

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
 Department of Health and Family Services  
 Division of Children and Family Services

MEMO SERIES DCFS 99 - 06  
 March 9, 1999

Re: NOTICE OF PETITION FOR  
 TERMINATION OF PARENTAL  
 RIGHTS

To: Area Administrators/Assistant Area Administrators  
 Bureau Directors  
 County Departments of Community Program Directors  
 County Departments of Human Services Directors  
 County Departments of Social Services Directors  
 Tribal Chairpersons/Human Service Facilitators

From: Susan N. Dreyfus  
 Administrator

Among the recent changes in Chapter 48 of Wisconsin Statutes is a requirement for notice to the Department of Health and Family Services when a petition for termination of parental rights (TPR) is filed. This notice is sent by the person who filed the petition or joined in the petition when a petition for termination of parental rights is required under s. 48.417(1), Wis. Stats.

In most situations when a child is in out-of-home care with a county social/human service department and a TPR petition is filed, this notice will be required. Also, it is helpful if this notice is sent whenever DHFS will be named as guardian after the determination on a petition for termination of parental rights. Each County Social/Human Service Department Director is asked to share this information with the persons who prepare such petitions on behalf of that agency.

Notice should be sent to the person identified for your county in the list below:

| COUNTY OF TPR                                                                                                                                                            | NOTICE ADDRESS                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adams, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Juneau, LaFayette, Richland, Rock and Sauk.                                                                  | Adoption Unit Supervisor<br>Dept of Health and Family Services<br>3601 Memorial Drive<br>Madison WI 53704                            |
| Ashland, Bayfield, Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Price, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas and Wood.                                          | Adoption Unit Supervisor<br>Dept of Health and Family Services<br>1853A North Stevens Street<br>P.O. Box 697<br>Rhinelander WI 54501 |
| Barron, Buffalo, Burnett, Chippewa, Clark, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, LaCrosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Rusk, St. Croix, Trempealeau, Vernon and Washburn. | Adoption Unit Supervisor<br>Dept of Health and Family Services<br>312 South Barstow Street<br>Suite 3<br>Eau Claire WI 54701-3695    |
| Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Marquette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Sheboygan, Waupaca, Winnebago and       | Adoption Unit Supervisor<br>Dept of Health and Family Services<br>200 Jefferson Street<br>Suite 411<br>Green Bay WI 54301            |

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*Document Summary*

*County social/human service agencies must assure that the notice of a TPR petition is sent promptly after the petition has been filed. Concurrent adoption efforts are required after the petition is filed and some suggested activities are identified.*

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| Waushara.                                                              |                                                                                                                          |
| Jefferson, Kenosha, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha | Adoption Unit Supervisor<br>Dept of Health and Family Services<br>141 NW Barstow Street<br>Room 209<br>Waukesha WI 53188 |
| Milwaukee                                                              | Adoption Unit Manager<br>WI Department of Health and Family Services<br>235 West Galena Street<br>Milwaukee WI 53212     |

The notice should contain the name and date of birth of the child, name of the parent(s) about whom the TPR petition was filed, name of the proposed guardianship agency, court and date when the petition was filed and contact information for the county case manager. Receipt of this notice will alert the DHFS adoption worker (or in Milwaukee, a contracted concurrent planning adoption worker) to assure that the concurrent adoption efforts required under s. 48.417 are either in place or initiated.

The out-of-home care case manager and foster care coordinator in the county agency have important roles in concurrent planning for a child when a TPR petition has been filed. When the current foster parent, a relative of the child or other interested person has expressed an interest in becoming an adoptive parent for the child, the county staff can assist that individual in finding appropriate information and resources. A course entitled "Adopting a Child with Special Needs" is available through the local Technical Colleges. Other informational materials for prospective adoptive parents are available on the Internet and through books in local libraries. Many libraries have public access to the Internet. Resource lists are attached.

To assure prompt permanency for children, adoption agencies cannot delay adoptive placement to accommodate an interested family when other appropriate approved adoptive families are immediately available for a child. Currently, foster parents interested in adoption will be assigned for home assessment by DHFS staff when the TPR has occurred.

Other individuals interested in adopting a foster child should seek a home assessment. A prospective adoptive parent who lives in Wisconsin and is not a current foster parent of the child may want to participate in the Department's screening of prospective adoptive parents. If the prospective adoptive parent is selected in the screening process as meeting a need for adoptive family resources and then is approved for adoption, the applicant can be considered for placement of any foster child who is legally free for adoption. Department staff will work with county staff to request home assessments through the Interstate Compact on Placement of Children (ICPC) for interested relatives who live in another state. Any family may pursue a home assessment through a licensed private adoption agency.

The county case manager and the DHFS adoption worker (or in Milwaukee, a contracted concurrent planning adoption worker) must work together to seek adoptive family resources. A court order or the signed approval of a parent can authorize photo listing on the state or national adoption exchange or other recruitment efforts. Relatives who have been involved with the child will be contacted for their interest or suggestions. At the same time, staff from the two units can plan for a smooth transition at the time of TPR including:

- Gathering all medical/genetic and social history information.
- Preparing information for a life book for the child.
- Assisting the child through this transition.

- Providing services to the birth parents so they can assist the child through this change and maximize their own potential.

Thank you for your cooperative efforts to seek permanency for children.

REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT: Adoption Unit Supervisor  
CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Adoption Policy Specialist  
Division of Safety and Permanence  
(608) 422-6905

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#### INTERNET SITES RELATED TO ADOPTION IN WISCONSIN

Listed below are useful Internet sites related to adoption services in Wisconsin, especially related to the adoption of a child with special needs. Many public libraries offer access to the Internet.

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/map/adoption/snap>

This web site contains information from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, including international adoption procedures, special needs adoption, licensed adoption agencies, support groups and post adoption services.

<http://www.wiadopt.com/>

Wisconsin's Adoption Exchange identifies children waiting for adoptive placement and provides information for families considering adoption of a child with special needs.

<http://www.wiadoptioninfocenter.org/>

Wisconsin's Adoption Information Center provides information to birthparents thinking about placing a child for adoption, professionals that work with those birth parents and the general public about adoption services in Wisconsin.

<http://www.adopt.org/>

The National Adoption Center includes the Faces of Adoption national adoption photo listing as well as information for prospective and current adoptive parents of children with special needs.

Prepared by:  
Wisconsin Division of Children and Family Services  
Bureau of Programs and Policies  
1999

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## PREPARING TO BE AN ADOPTIVE FAMILY

Being informed will help you decide what type of child you can best parent. The following suggested activities could focus your interest in adoption.

Attend an adoptive parent support group. Talk to adoptive families about their experiences. Observe adoptive families with special need children in family activities. Offer to provide respite care for children with special needs.

Volunteer to work with children (e.g. schools, youth groups, and scouts.)

Enroll in the course "Adopting a Child with Special Needs" at your local technical college.

Volunteer to be a foster parent with your county social/human service department, knowing that most foster children return to their birth family. Indicate to the agency if you will be willing to adopt if a foster child can not return home.

Read about adoption in books from your local library. If not available locally, your library may be able to obtain a copy of an interesting book through inter-library loan. Some suggested readings include:

Carney, Ann. *No More Here & There: Adopting the Older Child*. University of North Carolina Press, 1976.

Cline and Fay. *Parenting With Love and Logic: Teaching Children Responsibility*. 1990.

Delaney, Richard J & Frank R. Kunstal. *Troubled Transplants*, University of Southern Maine, 1993

Dorris, Michael. *The Broken Cord*, Harper, 1992.

Fahlberg, Vera. *A Child's Journey Through Placement*, Perspective Press, 1991.

Gilman, Lois. *The Adoption Resource Boo*, Harper & Row, 1992.

Glidden, Laraine Masters, editor. *Formed Families: Adoption of Children with Handicaps*, Hayworth Press, 1990.

Hopson, Dr. Darlene Powell and Dr. Derek S. Hopson. *Different and Wonderful: Raising Black Children in a Race-Conscious Society*, Simon & Schuster, 1990.

Jewett, Claudia L. *Helping Children Cope with Separation and Loss*. Harvard Common Press, 1982.

Marindin, Hope, compiler and editor. *Handbook for Single Adoptive Parents*. Chevy Chase, MD: Committee for Single Adoptive Parents, 1992.

McNamara, Bernard & Joan. *Adoption & the Sexually Abused Children*. University of Southern Maine, 1990.

Melina, Lois. *Raising Adopted Children: A Manual for Adoptive Parents*. Harper & Row, 1986.

Ward, Margaret and Barbara Tremitiere. *Kids in Batches: Placing Sibling Groups for Adoption*. York, PA: Tremitiere, Ward and Associates, 1990.

Look up resources on the Internet.

Your preparation now will enhance your family in the future.

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