Manager, MS OB-41C. Immediately transfer the child's records to the adoptive family worker.

D. When a child in DSHS custody is placed with a family from another agency, the service worker will send a case summary including copies of legal documents to the supervising agency and retain an open case file until the adoption is final. The supervising agency is appointed Next Friend and will complete the adoption. DSHS service worker obtains a copy of the decree, closes case and archives as usual. (See 36.46.)

36.38 Post-Placement Services

The adoptive worker will:

A. Open DSHS 14-139(X) with child as head of household using child's new name and case number. Open post-placement adoption services on DSHS 154/159 and authorize any necessary medical coverage. Initiate DSHS 2-305(X), SER. Only material sent to SO adoption program will contain the child's biological name.

B. Provide supportive counseling or referrals to appropriate resources during this period to assist the family and child. Schedule visits to include all family members. The child will be seen at least monthly until the decree of adoption is granted.

C. Record post-placement contacts in the child's service record and the family's service record. Such information shall refer to the child by his new name.

D. Ask the adopting family to file the petition for adoption as soon after placement as they feel they and the child are ready for this action and the child's legal custodian will give consent. (See 36.44).

36.39 Removal of Child from Adoptive Home

A. Before the decree of adoption is granted it may become evident that the home is not suitable for a child. The CSO providing post-placement services will work with the SO adoption program manager and the CSO that placed the child to decide an alternate plan for the child.

B. A child shall not be removed from adoptive placement against the family's wishes without consulting an assistant attorney general and SO.

C. When a child is removed from adoptive placement, complete DSHS 15-21(X). When the child is ready for subsequent placement, he/she must be re-registered at the central exchange by updating DSHS 15-18(X) and DSHS 13-41(X).

D. Use the child's legal (biological) name on all records and documents following removal from adoptive placement.

36.40 Protective Service Complaints

A. A child protective service worker will investigate a protective service complaint received about a child in adoptive placement. (See Chapter 26, Child Protective Services).

B. Upon completion of the investigation, the child protective service worker, the family adoption worker and their supervisors will review the report to determine a service plan. (See 36.39 if removal is recommended.)

C. Send the report of the investigation and summary of the CSO staffing via the CSO administrator to SO and to the administrator of the CSO which placed the child (for information and/or additional planning, if necessary).

36.41 Procedures for Adoptive Applicants

All inquiries from people interested in applying for adoption services will be referred to the adoption family worker.

A. Orientation of Adoptive Parents

The CSO adoption family worker will:

1. Provide sufficient information to the family at orientation meetings to enable them to decide whether to enter into a contract to work toward adoption through DSHS. Information to be shared in orientation:

   a. A description of the agency's adoption process and the types of children needing parents.

   b. The responsibility of the applicant and the agency in the process.

   c. The legal procedures for adoption and the agency's role in adoption.

   d. If a CSO is providing services on independent and/or intercountry adoptions, explain the differences in the services and programs.

2. Provide group orientation if there are a sufficient number of inquiries. The group orientation meetings should be regularly scheduled in advance. If the number of inquiries does not justify group orientation, hold interviews as inquiries are received.

B. Adoptive Home Study

1. Purpose: To help prospective adoptive parents decide on their readiness to adopt; to prepare and help them become adoptive parents if they decide to proceed; to provide the worker the opportunity to evaluate the family in respect to the types of children needing homes; and to complete the pre-placement report. (See RCW 26.32.220.)

2. Each applicant shall complete DSHS 10-33(X), Adoption Application, and return it to the CSO within 30 days. Once received the DSHS 10-33(X) becomes the face sheet in the applicant's case record.

3. Service worker completes and submits DSHS 10-20, Licensing and Approval of Homes. (See 06.80 for instructions to the form.)

4. The worker and applicant will evaluate the child care plan of employed parents in relation to the age and type of child the family is requesting.

5. A minimum of four contacts is required including one home visit.

6. Written permission of the applicant is necessary for the CSO to contact required references.

7. During the process of the home study, workers are encouraged to request a personal summary (autobiography), which becomes part of the service record. If the individual prefers not to write a personal summary, the necessary information will be obtained from interviews.

8. Information to be included and evaluated in the home study:

   a. Emotional maturity of the adoptive parents.

   b. Nature of the marital relationship.

   c. Family activities, interests, and life style.

   d. Expectations and attitudes regarding child development.

   e. Adjustment of their own children.

   f. Attitudes toward adoption and toward relinquishing or deprived parents.

9. The DSHS 13-01(X), Adoptive Applicant Medical Report--Confidential, is given to the applicant at the time the worker feels it is appropriate to do so. It is to be returned to the CSO. The home cannot be approved for placement without the medical report.

10. In the event applicants for adoptive placement through the DSHS program show evidence of not being ready to be adoptive parents, they may be informed of the specific problem areas. If the problem appears amenable to treatment, they should be encouraged to secure help before proceeding. If not, they should be encouraged to withdraw or the service request may be denied (see WAC 388-70-460). The independent adoption petitioner may also withdraw during the home study. (See 36.43 for the specific procedure.)

11. A copy of the home study or pre-placement report is given an adoptive family upon their written request only after it has been filed with the Superior Court hearing the petition to adopt.

C. Reapplication for Adoption Service

1. If a home study was completed by another agency, a DSHS 14-12(X), Authorization to Release Information, should be obtained from the adopting parents and a summary of the study requested of the other agency. If the previous study was done by another CSO, transfer of service records should be requested.

2. Sufficient information must be obtained to complete the pre-placement report and evaluate the family.

36.42 Registration With Adoption Exchanges

A. State Office Exchange

1. Complete DSHS 15-22(X), Adoptive Family Registration, when the decision has been reached that the family is approved and available for placement. This form is used only for families requesting placement of a child through DSHS and the Exchanges in which DSHS participates. It is not to be used for families adopting independently or a foster parent adoption. This form is to be typed and signed by the worker's supervisor. Mail to State Office, Adoption Program Manager, MS OB-41C.

2. Families should remain registered at the Exchange when they continue to be available for a placement.

3. When a family has been registered, the DSHS 15-22(X) shall be updated annually; revisions may also be submitted when appropriate.

4. Notify SO when a registered family is transferred to another CSO for service.

5. DSHS 15-21(X), Adoption Program Change of Status Report, will be submitted to withdraw a family from the exchange registration. Families are also withdrawn from the exchange when the DSHS 15-21(X) is forwarded by a child's worker at the time of placement.

6. Registered families become knowledgeable about referrals for them only when the child's worker requests the child be presented to them. In preparation for a case staffing, non-identifying information may be shared with a family.

B. Other Exchanges Available for Department Services

Coordination between the state exchanges and the regional and national exchange is performed by the SO. After mutual agreement is reached between the worker and SO adoption program manager, the manager will send copies of registration packets to the appropriate exchange.

1. Washington Adoption Resource Exchange (WARE)

   a. This exchange is operated by the department and is available to all agencies in the state for registration of children and families;

   b. Voluntary agencies submit DSHS registration forms;

   c. Department children and families are registered with WARE at SO.

2. Northwest Regional Adoption Exchange (NRAE)

   a. The States of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah and Washington participate in this photo listing and referral service for children and families.

   b. Signed consent by the administrator of the agency having custody of the child or by an adoptive family must be obtained prior to registration at this exchange.

   c. The purpose of NRAE is to develop adoptive resources for children with very special needs.

   d. Registration

      (1) Children are registered immediately when the state exchange does not have a waiting family or when eligibility for subsidy (adoption support) should be established.

      (2) Families are registered after 30 days registration at the state exchanges and no waiting child is under consideration for placement.

3. Adoption Resource Exchange of North America (ARENA)

   This national exchange is to be utilized when:

   a. The state and regional exchanges do not have a registered family waiting for a child.

b. The family is a mixed or minority race; or is a Caucasian family who can accept a mixed or minority race or severely handicapped child; and, they have been registered for three months at the state and regional exchanges.

C. Procedures for Out-of-State Exchanges

1. ARENA and NRAE will supply information to facilitate contact between workers for family and child.

2. The family's agency and the child's agency will exchange information, i.e., family's preplacement report, written social and medical information on the child. Copies are to be sent to the Interstate Compact Administrators. When interstate placement is anticipated, the child's worker will initiate the DSHS 15-92(X), Interstate Compact Application Request to Place Child. (See Chapter 30, Interstate Compact on Placement of Children.)

3. The procedures in 36.35 B. apply in evaluating potential placements. Families are not to contact the child's worker or agency prior to placement without the participation of their worker and prior approval by both workers.

4. Within 30 days the exchanged material will be returned to the agency of origin indicating the decision on placement in a cover letter. A copy of the decision will be sent to the Interstate Compact Administrators.

36.43 Pre-placement Report

A. This report is required by law and is advisory to the court. It is prepared on DSHS 10-43(X), Adoptive Home Study, from information obtained during the home study process.

B. Twenty (20) days before the hearing the following material will be sent to the Clerk of the Superior Court hearing the adoption petition:

1. A typed cover letter which identifies it as a pre-placement report on the specific adoption petition.

2. DSHS 10-43(X), Adoptive Home Study, typed and notarized.

3. DSHS 9-54(X), Waiver of Notice of Further Hearing, provided:

a. The preplacement report is positive, and

b. The parental rights of the child to be adopted have been terminated.

c. If the waiver was not submitted with the pre-placement report and service is received, the agency has a second chance to notify the court it does not intend to appear. This is done by submitting DSHS 9-56(X), Acknowledgement of Notice of Hearing and Declaration of Intent Not to Appear.

C. If the report is negative, i.e., the placement of a child in the home is not recommended, the CSO will want to be represented at a hearing on the matter. If so, in the cover letter to the court (B.1. above) advance notice is given by the agency stating the name of petitioner, cause number of the proceedings, time and place of the hearing. The notice also should offer testimony concerning any matters relevant to the relinquishment or adoption, and the recommendation concerning the fitness of petitioners as parents.

D. Independent Adoptions:

1. The home study procedures in 36.41 apply.

2. In exceptional circumstances, the child the family plans to adopt is already in the applicant's home. The worker will review how the child was placed, the biological parents' legal status in relation to the child, any other court's jurisdiction and include this information in the pre-placement report. Consultation from the assistant attorney general's office and SO may be needed.

3. The independent petitioner may at any time request a pre-placement study by one or more agencies, or request discontinuance of a study by an agency. An agency or CSO which has been authorized to make a pre-placement study and subsequently requested not to complete that study, shall be notified by the court hearing the adoption proceedings and given an opportunity to file a partial report and participate in the hearing.

4. If the agency chooses to file a partial report but not appear in court, DSHS 9-56(X), Acknowledgment of Notice of Hearing and Declaration of Intent Not to Appear, should be completed and sent to the Clerk of the Superior Court in which the petition is being heard.

5. A partial study or study completed prior to the petitioners change of mind about adoption shall be held in the family's CSO service file until notice is received of any later adoption proceedings.

6. At any later proceedings, the petitioner must attest to all adoption pre-placement reports authorized by him/her and all agencies then have an opportunity to participate in an adoption petition.

7. Once the home study is completed, the petitioner should be notified of the overall recommendation, i.e., negative or positive, and the approximate date the report is being submitted to the Clerk of the Superior Court.

36.44 Adoption Petition

A. When a petition for adoption is filed on a child for whom the department has adoptive planning responsibility by a family not selected according to the procedures outlined in 36.35, no consent is to be given. The assistant attorney general's office and the SO adoption program manager are to be informed of the petition immediately.

B. Procedures on Petitions of Department Placements

1. The family will retain an attorney who will inform the worker that he is representing the family.

2. The attorney prepares the adoption petition for the adopting parents' signatures without divulging the original name of the child or biological parents, forwards a copy of the order appointing the next friend, attends the adoption hearing with the family, and sends a copy of the adoption decree to the family worker.

3. The service worker will:

a. Submit the pre-placement report packet to the Clerk of the Superior Court hearing the adoptive petition (see 36.43).

b. Send a letter to the attorney with:

(1) Certified copies of the relinquishment, deprivation or permanent custody orders and the order of consent. If the consent for adoption does not rest with the CSO administrator, information should be provided to the attorney to enable him to obtain the consent from the appropriate court or agency. For a child in department custody, the consent for adoption is given by the CSO administrator.

(2) A completed DSHS 9-98(X), Adoption Information Form, for the issuance of the child's revised birth certificate.

(3) The date the pre-placement report was sent to the clerk of the court.

(4) The request to be named next friend.

(5) A request for a copy of the decree of adoption.

C. Next friend reports are completed when court ordered.

1. The department should be named as next friend for a child for whom DSHS provided post-placement services.

2. A suggested outline of the pertinent information to be included in a next friend report may be found in 36.80 following DSHS numbered forms. (See RCW 26.32.090).

3. The Clerk of the Court may request the next friend to complete the SRS-NCSS-281, Adoption Data Card.

D. Department staff serving as next friend will determine the child's legal status, remaining parental rights or other court's jurisdiction on the child, and include this information in the report to the court. This evaluation of the child's legal status may result in a negative recommendation to the court.

E. When a department employee is appointed next friend and the required preplacement report has not been filed in accordance with RCW 26.32.200 through 26.32.270, the situation shall be brought to the attention of the attorney general.

36.45 Action Following Decree of Adoption

A. For a child placed through the exchange process, the adoptive family worker will complete the DSHS 15-21(X), Change of Status Report. For a foster parent or relative adoption, complete DSHS 10-09(X), Foster Parent/Relative Adoption Report. Complete the DSHS 9-235(X), Registry for Legally Free Children. These reports are to be sent to State Office, Attn: Adoption Program Manager, MS OB-41C.

B. The worker will close service forms and any medical authorizations indicating the reason for closure is "adoption completed."

C. If the department has received trust monies for the child, SO Trust Fund Unit, MS OB-24, must be notified of the date the decree of adoption was issued. Social Security and Veterans Benefits may continue after the adoption. The adoptive family has the right to decide if they wish to apply for these benefits. The family needs to be aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if application is made. A family will be requested to confirm in writing if they do not wish to apply for either type of benefit.

D. The records of all children for whom the department had adoptive planning responsibility are to be placed in the archives. If the child was in the custody of another agency, any service record material on the child should be sent/returned to that agency.

36.46 Preparing the Social and Financial Records for the Archives

A. Remove all hardware.

B. Retain all pertinent material about the child, the biological parents, and the child's adjustment in the adoptive home in addition to:

1. The face sheet.

2. The narrative from protective service and foster care services.

3. Legal documents including the decree of adoption and summaries prepared for court hearings.

4. Medical records, including the signed copy of DSHS 13-41(X).

5. Psychological and/or psychiatric reports.

6. Copies of exchange registration forms, change of status forms, foster parent/relative adoption report, closure copies of service and financial forms, all Title XX forms.

7. Documentation of Indian status, i.e., DSHS 4-220(X), Family Ancestry Chart, or statements signed by Indian parent(s).

C. Each child's record must be prepared individually. Sibling records should not be sent as one case.

D. Staple all the retained material together, place the material in an envelope marked confidential and send it to: State Office, Attn: Adoption Program Manager, MS OB-41C. Destroy the other material from the records. Do not send any material directly to archives.

E. Maintain the child's master file card as "confidential" and indicate the date the record was sent to SO.

36.47 Post Adoption Services

A. Following the issuance of a decree of adoption, the family and/or child may request and receive counseling related to the adoption.

B. Non-identifying information for medical or emotional treatment is available from archived records upon the written request of the treating professional and a signed release from the family or adult adoptee. These requests should be sent to State Office, Attn: Adoption Program Manager, MS OB-41C.

C. In Washington State, each agency independently stores in archives the records of the children it placed in adoption. There is no central open location that furnishes the information about where the child's record is archived.

D. Adoptees seeking identifying information should consult the clerk of the court that granted the adoption petition. The court may, at its discretion, issue an order directing the opening of any of the records of the adoption.

E. For an Indian child, the family and/or child should be informed that the local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee and department's Office of Indian Affairs is available for counseling related to the adoption.

36.60 INTERFACE WITH OTHER DSHS SERVICES

A. In many instances adoption services will be provided for the child by the same worker (child foster care or permanent planning) who handled termination of parental rights. In cases where there are more than one worker involved involved it will be necessary to coordinate the services provided by each worker to serve the best interests of the child.

B. Early and Periodic Screening Detection and Treatment (EPSDT) services may be utilized for medical screening of children.

36.70 INTERFACE WITH NON-DSHS SERVICES

The service worker will coordinate and/or confer with:

A. Juvenile and Superior Courts for the purpose of legally freeing a child for adoption.

B. Licensed child placing agencies to facilitate placements when referrals are made through the adoption exchanges.

C. Attorneys and Superior Courts to complete the decree of adoption.

D. The community and adoptive parent groups for recruitment of homes to meet the needs of specific children.

E. Community health services, i.e., private physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health, health department, for evaluation/treatment of any physical and/or mental problems.

36.80 REQUIRED FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

A. See Chapter 99, General Forms, for instructions on these generic forms:

DSHS 2-265(X)	Information and Referral Log (Rev. 6/78)
DSHS 2-305(X)	Service Episode Record (9/78)
DSHS 2-306(X)	Communication/Referral (9/78)
DSHS 2-306A(X)	Communication/Referral page 2 (9/78)
DSHS 4-220(X)	Family Ancestry Chart (Rev. 3/78)
DSHS 14-24(X)	Face Sheet (Rev. 9/78)
DSHS 14-139(X)	Social Services Application (Rev. 9/78)
DSHS 14-154(X)	Social Services Authorization (Rev. 3/78)
DSHS 14-159	Change of Service Authorization (Rev. 2/78)
DSHS 15-128(X)	Verification of American Indian Status, Foster Care and Adoptive Applicant
DSHS 16-24(X)	Request for Verification of Birth (Rev. 3/78)