

## ONGOING SERVICES

### Removal From Home and Placement

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#### Policy

The Commissioner, or designee, shall authorize the intake Social Worker, ongoing Social Worker, or any law enforcement officer to remove a child from his or her surroundings without the consent of the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) when DCF determines:

- that there is probable cause to believe that the child is in imminent risk of physical harm from his/her surroundings, and
- that immediate removal from such surroundings is necessary to ensure the child's safety.

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#### Immediate Removal / 96-hour hold

The power of removal extends not only to the child who is the subject of the report, but also to other children in the home who are similarly situated and determined to be in need of immediate removal.

Such removal and temporary custody shall not exceed ninety-six (96) hours, referred to as a 96-hour hold. During the 96-hour hold, Department staff shall:

- provide the child with all necessary care, including medical care;
- determine the ability to return the child to a safe home environment, and if necessary;
- file petitions and/or a Motion for an Order of Temporary custody to safeguard the child.

**Note:** Preparation of the necessary court documents must begin immediately once it has been determined that an OTC is necessary.

**Legal Reference:** Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101g(e).

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#### Factors Determining Immediate Removal

Factors to be considered in determining if a child needs to be removed immediately from his home include the following:

- the risk level to the child and siblings;
- the child's own request for immediate removal;
- the parent's or guardian's request for immediate removal when a second parent or guardian is refusing to permit the child to leave;
- when the child is considered to be in danger and the parent or guardian indicates that he/she is about to flee the state;
- whether or not a prior report of abuse or neglect has been filed with DCF or there are reports in other states;
- prior Termination of Parental Rights of a sibling; and
- prior serious injury to a sibling.

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#### Requirements for Use of Immediate Removal/96-Hour Hold

The use of immediate removal/96-hour hold requires that:

- immediate removal of a child shall be initiated only as a last resort when Superior Court intervention is not possible;

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**Requirements for Use of Immediate Removal/96-Hour Hold**  
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- all less drastic procedures for intervention to secure the safety of the child shall be explored before considering immediate removal; and
- prior to immediate removal, the investigator shall:
  - evaluate the problem in accordance with protective service policies;
  - obtain approval from one of the persons authorized by the Commissioner to act as her designee.

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**Persons Who May Authorize an Immediate Removal/96-Hour Hold**

The Commissioner, or designees listed below, may authorize an immediate removal/96-hour hold:

- Deputy Commissioner
- Careline Director
- Regional Administrators
- Office Directors
- Regional Program Directors
- Program Supervisors

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**Notification to Parent(s)/Guardian(s)**

When the request is approved, the social worker shall:

- submit one copy of DCF-159, "Immediate Removal / 96-Hour Hold of Children" to the parent or guardian;
- file a copy of the DCF-159 in the child's uniform case record;
- document the approval for the hold on the legal screen in the computer system.

The Social Worker shall explain to the parent or guardian:

- why the 96-hour hold was initiated, and
- that the Department, during this period of time, will further evaluate the situation and may file a Motion for Order of Temporary Custody in the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters.

The Social Worker and supervisor shall decide whether the parent or guardian is to be told where the child will be placed. The parent's or guardian's right to know the child's location shall be respected unless this information must be withheld temporarily as a protective measure for the child and/or foster family.

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**Use of Police for Immediate Removal**

A social worker who is authorized to remove a child may request the presence of the local police during the removal, if necessary.

If any law enforcement officer is authorized to remove a child, the Social Worker shall cooperate with and accompany the law enforcement officer during the removal.

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#### **Notification to Selected Caretaker**

At the time of placement, the social worker shall:

- provide the selected caretaker with a completed DCF-160, Immediate Removal/96-Hour Hold Placement Notification and
- file a copy of the DCF-160 in the child's uniform case record.

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#### **Notification to Child's Attorney and Guardian Ad Litem**

When placing a child or youth, the Social Worker shall provide written notification of the placement, including the name, address and other relevant contact information relating to the placement, to any attorney or guardian ad litem appointed to represent the child or youth.

In most cases, notification shall be made via the DCF-3004 "Court Notification of OTC Placement" which shall be filed with the Clerk of the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters and sent via email to pubdef.dcf.kids@jud.ct.gov.

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#### **Medical Care and Evaluations for the Child**

During the 96-hour hold, the Department shall:

- provide the child with all necessary medical care, which may include an examination by a physician or mental health professional with or without the consent of the child's parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's care, provided reasonable attempts have been made to obtain consent. (The worker must document such attempts to obtain consent in the electronic case record.); and
- obtain a court order or the consent of the child's parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's care prior to securing any investigatory medical examination or medical care for the child that is not medically necessary. (During the course of any necessary medical examination, a physician may perform diagnostic tests and procedures necessary for the detection of child abuse or neglect.)

When there is reasonable cause to believe that the child is in need of medical care, or the child shows signs of physical abuse or sexual abuse, the investigator shall:

- take the child directly from the home to a medical care facility where the child can be examined;
- provide the physician with the DCF-2147, "Medical Request for Information"; and
- obtain documentation of medical findings, including photographs of the area of trauma taken or caused to be taken by the physician.

Conditions requiring a medical examination of a child include:

- observable injuries, including bruises or scratches which are unexplained, at variance with the explanation given, or otherwise suspicious;
- speech or behavior which suggests the possibility of internal injuries or the need for medical care;
- development (e.g., weight, height) which is inconsistent with the expected range for the child's age;

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#### Medical Care and Evaluations for the Child

- a report of the ingestion of any harmful substance;
- a report or indications of sexual molestation; and
- other conditions which suggest the need for a medical evaluation.

**Note:** All of the above conditions require an assessment and a determination regarding the time frame for the medical examination. Social Workers shall consult with supervisory staff and health providers to make this determination

**Legal Reference:** Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101g(f).

**Cross reference:** DCF Policy 21-5, "Health Care Standards and Practice for Children and Youth in Care" Practice Guide.

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#### Removal from the Home

Once it has been determined that a child needs to be removed from his own home, this action may be taken in one of three ways:

- 96 hour hold;
- Orders of Temporary Custody from Superior Court for Juvenile Matters;
- Orders of Temporary Custody from Superior Court upon arrest of parent or guardian.

Note: Whenever temporary custody has been awarded to the Department of Children and Families by any court, the child cannot be placed out of state without the Court's approval.

**Cross Reference:** DCF Policy 27-1-1, "Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children".

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#### Emergency Placement Homes

Each regional Foster and Adoption Services Unit shall maintain an "emergency list" of that region's licensed foster homes which are available to Careline for emergency placements.

The Careline shall have access to each region's emergency list through the Department's computer system.

Efforts shall be made to include multilingual homes on the emergency list. Priority shall be given to those families who:

- meet regional needs;
- are able and willing to take:
  - sibling groups;
  - teenagers; and
- have less than five (5) children in their home.

Foster parents shall be asked to commit to three (3) months as an emergency placement resource.

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#### Length of Emergency Placement

An emergency placement home shall be used for a maximum of five (5) business days to provide a safe environment for the child while a more long term living arrangement is located.

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#### After-Hours Responsibility for Emergency Placement

The Careline after-hours worker or supervisor shall:

- place children in emergency placement homes utilizing the "Principles of Foster Care Matching";
- attempt to utilize homes in the child's region first before using an out-of-region home; and
- ensure that placement information is entered in the computer system immediately upon placement.

**Note:** Exceptions may be granted to keep siblings together, and to place children close to their own home.

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#### Area Office Social Workers' Responsibilities Following an Emergency Placement

Each business day, the regional matchers shall retrieve and review the emergency placement information in the computer system and discuss the placement with the foster parent.

The child's Social Worker and the matcher shall meet or talk during the first business day following an emergency placement to plan, if appropriate, for the child's move.

Only in rare cases will a child be allowed to remain in the emergency placement home beyond 5 days; *e.g.*, to allow siblings to remain together.

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#### Payments for Emergency Placements

Foster parents shall receive an adjustment of \$25.00 per day added to the per diem reimbursement for each child placed on an emergency basis. The adjustment shall be in effect until the next business day, when the basic rate shall be authorized.

The child's regional Social Worker shall request the emergency adjustment in the computer system.

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#### Relative and Fictive Kin Placements

The relative, extended family, or fictive kin may be considered:

- if the proposed caregiver is able to meet foster care licensing requirements;
  - the placement permits the child to remain in their home community; or
  - the placement, although in another community is determined to be in the child's best interest.
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**Parent Recommendation** The parent has a right to suggest a relative of the child or other person to be the foster parent of their child.

The treatment worker shall inform the parent of this right and shall ask the parent if he or she wishes to make such a suggestion.

Whenever the parent suggests a relative or other out-of-state person, the treatment worker shall refer the matter to the Interstate Compact Unit.

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### Legal Risk Homes

A legal risk home is defined as one which is licensed for adoption, but provides foster care for a child who is not legally free for adoption. A legal risk family is expected to be able to make a strong commitment to the child and to be supportive whether the child remains with them permanently or is returned to the birth family.

If reunification with family is not in the child's best interest, it is crucial that a timely plan for adoption be considered. To avoid multiple placements, a decision to place in a "legal risk home" should be considered as soon as it is determined a Petition for Termination of Parental Rights will be filed.

**Cross Reference:** DCF Policy 21-2-2, "Permanency Planning Teams: Family Selection".

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### Legal Risk Placement Guidelines

The following guidelines shall be considered in allowing children to be placed in a legal risk home:

- Both parents have consented to termination of their parental rights, but the matter has not been resolved in court;
- One parent has consented to termination of their parental rights and:
  - the other parent's identity is not known;
  - the other parent's whereabouts is unknown; or
  - the other parent is known, but has been totally uninvolved.;
- The child has been abandoned by parents of unknown identity or whereabouts;
- The petition for termination of parental rights has been granted but is either being appealed or the judgement is not yet final;
- A petition of termination of parental rights has been filed without parental consent. The following situations are some examples:
  - child(ren) placed who have sustained life threatening injuries and/or have been so severely abused that a return home is not recommended;
  - child(ren) placed whose parents have documented histories which indicate poor reunification prognosis (example: severe psychiatric problem, substance abuse, Termination of Parental Rights on siblings, history of inadequate parenting skills);
  - child(ren) for whom reunification has occurred but who have been returned to placement because of new neglect or abuse;
- A child(ren) has been placed in a foster home, which is not a potential adoptive home; and
- Other reasons may be considered on a case by case basis.

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#### Placement Principles

**See** DCF Policy 24-1, "Foster Care Services Overview" section regarding "Foster Care Placements".

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#### Residential Placements

A child may be considered for residential care under the following conditions:

- a family like setting cannot meet the child's individual needs;
- residential placement has been recommended by the regional considered removal team, a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist as necessary to meet the child's treatment needs; or
- the plan for residential care has been approved by the Social Work Supervisor and Program Supervisor, as appropriate.

For special residential placements forward the DCF-469, "Child Placement Document" to the Program Supervisor for review and to determine whether a specialized residential placement is required or if an existing approved program can meet the child's needs.

If approved for residential placement, the Social Worker shall complete the CANS and transmit to Beacon Health Options for review, level of care and match decisions.

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#### KidPix

The Department is obligated to maintain on file a current digital photographic record of all children under its care.

KidPix is a DCF intranet-based, computerized program that allows qualified users access to pictures of all the children under the Department's care. Retaining a digital image with KidPix ensures that pictures are available at any time. This is especially important when attempting to locate children who are on runaway status, or who are kidnapped.

KidPix pictures may be shared with law enforcement officials, but consultation with an attorney from the Department Legal Division shall take place prior to any additional dissemination of the picture.

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#### Taking the KidPix

Pictures shall show the child as the only subject, and shall show the child's face, head and shoulders. Full body images, images of the child with other persons or blurry images are not acceptable.

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#### Standards and Practice for KidPix

All children under DCF care shall have his/her picture taken within ninety (90) days of placement.

Permission from the child's parent to have the child photographed is not necessary for children who are committed as abused/neglected/uncared for or for whom parental rights have been terminated.

For children in the custody of the Department pursuant to a 96-hour hold or Order of Temporary Custody permission shall be obtained from the child's parent or guardian before the picture is taken. In the event the parent or guardian refuses, a consultation with an attorney from the Department's Office of Legal Affairs shall take place to determine the Department's options.

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#### **Standards and Practice for KidPix** (continued)

The permission of the child's parent or guardian shall be obtained before taking the child's picture for children who are voluntarily placed or receiving services under the Voluntary Services Program.

Updated pictures shall be taken at least once per year. Pictures shall be taken more often depending on the child's age and rate of development and/or amount of change in facial features. Each Area Office has a supply of digital cameras available for this purpose. Employees may also utilize their state issued cell phone for this purpose.

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#### **Suitcases for Children**

Whenever a child or youth who is in the care of the Department needs to move, due to an initial placement or change in placement, his or her personal belongings shall be treated with respect and recognition of the personal value to the child or youth.

The Department shall provide adequate luggage so that children and youth are able to bring their possessions with them to the new setting. Department staff shall ensure that each child and/or youth has sufficient luggage to transport personal belongings.

Area Directors shall develop a protocol for the acquisition, storage and dissemination of luggage to children who are being removed from home or who are changing placements.

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#### **Responsibilities to the Child**

The Social Worker shall:

- develop a relationship with the child through visits, telephone calls and private conversations, as age appropriate;
- explain the purpose of the case plan and planned activities to the child, as appropriate for the child's level of understanding;
- help the child understand the reasons for and the realities of placement without violating the positive aspects of the child's feelings about his or her parents;
- keep the child informed about his or her case planning, family situation and siblings;
- ensure the child's visitation with parents, siblings and significant persons according to the case plan;
- ensure that arrangements are made for the child to attend activities and services consistent with his or her treatment, educational, social, cultural and religious needs;
- allow the child the opportunity to express his or her anxieties, fears and other feelings, including conflicted loyalties;
- ensure through observation and direct inquiry that all the child's basic needs are met;
- aid the child in preparing for any life transitions, adoption, reunification and adulthood, as appropriate;
- ensure that a full array of adolescent services are provided to all youth over the age of 16 years; and
- document the child's progress by maintaining the uniform case record and computer record.



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#### **Child In Care/ Siblings Bill of Rights and Expectations**

The DCF-780, Child in Care/Siblings Bill of Rights and Expectations, shall be reviewed by the social worker with the child, if the child is of an appropriate age:

- whenever a child is placed in out-of-home care
- whenever a child is moved to a new out-of-home placement
- annually, as long as the child is in an out-of-home placement.

Both the child and the worker shall sign the form to certify that the rights and expectations have been explained to the child. The caregiver shall also sign the form to certify their understanding of the child's rights and the expectations for the care they are to provide for the child.

The worker shall explain to the child that the child may contact any of the individuals listed on the form if he or she believes their rights have been violated or expectations not met.

Cross reference: Policy 20-1, Case Planning Overview; and Child in Care/Siblings Bill of Rights Practice Guide.

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#### **Responsibilities to the Family of Origin**

The Social Worker shall:

- work with the family of origin to help them rectify the problem(s) which resulted in the abuse or neglect of their child;
  - maintain professional contact with the family to successfully effect and oversee the objectives of the case plan;
  - continually evaluate the home and keep aware of changes in the family's psychosocial circumstances;
  - work with all parties toward a termination of the parent-child relationship when that action is determined to be in the child's best interest;
  - provide a clear explanation to the parents, child and caregivers of why the child requires placement;
  - establish an ongoing relationship with the parents through planned appointments and contacts in order to jointly identify and develop goals for family reunification;
  - continually monitor the parents situation, evaluating changes which will affect the planning for this family and the progress toward reunification or other case goal;
  - support the parents in full participation with the case planning process and encourage them to assess their progress;
  - as appropriate, support the ongoing relationship between the family and child by encouraging planned contacts such as:
    - a formal visitation plan;
    - telephone conversations;
    - correspondence; and
    - gifts on appropriate occasions;
  - assist, support, and facilitate the use of services by the parent, as decided in the case planning process; and
  - provide the parent with ongoing information regarding the child and all aspects of the child's foster care experience.
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**Responsibilities to the Foster Family** At the time of placement, the child's Social Worker shall:

- meet with the foster family to confirm the appropriateness of the match and complete the process of placement;
- provide for the child's special needs; and
- provide the foster parents with the child's Placement Portfolio which contains the information necessary for the care and supervision of the child.

Information about the child that is not available at the time of placement shall be provided within 30 days of the date of placement.

For emergency placements, information to meet the child's immediate needs shall be provided to the foster parents within 24 hours of placement or one working day, whichever is sooner.

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#### **Use of the Placement Portfolio**

The Placement Portfolio shall be completed and updated with the most current information available about the child and given to the placement provider at the time of initial or any subsequent placement.

The Portfolio information may be shared with the child's attorney upon request.

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#### **Completing the Placement Portfolio**

The area office social worker shall initiate the placement request/469 in the Department's computer system. The 469 will be partially generated by the computer system. The social worker shall complete all required fields in the computer system and compile the required documents identified on the cover page.

Cross Reference: Ehelp, "Placement request guide and 469 Printout with Mapping".

As new information about the child becomes available, the DCF-469 must be updated by the Social Worker and provided to the caretaker. Any new information affecting the safety and health of the child must be provided to the caretaker immediately. The caretaker's outdated DCF-469 must be discarded.

The DCF-469 is utilized to:

- request a placement;
- effect an out-of-home placement with the selected provider;
- specify the visitation plan; and
- serve as the board and care agreement.

The information on this document shall be reviewed with the supervisor in supervisory conferences at each six-month Administrative Case Review.

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#### Types of Placements Utilizing DCF-469

The DCF-469 is utilized for the following types of placements:

- Foster Care, including relative, fictive kin, and pre-adoptive care, Therapeutic Foster Care and the care of Children with Complex Medical Needs;
- SAFE Homes;
- Temporary Shelter Care;
- DCF Operated Facilities; and
- Private Residential Facilities.

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#### To Make a Foster Care Placement

Once a foster family has been identified by the matcher, the child's Social Worker shall take the following steps to make the placement:

- Call the foster parent to make arrangements for the placement;
- Gather applicable documents and materials in the Placement Portfolio, as specified above;
- Make provisions for the child's special needs; *e.g.*, special equipment or medical services;
- Obtain a copy of the child's medical records, if available;
- Bring the Portfolio documents, records and materials to the foster parent, including two (2) completed copies of the DCF-469 for signature. Information that is not available at the time of placement must be supplied to the foster parent within thirty (30) days of the date of placement;
- Review the information on the DCF-469 and other documents in the Portfolio with the foster parent, emphasizing:
  - the confidentiality of the child's information;
  - the importance of updating the DCF-469 as new information becomes available. (Both the foster parent and the child's worker are responsible for communicating new information to each other.); and
  - how to use and maintain the health forms in the Placement Portfolio;
- Sign, and have the foster parent sign, both copies of the DCF-469. Leave one copy with the foster parent and file the other in the child's case record. Important: The DCF-469 serves as the board and care agreement;
- Notify the matcher of the disposition of the placement by e-mail on or by the next working day.(If the placement did not occur, specify the reason.); and
- Complete the placement and payment sections in the computer system.

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#### Placement of Siblings

Siblings shall be placed in the same foster care setting unless the documented special needs of one or more siblings preclude placing the siblings in the same foster care setting.

Siblings who are not initially placed together shall be reunited in the same foster care setting, unless exceptional reasons exist that preclude reunification.

Reasons for not reuniting siblings shall be exceptional and documented in each child's case plan and Uniform Case Record including:

- the exceptional circumstance requiring placement in different homes;
  - the reasons the reunification to a single foster care home did not occur; and
  - discussion of the child's best interest considerations that led to this decision
-