

POST-ADOPTION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHEN WILL WE RECEIVE OUR NEW BIRTH CERTIFICATE?

Your attorney (or sometimes the Clerk of Superior Court) will submit a certified copy of the final order of adoption along with a Certificate of Adoption to the State Office of Vital Records where your child was born. It generally takes at least a month to receive the new adoption certificates. They may go to your attorney or directly to you.

HOW DO I CHANGE MY CHILD'S NAME ON THEIR SOCIAL SECURITY CARD?

Social Security offices require the child's new birth certificate and a certified copy of the final decree of adoption to change your child's name. There is a Social Security office in Winder, Gainesville, and Athens to name just a few. Our advice is to go by and, if the waiting room is full, go again another day. Some days you'll get there at just the right moment and there won't be anyone waiting.

CAN I CHANGE MY CHILD'S NUMBER ON THEIR SOCIAL SECURITY CARD?

Changing your child's social security number may be wise if there are unscrupulous persons who may have access to their number, such as may be the case for children who have been in the foster care system for long periods of time.

The SSA policies that apply to this issue state:

- 1) Any adopted child can obtain a new social security number ("SSN") after adoption (there are no exclusions for older children, children adopted by grandparents, etc., referenced in these policies);
- 2) The only exclusion for a new SSN after adoption is for adult adoptees; they cannot obtain a new number; and
- 3) The mandatory in-person interview conducted when an applicant is age 12 or older and applying for an original SSN does **not** apply to adopted children applying for a new SSN.

Another option is to "freeze" your child's credit through the three major credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion). Contact them and get a copy of your child's credit report to make sure it has not already been compromised. Then inquire with them about freezing your child's credit until they reach age 18 (or beyond). Hopefully by that time, anyone who has attempted to use their number will have given up and moved on.

HOW DO I CHANGE MY CHILD'S NAME AT SCHOOL?

Most schools will accept the certified copy of the final decree to change the child's name at school, however some counties give a Certificate or Certification of Adoption which also contains all information the school will need. **DO NOT GIVE YOUR CERTIFIED COPY TO ANYONE!** They can look at your copy and make their own. You have a limited number of certified copies, and it can be difficult in some counties to obtain more. Once you have the new birth certificates you should not really need them, but it's nice to have one on hand, in a safe place, just in case.

CAN I FREEZE MY CHILD'S CREDIT?

You can protect your child from identity theft by freezing their credit. In Georgia, if your child is under the age of 16, you can request a free credit freeze from the 3 national credit bureaus. To do so for each bureau, you must send the following documents:

- A written request to place a "protected consumer freeze" on the named individual's file

- One of the following qualifying documents showing proof of authority—court order, power of attorney, or a written, notarized and signed description of authority
- One or more of the following identification documents for the child and the parent—proof of social security number, copy of birth certificate, copy of driver’s license or identification card showing name and address

Note: the bureaus differ in requirements, so be sure to check with each one before sending things in to verify that you have everything you need. The three national credit bureaus are:

- TransUnion
- Equifax
- Experian