



16.46 Child/Youth Referral and Placement

Application: Department of Children's Services, Contract Agency, and Licensed Child Placing Agency Staff

Authority: TCA 37-1-116(b); 37-1-137(a); 37-2-415; 37-4-201 et seq.; 37-5-105(3); 37-5-106; Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC); P.L. 109-239, Safe & Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Care Act of 2006; Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010; Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA); Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA)

Standards: PA-CR 1.04. PA-CFS 12.02, 12.03, 12.05, and 12.08. PA-CFS 14.09. PA-CFS 17.03

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Glossary:

- ◆ Child of Minor Parent
 - A child who has a parent that is under the age of eighteen (18).
- ◆ Licensed Child Placing Agency
 - Any agency operating under a license to place children/youth for adoption.

Policy Statement:

DCS placements are made in the least restrictive setting appropriate to meet the unique needs of each child/youth.

Purpose:

To identify the best placement for children/youth that meet their unique/individual needs and limits the amount trauma experienced by the child/youth.

Procedures:

A. Standards

1. The placement of all children/youth takes into consideration all information gathered prior to and during the initiation of any custody episode.
2. At the point that a child/youth comes into the Department's custody, the DCS representative(s) and other specialized DCS experts, if needed, engage the family in discussing the unique needs of the child/youth and family. All available assessment

information is reviewed so that the appropriate placement can be identified and matched to the child/youth's needs. Members of the treatment team including the case manager, regional mental health clinician, or other involved team members will make a referral for a diagnostic mental health assessment within thirty (30) calendar days when indicated.

3. All information gathered, by completing the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) and/or other specialized assessments outlining the child/youth's strengths and needs, is documented and updated according to the DCS [CANS Case Protocol](#).
4. Children/youth who have high risk scores, as identified on the CANS Assessment, must have safety plans. Refer to DCS Policy [31.18, Safety Planning for High Risk Behaviors in Children and Youth in DCS Custody](#) for more information.
5. Relative/kinship placement options should be pursued and utilized, if appropriate, prior to considering a traditional foster home placement. Refer to DCS Policy [31.9, Conducting Diligent Searches](#), the [Diligent Search Manual](#), and the [Protocol for Kinship Exception Requests](#) for additional information.
6. The Child and Family Team (CFT) will be engaged in making all placement decisions as outlined in the [Child and Family Team Meeting Guide](#).
7. Upon determination that a child/youth may need out of home placement, the placement referral process, as outlined in the [Guide to Placement Principles & Types](#), will be followed. Only Network Development (ND) may refer a child/youth for placement within DCS foster care, contract provider network, or non-network provider funded by a Unique Care Agreement.
8. If a child/youth is referred to and placed in a DCS foster home, the Department discloses all information in accordance with DCS Policy [20.25, Health Information Records and Access](#). This includes the use of form [CS-0727, Initial Intake, Placement and Well-Being Information and History](#). When placing a delinquent child/youth in a foster home, the prospective foster family is provided with all available information regarding the youth's delinquent record.
9. If circumstances require any child/youth to be placed in a potential contract agency setting, DCS provides all information to the potential contract agency to ensure appropriate placement and services. The contract agency is responsible for sharing

the information with foster parents or residential placements for full disclosure prior to placement.

10. When identifying a placement that best meets the child/youth and family's needs, there are scenarios in which a form **CS-0664, Placement Exception Request (PER)** will be required. For information on the PER categories and process, refer to the [*Guide to Placement Exception Requests and Categories*](#) and the [*Guidelines for Foster Home Placements Exceeding Five Total Children in a Foster Home*](#).
11. If the CFT recommends a placement change of a child/youth that is placed in a foster home, refer to DCS policy [*16.27, Notice of Removal from a Foster Home*](#).
12. For referrals that involve assessment homes, refer to the [*Protocol for Assessment Homes*](#).
13. There is specialized training for foster parents accepting placement of delinquent children/youth. For information regarding foster parent training requirements, refer to DCS policy [*16.9, Required Foster Parent In-Service Training*](#).
14. For children/youth placed in a Qualified Residential Treatment Center, refer to the [*Placement and Provider Services Division Placement Support Guide, Protocol for Placing Children in a Qualified Residential Treatment Program \(Q RTP\)*](#), the [*Protocol for Commissioner's Review of Long-Term Qualified Residential Treatment Program \(Q RTP\) Placements*](#), and form **CS-4215, Qualified Residential Treatment Program (Q RTP) Commissioner Long-Term Review Summary and Authorization**.
15. Children/youth in foster care as dependent/neglected and/or unruly are not placed in a jail, correctional center, hardware secure facility, or detention facility unless the child/youth has been charged with a delinquent offense or unless otherwise placed or ordered by the court. Court orders, verbal or written, instructing DCS to place a child/youth in jail, correctional center, hardware secure facility, or detention facility are provided immediately to the DCS Regional Counsel for interpretation and legal advice as outlined in the [*Guide to Placement Principles & Types*](#).
16. Regardless of the type of placement, out of state placements of a child/youth in DCS custody is subject to compliance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (TCA 37-4-201-207), Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006, P.L. 109-239, and DCS policy [*1.30, Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children*](#). Refer to the [*Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children \(ICPC\) Procedural Guide*](#) for additional information.

17. For emergency placement with parent/relative (kin) under ICPC Border Agreements, refer to the [DCS Interstate Compact Information Website](#) for additional information.
18. A child/youth placed in detention or otherwise detained in another state due to run away or other legal reasons is subject to return through the [13.3, Interstate Compact for Juveniles \(ICJ\)](#).

B. Emergency Placements

1. When a placement option is not available within the child/youth's county, placement into an emergency foster home is optional while Network Development continues to look for a long-term placement. Emergency placement rates must be approved by Network Development prior to initial placement. The length of time of placement into these homes is limited to three (3) days; however, the length of stay can be extended only with approval from the Executive Director of Network Development or Deputy Commissioner of Operations.
2. When a placement in a foster home or other appropriate setting is not possible, transitional homes may be used as a last resort. Details about transitional home settings can be found in the [Protocol for Accessing a Transitional House](#).

C. Documentation

1. For placement moves not initiated by Network Development, DCS staff is to notify Network Development of the placement move on the same day as the move. Placement information for children/youth in DCS custody is entered or updated in the Electronic Record System within 24 hours of any change and available to authorized personnel. Network Development is responsible for entering the placement move into the electronic record.
2. A Notice of Action (NOA) is completed in the Electronic Record System for any placement into or moving from Level 2, 3, or 4. For more information, refer to the [NOA-GRIER FAQ](#).
3. Events not documented elsewhere in the Electronic Record System or requiring a more comprehensive explanation are entered into case recordings in accordance with DCS Policy [31.14, Documentation of TFACTS Case Recordings](#).

Forms:

[CS-4215, Qualified Residential Treatment Program \(Q RTP\) Commissioner Long-term Review Summary and Authorization](#)

[CS-0664, Placement Exception Request \(PER\)](#)

[CS-0727, Initial Intake, Placement and Well-Being Information and History](#)

[CS-0747, Child and Family Team Meeting Summary](#)

[CS-1013, Kinship Exception Request](#)

[TennCare Medical Appeal](#)

Collateral Documents:

[18.34, Criteria for Referral and Placement of Youth in a Hardware Secure Facility](#)

[CANS Case Protocol](#)

[31.18, Safety Planning for High Risk Behaviors in Children and Youth in DCS Custody](#)

[31.9, Conducting Diligent Searches](#)

[Diligent Search Manual](#)

[Protocol for Kinship Exception Requests](#)

[Child and Family Team Meeting Guide](#)

[Guide to Placement Principles & Types](#)

[20.25, Health Information Records and Access](#)

[Guide to Placement Exception Requests and Categories](#)

[16.27, Notice of Removal from a Foster Home](#)

[1.30, Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children](#)

[Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children \(ICPC\) Procedural Guide](#)

[NOA-GRIER FAQ](#)

[Protocol for Placing Children in a Qualified Residential Treatment Program \(Q RTP\)](#)

[Protocol for Commissioner's Review of Long-Term Qualified Residential Treatment Program \(Q RTP\) Placements](#)

[Guidelines for Foster Home Placements Exceeding Five Total Children in a Foster Home](#)

[*Protocol for Accessing a Transitional House*](#)

[*Protocol for Assessment Homes*](#)

[*31.14, Documentation of TFACTS Case Recordings*](#)