

HOW TO CHANGE THE NAME OF MINOR CHILDREN IN _____ COUNTY

Name changes are governed by O.C.G.A. §19-12-1. There are two sets of forms available for name changes. One set is for adults (18 years old or older) who want to change their own name (NAME CHANGE OF AN ADULT). The other set is for people who want to change the name of a minor child or children (NAME CHANGE OF A MINOR CHILD OR CHILDREN). Decide which set of forms you need to use and follow the instructions accordingly. THIS SET OF FORMS IS FOR A NAME CHANGE OF A MINOR CHILD OR CHILDREN.

- STEP 1:** Fill out the Petition to Change Name of Minor Child(ren)
- STEP 2:** Fill out the Verification form, to go with the Petition
- STEP 3:** Have the Consent form, signed and notarized
- STEP 4:** Fill out the Notice of Petition to Change Name form
- STEP 5:** Make copies of all of the forms
- STEP 6:** Publish Notice
- STEP 7:** File the forms you just filled out
- STEP 8:** Obtain your Final Decree
- STEP 9:** File the Final Decree and obtain a certified copy of it
- STEP 10:** Change Birth Certificates

The following are detailed instructions:

STEP 1: Fill out the Petition to Change Name of Minor Child(ren):

- A. Print or type the current name(s) of the minor children whose names you want to change next to the word, "Children:". Then fill in your name next to the word "Petitioner". Fill in the name of the other parent or guardian next to the word "Respondent". You should not fill in the blank next to "Civil Action File No." because the clerk will assign your case a number when you file the Petition, and the clerk will fill that number in for you. This top part of the form is called the "style" of the case.
- B. Paragraph 1: Print or type your name.
- C. Paragraph 2: Print or type the name or names of the child(ren) whose name or names that you want to change.
- D. Paragraph 3: Check the box next to the word that describes your relationship to the child(ren). For example, if you are the child(ren)'s mother, check the box next to "mother." Only people who have a legal relationship (such as a parent or guardian) can change the name of a minor.
- E. Paragraph 4: Print or type the current name or names of the child(ren) in the left column and the new name or names of the child(ren) in the right column. For example, if your child(ren)'s names were Mary and John Smith, and you wanted to change them to Mary and John Jones, it would look like this:

If you require materials in alternate format, please notify the Family Law Information Center as soon as possible.

STEP 4:

- ▶ the parent or parents are deceased **OR**
- ▶ the parent or parents have abandoned the child(ren) **OR**
- ▶ the parent has not contributed to the support of the child(ren) for a continuous period of five years or more immediately before you file the petition.

If both parents are deceased or have abandoned the child or children, then the guardian has to sign the form. If only one parent is deceased, abandoned the child or children, or has not contributed to the support of the child in the past five years, then the remaining parent has to sign the form. Once this form is signed, have it notarized and staple it to the Petition. This is "Exhibit A," which is referred to in paragraph 7 of the Petition. (If one of the parents does not want the child(ren)'s name changed and refuses to sign the consent form, that parent can file objections to the petition once it is filed. If this happens, you may not be able to change the child(ren)'s name, but you should seek the advice of an attorney.)

- A. Fill out the style of the case like you filled out the Petition (print or type the current name(s) of the children next to the word "Children:", your name next to the word "Petitioner", and the other parent or guardian's name next to the word "Respondent").
- B. Next to the number [1], print or type the name of either the mother, the father, or one of the guardians.
- C. Next to the number [2], print or type the name of the other parent or guardian (if there is one).
- D. Next to the number [3], check the box that applies. If the parents are signing the form, check the box next to "parents". If the guardian or guardians are signing, then check the box next to "guardians".
- E. Next to the number [4], print or type the names of the child(ren).
- F. Next to the number [5], print or type your name.
- G. In the columns that follow number [6], print or type the child(ren)'s current and new names, like you filled out the petition.
- H. Next to the number [7], have one of the parents or guardians sign their name. Then check the box that describes who they are (either the father, the mother, or the guardian). Then fill in the name of the child(ren) with whom they have that relationship. Then print or type their address.
- I. Next to the number [8] do the same thing as in paragraph H above with the other parent or guardian (if there is one).
- J. The parents or guardians will also have to sign their names in front of a notary on the following page. They should also check the box that describes their relationship to the children under their signature.

STEP 5: Fill out the Notice of Petition to Change Name form as follows:

- A. Fill out the style of the case like you filled out the Petition (print or type the current name(s) of the child(ren) next to the word "Children:", your name next to the word "Petitioner", and the other parent or guardian's name next to the word "Respondent").
- B. Next to the number [1], print or type your current name.
- C. Next to the number [2], print or type the date that you filed the Petition.
- D. Next to the number [3], print or type the month and year that you filed the Petition.
- E. In the column marked [4], print or type the current name(s) of the minor child(ren).
- F. In the column marked [5], print or type the new name(s) that you want the court to change the child(ren)'s name(s) to.
- G. Next to the number [6], print or type the date that you are signing this document (it may be the same date that you file it).
- H. Next to number [7], print or type the month and year that you are signing this document.
- I. Then sign your name and print or type your name, address, and telephone number.

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