

Placement Change Tip Sheet

The child's first OOHC placement is crucial, because it is intended to be the child's only placement until legal permanency is achieved. One of the current challenges is maintaining a child in a stable foster home placement until the child is able to return home, be adopted or emancipated.

Thorough deliberation in the choice of the child's initial placement and sufficient support of the family team, especially the child and caregiver, after placement is made to prevent the need for a change in placement and avoid replication of the child's initial trauma in the majority of circumstances.

Factors to assist a child during placement changes

- Do not make unplanned placement changes without careful consideration of all available alternatives for support of the current placement.
 - A placement change may be another loss, rejection, and possible trauma for a child, and may impact the child's ability to form positive attachments in the future.
 - If removal becomes necessary, information regarding the child's adjustment to the current placement, the foster/adoptive parent's relationship with the child, the child's permanency goal, likely timeframe for achievement and placement with siblings is to be used to facilitate the child's planned placement into another setting.
- Request a family team meeting to support and preserve the current placement if there is a risk of disruption.
- Continually assess the child's adjustment to the placement, the foster/adoptive parents' relationship with the child and special circumstances, which include the child's permanency goal, the likely timeframe for its achievement and placement of siblings.
 - If, under exceptional circumstances, a placement change appears to be necessary, the change is to be well planned and the child is to be prepared. Appropriate placement changes include those that lead to timely accomplishment of legal permanency, such as reuniting siblings or placing a child with a relative.
- Make placement changes only after careful consideration of all available alternatives for support of the current placement (unless the placement is deemed NOT to be in the best interest of the child's safety, permanency and well being).

- Prior to any other placement options, explore relative search and all least restrictive placement opportunities.
- Document, in the case record, efforts to maintain the placement and rationale justifying that placement changes, planned or unplanned are in the child's best interest.
- Develop a plan to support the child's adjustment to the new setting.
 - The transition process should include a plan that encourages the child to maintain connections with the previous family or social environment through retention of personal keepsakes, such as lifebooks, and whenever possible, contact with the family through visitation, letters, telephone or email.
- Explore and document the concerns that led to the request and attempt to resolve the concerns in a timely and comprehensive manner upon a request from a child, parent or caregiver to remove a child.
- Send the parent a DPP-154A Notice of Intended Action, ten (10) days prior to the move if parental rights are intact.
- Attempt to notify the parent of the placement change by the next working day in an emergency situation.
- Follow additional guidelines provided in SOP 4.46 Movement From a DCBS Foster/adoptive Home, when it is determined that movement of the child from the DCBS resource home is necessary in order to accomplish timely legal permanency, or if a situation exists that poses a risk of harm to the child.
- Arrange a pre-placement visit whenever possible.
- The SSW or caregiver should locate appropriate providers near the new placement if the child's placement change results in a change of health care providers.
- Facilitate transfer of the child's health records to the child's new providers and assist the new caregiver and providers in meeting their responsibilities regarding the child's health care needs.
- Request that the child's educational passport be sent to the child's new school if the placement change results in a change in school for the child.
- Provide the new caregiver a copy or original of the child's medical card and passport health plan card (if appropriate) and the DPP-1281 Child Youth Action portion of the case plan and visitation agreement within seven (7) days of placement.
- Notify the Children's Benefits Worker within ten (10) working days of the change or temporary interruption of placement (including runaway) using

the DSS-1251A Child Placement History Log and the DPP-1279 Information for OOHC Placements.

- Send the court of competent jurisdiction written notice of the child's new placement or the child's status as a runaway within fourteen (14) working days of any placement change (including runaway).
- Update the DPP-1251A Child Placement History Log.
- Report the new information to the billing specialist when a child moves from any unique resource to another using the DPP-1279 Information for OOHC Placements noting the:
 - New placement information; and
 - Reason for the move.
- The SSW does not have to report a move that occurs within the same:
 - Residential program;
 - Independent living program; or
 - Foster care program.
- Develop an aftercare plan or prevention plan to ensure the child's safety in the home prior to a child's exit from OOHC.
- The FSOS, Recruitment and Certification (R&C) staff and Regional Placement Coordinator (RPC) may assist the SSW in reassessment of the child's placement and possible alternatives to change in placement.
- Designated DCBS regional staff completes the DPP-111A Foster/Adoptive Home Contract Supplement or DPP-114 Level of Care Schedule, as appropriate.
- Moving a child from one type of OOHC placement to another is considered to be a placement change. This includes moving from an emergency shelter to a foster home, from a foster home to the home of a relative, or between placements connected with one private child caring or child placing agency.
- Placement change also includes a child's move from OOHC to a DJJ contracted foster home or private child caring facility, or the child's return from one of those placements to any OOHC placement.