

INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR CHANGING THE NAME OF A MINOR CHILD

The forms presented in this packet are designed to guide you in the preparation of change of name of a minor child. You must type or print the required information as it applies to your situation. Your papers should remain in the same order as they appear in this packet. You should type or print in every blank line EXCEPT for the civil action file number blanks and the lines provided for signatures. Make sure that everything is signed.

Remember, you must fully complete the forms and follow all instructions before the Judge will be able to grant your change of name. Incomplete forms, as well as forms that are improperly filled out, may delay the grant of your change of name. Make sure that you take time to read over all the forms, and understand what is being asked of you in each situation.

Please consult an attorney if you have questions about the procedure or what action is best for you to take.

Follow these steps:

1. Fill out the petition for name change, printing neatly and using black ink, being sure to include the reasons for the change.
2. Obtain written consent of the parent(s) of the minor child(ren). O.C.G.A. § 19-12-1(c) requires that written consent be obtained and filed with the petition UNLESS the parent "has abandoned the child." O.C.G.A § 19-12-1
3. File the petition for name change AND the parents' written consent with the clerk of the Superior Court in the county of the child's residence. O.C.G.A. § 19-12-1(c)
4. Serve the parents a copy of the petition. O.C.G.A. § 19-12-1(d)

a. If the parent(s) reside in Georgia, the copy must be served in person unless the location or address of the parents is unknown. If the parents' address is unknown, they may be notified by publication in the newspaper once a week for four weeks.

b. Or acknowledge service.

c. If the parent(s) reside outside of Georgia, service must be made by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery if the address is known or by publication in the newspaper if the address is not known.

d. If the child(ren) live(s) with someone other than the parents, "a copy of the petition shall be served upon the person acting as guardian of the child in the same manner as service would be made on a parent." O.C.G.A. § 19-12-1(e).

5. Within seven (7) days of filing the petition, you must publish the enclosed Notice of Petition to Change Name with the official legal organ (newspaper) in the county of your residence. This notice must run once a week for four weeks. O.C.G.A. § 19-12-1(b).

6. Submit to the Court proof that you have published the notice as required. Proof consists of an affidavit of publication by the newspaper AND photocopies of the published notices as they appeared. O.C.G.A. § 19-12-1(f).

7. Thirty days or more after your petition was filed, and after you submitted proof to the Court of publication of the proper notice, the Court will set a date to hear the matter in chambers and to render a final judgment or decree. O.C.G.A. § 19-12-1(f).