

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
FAMILY COURT
DOMESTIC RELATIONS BRANCH – ADOPTIONS

**GENERAL ORDER CONCERNING ADOPTION CASES IN WHICH THE ADOPTEE IS
THE RESPONDENT IN A NEGLECT CASE**

In keeping with the Superior Court's commitment to the principle of One Family-One Judge, consistent with the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, all adoption cases filed on or after March 1, 2004, will be assigned to the judicial officer assigned to the pending neglect case. As a result of this change in procedures, and to otherwise promote the best interests of children by the expeditious and efficient management of adoption cases, the procedures for adoption cases are amended as follows:

Filing the Petition:

1. When initiating an adoption case, counsel or *pro se* petitioners shall file the following documents:

- a. A Petition (with one copy);
- b. A Vital Records Form in compliance with D.C. Code §7-209 (2001 Ed.);
- c. An Adoption Information Form;
- d. A "copies to" list, consisting of the names and addresses of petitioner's counsel or *pro se* petitioner, the social worker, and all attorneys of record in the neglect case; and
- e. Mailing labels or addressed envelopes for all the persons on the "copies to" list.

Separate documents are required for each child who is to be adopted.

Please note that the Adoption Information Form replaces the requirement for submission of an Order of Reference and Consolidation.

2. Please note that a Waiver of Filing Fee Request is no longer required. Pursuant to D.C. Code Ann. §15-719 (Supp. 2003), filing fees for petitioners who file a petition to adopt a respondent in a neglect proceeding are automatically waived.

3. Counsel must comply with Super. Ct. Adoption R. 10, which requires counsel's signature; name; office address; telephone number; fax number, if any; and District of Columbia Bar number on the adoption petition and all other pleadings. Please also provide an email address, if any. Please note, however, that a praecipe is no longer required at the time of filing of the adoption petition.

After the Petition is Filed:

1. The court will issue a Combined Order of Reference, For Expedited Response, For Consolidation, and For Service. At the same time, the court will issue a Notice of Pending Adoption Proceeding and Order to Show Cause for each parent or putative

parent. Samples of these new orders will be available in the Adoptions Clerk's office on March 1, 2004.

2. All adoption pleadings filed after the adoption case is consolidated with the neglect case shall show the neglect caption under the adoption caption.
3. Unless otherwise ordered by the assigned judicial officer, counsel are no longer required to submit proposed supplemental show cause orders.
4. All pleadings and reports shall be filed in the Adoptions Clerk's office.
5. Except for the Petition, Adoption Information Form and Vital Records Form, a chambers copy of all pleadings and reports shall be filed in the Adoptions Clerk's office at the time the pleading or report is filed. On the front page of the pleading or report, the chambers copy shall be marked "chambers copy" and shall state the name of the judicial officer to whom the case is assigned.

The Adoption Clerk's office will distribute the chambers copy of all documents to the assigned judicial officer by no later than the next business day after filing. Counsel, social workers, and parties shall no longer deliver chambers files directly to chambers unless the assigned judicial officer directs otherwise.

6. All motions shall be accompanied by a proposed order. All proposed orders shall contain a "copies to" list, consisting of the names and addresses of petitioner's counsel or *pro se* petitioner, the social worker, and all attorneys of record in the neglect case. Mailing labels or addressed envelopes for all the persons on the "copies to" list shall accompany all proposed orders.

Access to Forms:

Copies of revised forms for use in adoption proceedings, including the Adoption Information Form, will be available by March 1, 2004, in hard copy in the Adoptions Clerk's office. The revised forms are being sent in Word format, as email attachments to this General Order, to all counsel who have provided email addresses to the CCAN office. Other persons may obtain these forms as email attachments by sending an email request to either BrierWA@dcsc.gov or MurphyG@dcsc.gov. The court hopes to make forms available in the future on the court's web site.

SO ORDERED this 26th day of February, 2004.

/s/ _____
Judge Lee F. Satterfield
Presiding Judge, Family Court