

Juvenile Adoption

If a juvenile is the subject of an open dependency-neglect case, the law (ACA § 9-9-205(a)(3)(A)) requires an adoption petition to be filed in that case. The law (ACA § 9-9-217(a)(2)(B)(i)) also requires any portion of the court file relating to the adoption shall be maintained separately from the file of other pending juvenile matters concerning the juvenile who is the subject of the adoption or the family of the juvenile.

In Contexte, it is not currently possible to completely segregate the adoption portion of the case from the underlying case without starting a new case.

Circuit Clerk - Filing

When you receive an adoption petition in a DN case:

1. Docket the petition (F179). Do not add an MFR code.
2. Seal the docket code for the petition in the DN case. Add a docket note that an adoption case has been opened.
3. Leave the case status as “set for review.”

Create a new case with code of MFO and case type JA using the adoption petition (F179) and cover sheet.

1. Use each child’s adoptive name in the case description and when creating the new Party ID.
2. Assign the case to the judge hearing the underlying DN case.
3. Let Contexte assign each child in the JA case a NEW party ID number using the adoptive name. Do not associate it with the child’s ID in the DN case.
4. Enter adoptive parents as petitioners in the JA case. Mark “selfrep” as party status if they do not have private counsel.
5. Enter the OCC attorney (party type OCC) and Attorney ad Litem (party type AAL) from the DN case.
6. Do not enter parents whose rights have been terminated or their attorneys as participants in the JA case.
7. Relate the cases in CDARELC.

Special filing note for e-filing courts:

- a. Print the adoption filing paperwork.
- b. Create the JA case directly in Contexte in CMAINIT rather than e-filing the case.
- c. Finish the top block of the form and hit CTRL-page down to get the judge on the case. Transfer to the correct judge, if necessary.
- d. Save (F10)
- e. Write the new case number on the documents.
- f. Go to CDACASU, click the e-file box, save. Exit the form.
- g. Add the additional parties, dockets, and images on the JA case.

Circuit Clerk - Disposition

In the JA case:

1. Docket any pleadings, orders, or decree.
2. Enter the disposition code (MDDM-dismissed, MDPG-granted, or MDPD-denied).
3. Associate the MF and MD.
4. If the adoption is granted:
 - If needed, update the child’s name in the adoption (JA) case (NOT in the DN case) in CPAIDEN. Do not change the case description.
 - Enter JUC0 for the adoption (JA) case.
 - Transfer the adoption file to the probate clerk, using a probate cover sheet and providing the JA party IDs.¹

In the DN case:

1. A Final Case Closing Form should accompany the final order related to the adoption. Docket this form using docket code AOJVC and the appropriate closure reason codes noted on the form.
2. If the case has been closed for **all** the children on the case, enter JUC0 for the underlying DN case.

¹ See A.C.A §9-9-217(a)(2)(B)(ii).

County Clerk - Filing

1. Filemark the case
2. Let Contexte assign a PR case ID
3. Let Contexte assign a judge
4. Add relevant parties from the juvenile adoption case. Enter the child as party type CHIL and use the same party ID as the juvenile adoption case. Do NOT use the child's party ID from the DN case!
5. Enter MFT and other dockets as needed.

County Clerk - Disposition

1. Enter MDJD and associate the MFT/MDJD
2. Enter JUC0
3. Report the adoption to vital records. The form can be found at https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/RESOURCE_-_Report_of_Adoption.pdf