

	GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL			
	Chapter:	(6) Special Investigations	Effective Date:	April 2020
	Policy Title:	Special Investigations and Policy Violations Review Process		
Policy Number:	6.11	Previous Policy #:	6.5	

CODE/REFERENCES

O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 Reporting of Child Abuse
O.C.G.A. § 49-5-8 Powers and Duties of Department of Human Services
O.C.G.A. § 49-5-41 Persons and Agencies Permitted to Access Records
Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA)
Title IV-E of the Social Security Act Section 471(a)(9)

REQUIREMENTS

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall:

1. To initiate the review process, notify the following Units within the State Placement and Permanency Section within 10 calendar days of the completion of the special investigation when the circumstances apply:
 - a. Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit (CRRU): when there is a recommendation to close a DFCS foster/adoptive home, kinship foster home or foster care kinship placement based on a policy violation(s).
NOTE: The Office of Provider Management (OPM) reviews all policy violations for Child Placing Agency (CPA) foster or adoptive homes for concurrence to ensure all pertinent issues were adequately addressed and make a decision regarding continue utilization of the placement resource for children in DFCS custody (see policy [14.22 Resource Development: Policy Violations](#)).
 - b. State Adoption Unit: when the case involves a child with a permanency plan of adoption or guardianship with the caregiver who is the subject of the report.
2. Conduct a review of a special investigation or policy violation assessment on a DFCS foster/adoptive home or foster care kinship placement within 15 business days of notification of completion to evaluate retention options for the resource and to examine if the foster parent's rights have been violated.
3. Conduct a review of a special investigation within two business days of being notified of completion when the case involves a child in DFCS custody with a permanency plan of adoption to ensure the outcome is in the best interest of achieving permanency for the child.
4. Conduct a review of a special investigation or policy violation assessment within ten business days of being notified of completion when the case involves a child in DFCS custody with a permanency plan of guardianship to ensure the outcome is in the best interest of achieving permanency for the child.

PROCEDURES

Review – Recommendation to Close a DFCS Foster/Adoptive Home or Kinship Foster Care Kinship Placement

The Permanency SSCM or Resource Development (RD) Social Services Case Manager (SSCM) will:

1. Submit to CRRU within 10 calendar days of the conclusion of the special investigation or policy violation assessment when there is a recommendation to close a DFCS foster/adoptive home, kinship foster home, or foster care kinship placement due to a policy violation(s):
 - a. A detailed outline of closure reasons;
 - b. DFCS policies violated;
 - c. Corrective action plan (CAP) information; and/or
 - d. Requests for the placement resource to remain open for the purposes of achieving permanency for the child, if applicable.
2. Upload information received from CRRU into Georgia SHINES External Documentation upon receipt.

NOTE: The Permanency SSCM will notify CRRU when the recommendation is to close a foster care kinship placement based on a policy violation. The RD SSCM will notify CRRU when the recommendation is to close a foster/adoptive home or kinship foster home based on a policy violation.

CRRU will:

1. Acknowledge receipt of a request for a review of the special investigation or policy violation assessment.
2. Complete a review of the DFCS foster/adoptive home, kinship foster home, or foster care kinship placement closure recommendation due to a policy violation(s) within 15 business days of receiving notification from the RD or Permanency SSCM.

NOTE: CRRU will coordinate the review with the State Adoption Unit when the child's permanency plan is adoption and includes the DFCS foster or adoptive parent.
3. Conduct staffings and/or contact the field for additional information, as applicable.
4. Provide a written response to the requesting RD SSCM, County Director, and Regional Director of the decision.

Review – Achieving Permanency Through Adoption or Guardianship

The Permanency SSCM will:

1. Submit to the State Adoption Unit within 10 calendar days of the conclusion of the special investigation for children with a permanency plan of adoption:
 - a. A detailed outline of the investigation findings, including reasons for closure of the placement resource (when applicable);
 - b. Any policy violations;
 - c. CAP information; and/or
 - d. Requests for the placement resource to remain open for the purposes of achieving permanency for the child, if applicable.
2. Upload information received from the State Adoption Unit in Georgia SHINES External Documentation upon receipt.

The State Adoption Unit will:

1. Conduct a review of the permanency case within 10 business days of being notified of an assignment of a special investigation involving a child in DFCS custody with a permanency plan of adoption or guardianship (see policy [6.9 Special Investigations: Notifications in Special Investigations](#)).
2. Conduct a review of the special investigation within two business days of being notified of the investigation outcome from the CPS Investigator as outlined in policy [6.9 Special Investigation: Notifications in Special Investigations](#) and make a recommendation regarding permanency for the child(ren) with the alleged maltreater/caregiver in both unsubstantiated and substantiated cases.
NOTE: The State Adoption Unit will coordinate the review with the Office of Provider Management (OPM) when the child's permanency plan includes a CPA foster or adoptive parent.
3. Review all waiver requests for the placement resource to remain open for the purpose of adoption of a child in the home.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Special Investigation Reviews

Reviews of special investigations involving placement resources or children in DFCS custody provide valuable feedback and shared decision making when there are complex case issues or decisions pertaining to child safety, permanency, or well-being. Additionally, the review process may identify policy violations not noted during the special investigation or identify trends for targeted technical assistance, training and/or services for placement resources and children in their care.

Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit (CRRU)

The CRRU is responsible for the oversight of DFCS foster and adoptive parent recruitment and retention. CRRU completes a concurrence review when a special investigation indicates maltreatment or policy violations exist resulting in a recommendation to close the resource. This review evaluates retention options for the resource, such as the completion of a CAP and examines if any of the Bill of Rights impacting foster parent grievances have been violated either directly or indirectly. Programs, practices, procedures, service provision, communication, and partnership between DFCS and the placement resource is incorporated into the review. A written concurrence/non-concurrence with the recommendation to close the resource is provided to the County Department/Region upon completion. Send notifications to CRRU@dhs.ga.gov.

State Adoption Unit

The State Adoption Unit works with other state office units, local county offices and child placing agencies to provide a continuum of available, accessible, and effective services that enable and support the placement of children in adoptive families. This unit reviews all special investigations on children who have a permanency plan of adoption to ensure the outcome is in the best interest of achieving permanency for each child on a case by case basis. In certain instances, waivers may be sought to achieve permanency regardless of the outcome of the special investigation. Send notifications to adoption.mic@dhs.ga.gov.

FORMS AND TOOLS

N/A