

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF QUALITY AND PLANNING

Administrative Case Review

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Policy

Consistent with federal law, the Department of Children and Families shall implement an Administrative Case Review (ACR) process for all children under the care of DCF and their families, including youth over age 18 and children placed through the Voluntary Services Program.

Note: DCF, at its discretion, may develop procedures for the similar review of cases in which children remain in their homes.

Legal references: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-15(b); 42 U.S.C. 675; Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovations Act of 2011 - Public Law 112-34, Section 422(b)(15)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act.

Cross-reference: DCF Policy 20-2, "Case Planning." **See also:** "Case Planning Practice Guide."

Elements of the ACR Process

The ACR process shall include a review of the electronic record and periodic Administrative Case Review meetings no less frequently than 60 days from the child's entry into care and at least once every six months (180 days) thereafter in order to determine:

- the physical and psychological safety of the child;
- the extent of compliance with the case plan;
- the extent of progress that has been made toward alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating DCF involvement;
- if the child is placed in out-of-home care, the appropriateness of the placement;
- the treatment and monitoring of any trauma associated with maltreatment and removal from home;
- a projected likely date by which the child may be returned to and safely maintained in the home or placed for adoption or legal guardianship;
- for a youth for whom OPPLA has been approved, the steps taken to ensure the child's foster parent or institution is following the reasonable and prudent parent standard; and
- the extent to which the child has regular, ongoing opportunities to engage in age- and developmentally-appropriate activities.

ACR Supervisors

Administrative Case Review Social Work Supervisors (ACR SWS) shall facilitate case review meetings, utilizing the Partners in Change (PIC) principles, following a review of the electronic record. Feedback from the ACR meetings shall be reflected on the DCF-approved data collection instrument, which shall be shared with the Regional staff.

The ACR SWS shall serve as an independent third party reviewer to measure and assess DCF's adherence to state and federal regulations to ensure appropriate service provision and evaluation of progress.

For individual cases, the ACR SWS shall:

- review the electronic record and case plan;
- facilitate the ACR meeting; and
- complete the data collection instrument.

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ACR Reports The ACR Program Supervisor shall make data available to management about the ACR process and data outcomes from the Administrative Case Review program.

ACR Meetings ACR meetings shall be scheduled in accordance with the required time frames:

- within 60 days of entry into care (or case transfer for in-home cases); and
- every six months (180 days) thereafter.

ACR Social Work Supervisors, assigned to Regional Offices, shall facilitate the ACR meetings.

Invitees to the ACR Meeting The following persons shall be invited to the ACR meeting:

- the parent or guardians;
- the child, if 12 years of age or over;
- the attorneys for the parents and child;
- any guardians ad litem appointed by the court;
- community providers;
- placement providers;
- any other professionals involved with the child or family;
- school personnel; and
- any DCF Regional or facility staff that provide services to the child or family.

Note: DCF, at its discretion, may hold separate ACR sessions when necessary to protect participants or when it is in the best interests of the child, *e.g.*, in cases of intimate partner violence between parents or in cases in which the child has a valid reason for requesting a separate session.

Written Notifications Written notification of the scheduled ACR meeting shall be sent to the child's attorney and/or guardian ad litem, no less than twenty-one days prior to the meeting. Written notification may be made by email.

Legal Reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-15(b).

Mandatory Attendance of DCF Staff Attendance at ACR meetings is mandatory for the ACR SWS and at least one of the following Ongoing Services staff:

- Social Worker;
- Social Work Supervisor; or
- Program Supervisor.

In instances when the designated DCF staff is unavailable for the meeting, the meeting shall be rescheduled with every effort made to maintain compliance with the required timeframe.

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Attendance of Parent and Child	Every effort shall be made to hold the ACR meeting at a time and location that allows the parents or guardians, foster parents and the child if, 12 years of age or over, to attend. Social Workers shall explore and encourage parents and children to invite others to attend their meeting (<i>e.g.</i> , informal supports such as coaches, clergy, other family members, recreation leaders).
Participation by Phone	A toll-free audio conference number shall be provided to all invitees in the event they are unable to attend in person. The toll-free number shall allow multiple participants to contribute who may have otherwise been unable to be involved.
Consent	The parents shall have the right to give their consent to the presence of other participants during the discussion of their confidential case information. A family case shall be reviewed with outside participants only with the written permission of the parents.
Family Case Plan Review	<p>The review of the family case plan at the ACR meeting shall be an opportunity to review the status of progress towards the family's case goals.</p> <p>Family ACR Meetings are required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• for all families who have an associated child in placement whose permanent or concurrent plan is reunification;• for all families who have an associated child in placement and DCF is providing services to meet the parent(s)' identified needs; or• as requested by Ongoing Services and at the discretion of the ACR Program Supervisor.
Review of CIP Case Plan	<p>The review of the child in placement case plan at the ACR meeting shall be an opportunity to review the status of progress toward the child's case goals.</p> <p>CIP ACR Meetings are required for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• children who are at home but committed to DCF;• youth age 18 and older while the DCF case remains open;• children in out-of-home care regardless of age or placement type when the legal basis for the placement is:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ a Voluntary Services Program placement;○ a voluntary placement agreement; or○ a court order (96 hour hold, order of temporary custody, abuse/neglect/uncared for commitment, Probate Court order, TPR/statutory parent).
ACR Meeting Narratives	The Social Worker shall enter a summary of the ACR meeting as a narrative in the electronic record within five days.
