



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE  
OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES  
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Dear Colleague:

On October 27, 2010, former Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell signed Senate Bill 1360, Printer's Number 2188, into law. This amendment to the Adoption Act (23 Pa.C.S. Domestic Relations Chapters 21-29), known as Act 101 of 2010, is effective April 25, 2011. Act 101 will have far-reaching effects on the ability of adopted children to maintain lifelong connections with their biological family and to have access to information that may not have been readily available in the past when appropriate authorizations are on file. These connections to both people, as well as information, will allow access to information that provides an opportunity for children to understand their past and its potential impact on their lives and the lives of their descendants.

The attached Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) Bulletin 3350-11-01 entitled "Act 101 of 2010" is effective April 25, 2011 and is the end product of a workgroup that was developed comprised of key stakeholders from the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC), the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, Orphan's Court, birth and adoptive parents, youth, the Youth Advisory Board, Guardians ad Litem, private attorneys, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC), child and family advocates, county children and youth agencies, private adoption agencies, Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Families (PCCYFS), the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN), the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program, and OCYF.

We would like to thank the workgroup for the energy and effort that went into the development of the bulletin and accompanying forms in a very short period of time. The product before you was accomplished through the tremendous collaboration of all who were involved. While the workgroup was initially tasked with the development of policies and procedures related to Act 101, they will continue to meet to address any issues that arise following implementation, including those that may require revisions to the bulletin or attached forms. The Act also requires the promulgation of regulations, so the workgroup will also be integral in the eventual development of regulations.

Act 101 of 2010 amended the Adoption Act to provide the option for adoptive parents and birth relatives to enter into an enforceable voluntary agreement for ongoing communication or contact between the child and the birth relative or between the adoptive parent and the birth relative. This law also requires the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare to establish a statewide information registry for records and documents associated with all adoptions finalized or registered in this Commonwealth. Courts and agencies are required to appoint an "authorized representative" to conduct searches of requested information. Additionally, Act 101 of 2010 outlines who may request information from the court, the agency that coordinated an adoption or a successor agency. The act further defines who may be the subject of a request for information.

Act 101 required the Department to develop a standardized training program specific to the role of the "authorized representative". To that end, a 12-hour training is being offered specific to these roles and responsibilities, as well as a 3-hour overview of Act 101. These trainings are being offered as outlined in the attached flyers. Continued discussions will take place related to long-term training opportunities and information will be forthcoming related to the specific dates and locations.

Thank you for your continued efforts to ensure children have permanency, stability and an opportunity to maintain lifelong connections.

Sincerely,



Cathy A. Utz  
Acting Deputy Secretary  
Office of Children, Youth and Families

Enclosures