



Series: 100
Policy Name: Transition Planning for Children in Out of Home Care
Policy Number: 146
Origination Date: 9/1/2017 **Revision Date:** 07/01/2018
Regulation: 65C-28.005, FL409.145 (2)(c)
Policy: Communities Connect for Kids recognizes that thoughtful transitions are critical for the child's best interest and foster parent retention.

Procedure:

Once a caregiver accepts the responsibility of caring for a child, the child will be removed from the home of that caregiver only if:

- a. The caregiver is clearly unable to safely or legally care for the child;
- b. The child and his or her biological family are reunified;
- c. The child is being placed in a legally permanent home pursuant to the case plan or a court order;
- d. The removal is demonstrably in the child's best interest; (group to foster home, to place siblings together, etc.) or
- e. The caregiver provides a 30 day removal request of the child.

Emergency Situations:

In emergency situations, a change of placement can be made immediately.

The child welfare professional shall within 72 hours inform the child's parents, unless contrary to court order, Children's Legal Services and guardian ad litem and child's attorney, if appointed, of the move and the reasons an emergency placement change was necessary.

Non -Emergency Situations:

- 1. The child's parents, unless contrary to court order, licensed out-of-home caregivers and the guardian ad litem or attorney ad litem, if appointed, shall be given at least two (2) weeks notice prior to moving a child from one out-of-home placement to another and the reason



a placement change is necessary.

The placement change transition must be accomplished according to a plan that involves cooperation and sharing of information among all persons involved (all caregivers, parents, case management, GAL) respects the child's developmental stage and psychological needs, ensures the child has all of his or her belongings, allows for a gradual transition from the caregiver's home, (when appropriate and possible) and for continued contact with the caregiver after the child leaves.

- a) Parental notification of any placement changes shall be documented in FSFN, unless the court previously excused the Department from further efforts to locate.
 - b) If the parent(s) is unable to be located, efforts to locate and notify the parent shall be documented in FSFN.
2. The child welfare professional shall prepare the child for a move and support the child during the re-placement process.
 3. The child welfare professional shall provide supportive services to the caregiver where the child is residing to avoid a change in placement when possible. When a placement is in danger of disrupting, the child welfare professional shall urge the caregiver to wait to request removal of the child until efforts can be made to remedy the reasons for the child's instability. When efforts to stabilize a placement have not been successful or there are circumstances that preclude the child's continued stay, the child welfare professional will work with the caregiver to reach agreement on a move date that takes into consideration the following needs of the child:
 - a) There is a break in the school year;
 - b) An alternative placement can be located; and,
 - c) Arrangements for the child's transition to the new setting can be made and implemented.
 4. The caregiver at the new placement shall be prepared and informed prior to placement of the child and shall be given needed support to help the child transition and achieve stability. Out-of-home caregivers shall be given all relevant information about the child in their care while maintaining confidentiality requirements. Specifically, the child welfare professional shall:
 - a) Inform the caregiver of all identified needs of the child;
 - b) Discuss any training the caregiver may need to care for the child, including any special needs of the child and possible reactions to the specific trauma that the child has experienced;



- c) Discuss any services that the child may need and the role of the out-of-home caregiver with regard to transportation, participation in treatment sessions, communication with treatment provider(s) and potential implementation of treatment recommendations in the home;
- d) Inform the out-of-home caregiver about available programs that may provide financial and medical assistance for the child;
- e) Provide the out-of-home caregiver with counseling and information regarding the dependency process and support services available in the community;
- f) Review with the licensed out-of-home caregivers their roles and responsibilities according to the "Partnership Plan for Children in Licensed Out-of-Home Care," incorporated in paragraph 65C-28.004(6)(c), F.A.C., available here: <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-06689>, (see attachment). The child welfare professional shall sign a copy of the Partnership Plan and obtain a signature of the licensed out-of-home caregiver, attesting acknowledgment of the requirements at time of placement; and,
- g) Provide to the out-of-home caregiver the Child's Resource Record. The Child's Resource Record from the previous placement(s) shall be reviewed with the out-of-home caregiver upon the child's new placement. The child welfare professional shall discuss with the out-of-home caregiver the caregivers' role in maintaining and updating the Child's Resource Record.

It is at the discretion of the CCKids CEO to approve any transitions outside the above parameters.

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol DeLoach". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Carol DeLoach, CEO

Date: July 1, 2018



Partnership Plan for Children in Out-of-Home Care

All of us are responsible for the well-being of children in the custody of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The children's licensed caregivers, along with the Florida Department of Children and Families, community-based care (CBC) organizations, their subcontractors, residential child caring agencies and staffs of these agencies undertake this responsibility in partnership, aware that none of us can succeed by ourselves.

Children need normal childhoods as well as loving and skillful parenting which honors their loyalty to their biological family. The purpose of this document is to articulate a common understanding of the values, principles and relationships necessary to fulfill this responsibility. The following commitments are embraced by all of us.

1. To ensure that the care we give our children supports their healthy development and gives them the best possible opportunity for success, licensed caregivers, DCF, CBC, and residential child caring agencies will work together in a respectful partnership.
2. All members of this partnership will behave professionally, will share all relevant information promptly, and will respect the confidentiality of all information related to the child and his or her family.
3. Licensed caregivers or designated persons, the family, DCF, CBC, residential child caring agencies will participate in developing the plan for the child and family, and all members of the team will work together to implement this plan. This includes caregiver participation in all team meetings or court hearings related to the child's care and future plans. DCF, CBC and agency staff will support and facilitate caregiver participation through timely notification, an inclusive process and providing alternative methods for participation for caregivers who cannot be physically present.
4. Excellent parenting is a reasonable expectation of caregivers for youth in care. Licensed caregivers will provide and DCF, CBC, and the residential child caring agencies will support excellent parenting. This requires a loving commitment to the child and the child's safety and well-being, appropriate supervision and positive methods of discipline, encouragement of the child's strengths, respect for the child's individuality and likes and dislikes, providing opportunities to develop the child's interests and skills, awareness of the impact of trauma on behavior, equal participation of the child in family life, involvement of the child with the community and a commitment to enable the child to lead a normal life.
5. Children will be placed only with licensed caregivers who have the ability and are willing to accept responsibility for the care of a child in light of the child's culture, religion and ethnicity, special physical or psychological needs, unique situation including sexual orientation and family relationships. DCF, CBC, and the residential child caring agencies will provide licensed caregivers with all available information to assist them in determining whether they are able to appropriately care for a child.

Licensed caregivers must be willing and able to learn about and be respectful of the child's religion, culture and ethnicity, and any special circumstances affecting the child's care. DCF, CBC, the residential child caring agencies will assist them in gaining the support, training and skills necessary for the care of the child.

6. Licensed caregivers will have access to and take advantage of all training they need to improve their skills in parenting children who have experienced trauma due to neglect, abuse or separation from home, to meet these children's special needs and to work effectively with child welfare agencies, the courts, the schools and other community and governmental agencies.
7. DCF, CBC, and residential child caring agencies will provide licensed caregivers with the support they need to enable them to provide quality care for the child.
8. Once a licensed foster parent or residential child caring agency accepts the responsibility of caring for the child, the child will be removed from that placement when the foster parent(s) or residential child caring agency is clearly unable to care for him or her safely or legally, when the child and his or her biological family are reunified, when the child is being placed in a legally permanent home in accordance with the case plan or court order, or when the removal is demonstrably in the child's best interest.
9. If a child must leave the placement in a licensed setting for one of these reasons and in the absence of an unforeseeable emergency, the transition will be accomplished according to a plan which involves cooperation and sharing of information among all persons involved, respects the child's developmental stage and psychological needs, ensures they have all their belongings, and allows for a gradual transition from the child's placement and, if possible, for continued contact with the foster parent or residential child caring agency after the child leaves.
10. When the plan for the child includes reunification, licensed caregivers or their designees and agency staff will work together to assist the biological parents in improving their ability to care for and protect their children and to provide continuity for the child.
11. Licensed caregivers will respect and support the child's ties to his or her biological family (parents, siblings and extended family members) and will assist the child in visitation and other forms of communication. DCF, CBC, and the residential child caring agencies will provide licensed caregivers or their designee with the information, guidance, training and support necessary for fulfilling this responsibility.
12. Licensed caregivers or their designees will work in partnership with DCF, CBC, the residential child caring agency to obtain and maintain records that are important to the child's well-being including child resource records, medical records, school records, photographs, and records of special events and achievements.
13. Licensed caregivers or their designees will effectively advocate for children in their care with the child welfare system, the court, and community agencies, including schools, child care, health and mental health providers, and employers. DCF, CBC, and residential child caring agencies will support them in doing so and will not retaliate against them as a result of this advocacy.
14. Licensed caregivers or their designees will participate fully in the child's medical, psychological and dental care as they would for their biological child. Agency staff

will support and facilitate this participation. Caregivers, DCF, CBC, and residential child caring agencies will share information with each other about the child's health and well-being.

15. DCF, CBC, residential child caring agencies and staff of these agencies will ensure that children are enrolled in school or in the best educational setting that meets their needs. Caregivers will support that the child continues to be enrolled at the school of origin when, if possible it is in the best interest of the child, with the goal of minimal disruption of the child's education.
16. Licensed caregivers or their designees will support the child's school success by participating in school activities and meetings, including IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meetings, assisting with school assignments, supporting tutoring programs, meeting with teachers and working with an educational surrogate if one has been appointed and encouraging the child's participation in extra-curricular activities.
17. DCF, CBC, residential child caring agencies and staff of these agencies will show no prejudice against a caregiver who desires to educate at home a child placed in their home through the child welfare system and will facilitate this participation and will be kept informed of the child's progress and needs.

Signature of Foster Parent or Direct Care Staff

Signature of Agency Representative