

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Division of Children & Family Services Internal Procedures

WE CARE. WE ACT. WE CHANGE LIVES.

10/26/2026

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The Department of Human Services (DHS) has administrative policies and procedures that address the day-to-day operations of all Divisions in the Department. Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) employees are expected to conduct business within this Policy framework. The DHS policies and procedures are located at DHS Policies - Arkansas Department of Human Services. DCFS has set additional standards for DCFS employees. These standards are addressed in the following administrative Internal Procedures.

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Internal Procedure 100: Division Organizational Structure

100.1 Division Organizational Structure

03/2026

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Director has management and administrative responsibilities for the Division. The DCFS Director supervises the Assistant Director of Administrative Services, a Program Administrator, and the DCFS Deputy Director who oversees all other DCFS Assistant Directors.

An Assistant Director supervises each of the following sections: Administrative Services, Field Operations, Prevention and Reunification, Policy, Practice and Training, Mental Health and Treatment Services, and Placement Support and Community Outreach. These sections are described below.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Administrative Services oversees and provides support to the following areas:

A. Eligibility Unit
   The Eligibility Unit is responsible for the Division's IV-E eligibility determinations and provides assistance with opening and maintaining Medicaid services for children experiencing foster care.
B. Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System
   Administrative Services oversees the development and ongoing maintenance of the Division's Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), ensuring alignment with federal requirements and supporting system functionality for statewide operations.
C. Centralized Inquiry
   The Centralized Inquiry unit processes initial online applications for traditional resource parents as well as the initial paperwork for applicants, to include background checks, before assigning resource applicants to the field for the completion of the resource parent approval process.

D. Notification Unit
   The Notification Unit is responsible for ensuring timely and accurate completion of required notifications in accordance with Division Policy and applicable legal requirements.
E. Central Registry Unit
   The Central Registry Unit maintains accurate, secure, and confidential records related to child welfare information. This unit ensures compliance with state and federal laws regarding record retention, reporting, and authorized access to information.
F. Criminal Background Check Unit
   The Criminal Background Check Unit runs and conducts criminal background checks for all resource parent applicants. The unit is responsible for notifying applicants if there is a hit on the criminal record report allowing the applicant to challenge the accuracy of the report.
G. The Release of Information Unit is responsible for processing all file requests (records request) received from the Office of Appeals & Hearings, private attorneys, outside state agencies, and the public.

FIELD OPERATIONS

Field Operations provides administrative leadership and guidance to DCFS staff throughout all seventy-five (75) Arkansas counties. Counties are grouped into ten (10) service delivery areas, each with a Social Service Area Manager. The Assistant Director of Field Operations directly supervises ten (10) Social Service Area Managers and a Program Administrator.

Each Area is comprised of the following counties:

- AREA I: Benton, Carroll, Madison, Washington
- AREA II West: Sebastian
- AREA II East: Crawford, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Scott, Yell
- AREA III: Clark, Garland, Hot Springs, Howard, Montgomery, Perry, Pike, Polk, Saline
- AREA IV: Columbia, Hempstead, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, Sevier, Union
- AREA V: Baxter, Boone, Conway, Faulkner, Marion, Newton, Pope, Searcy, Van Buren
- AREA VI: Pulaski
- AREA VII: Bradley, Calhoun, Cleveland, Dallas, Grant, Jefferson, Lincoln, Lonoke, Prairie
- AREA VIII: Clay, Craighead, Fulton, Greene, Izard, Lawrence, Mississippi, Randolph, Sharp
- AREA IX: Cleburne, Crittenden, Cross, Independence, Jackson, Poinsett, Stone, White,
- Woodruff
- AREA X: Arkansas, Ashley, Chicot, Desha, Drew, Lee, Monroe, Phillips, St. Francis

Each area also has at least one (1) Program Administrator and Social Service Coordinator who directly supports their Area Manager in area administration. Each county is generally comprised of at least one (1) Social Service Supervisor or Social Service County Manager, as well as Social Service Specialists, Social Service Assistants, and other support staff. Each position has a job title

that has a set of minimum qualifications established by the Department of Finance and Administration, Office of Personnel Management. Positions may then be further defined based on job functions developed by a direct supervisor. Social Service Specialist functional roles include but are not limited to Investigators, Caseworkers, Resource Specialists, and Adoption Specialists. Support staff functional roles include but are not limited to Social Service Assistants, Transitional Youth Coordinators, Health Service Assistants and Administrative Specialists.

PREVENTION AND REUNIFICATION

Prevention and Reunification focuses on support to families in their homes to prevent initial entry into foster care as well as to re-entry through focus on reunification services and supports. The unit provides reviews, coaching, and technical assistance to field staff in the following areas:

- Children's Trust Fund
  The Arkansas Children's Trust Fund within the Prevention and Reunification Unit is responsible for overseeing the DCFS Child Abuse Prevention Program, which focuses on primary prevention services. The Children's Trust Fund oversees several primary prevention initiatives such as the DCFS Parent Advisory Council and the Baby and Me WIC Clinic Project.
- Citizen Review Panels
  Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) are federally mandated through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Funding for CRPs is provided through DCFS, but the panels are comprised of citizens within the community who are passionate about improving the lives of children and families in Arkansas and strengthening the child welfare system. There are currently three (3) CRPs in Arkansas that cover the following counties: Garland, Pope, and Logan.
- Differential Response
  The Differential Response (DR) Unit responds to allegations of low-risk child maltreatment. Families that have allegations that are diverted from the traditional investigative pathway to the DR Program are provided with short-term services designed to keep children from entering foster care.
- Child Protective Services (Investigations)
  The Child Protective Services Unit provides oversight and monitoring of DCFS child maltreatment investigations and staff statewide. Investigator Specialists respond to allegations of child abuse and neglect that have been accepted through the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline. During the investigation, Investigators conduct Safety and Risk Assessments of the children and must show a "preponderance of evidence" to substantiate (determined to be true) the allegations. This unit also oversees child fatality and near fatality reviews to develop recommendations and actions designed to prevent such occurrences in the future.
- Team Decision Making
  Team Decision Making (TDM) is a collaborative teaming process with families, their informal and formal supports, and DCFS to come up with a plan to safely keep children in their homes. TDM is designed to help build on families' strengths, protective factors, and

community supports to keep children safely in the home when immediate safety threats may be mitigated.

- In-Home Services
  The In-Home Services Unit provides oversight and programmatic planning for DCFS in-home cases and prevention cases throughout the State of Arkansas. This unit is responsible for contracts that are community-based and designed to increase the strength and stability of families, to include those families who have recently reunified to prevent re-entry into care. There are several services and programs offered to DCFS clients through the In-Home Unit including counseling, Intensive In-Homes Services, Triple P (in-home parenting), and SafeCare. The main goals of the In-Home Services Unit are to improve the practice of frontline Social Service Specialists, strengthen and expand services throughout the State of Arkansas that allow children to remain safely at home and improve the lives of the families with whom DCFS works, and increase support for families during and after reunification if removal occurred. The In-Home Services Unit is also responsible for monitoring Permanency Safety Consultations.
- Safety Organized Practice (SOP)/Structured Decision Making (SDM) Unit
  The SOP/SDM Unit oversees the implementation, sustainability, and fidelity of Safety Organized Practice and the Structured Decision Making (SDM) model in Arkansas. This includes managing associated contracts, supporting implementation and training efforts, and providing coaching, technical assistance, and resource development to staff statewide. The SDM model is the Division approved framework used to support consistent and informed decision making throughout the life of a case. The SDM suite includes assessment tools used at critical decision points, including safety, risk, and case planning. The unit is responsible for ensuring appropriate utilization of these tools and supporting continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts related to SOP and SDM.

<u>POLICY, PRACTICE, AND TRAINING</u>

The Policy, Practice, and Training unit oversees and provides support to the following areas:

- Policy
  The Unit has the responsibility for developing, revising, promulgating, and distributing Division policies, procedures, publications, and forms. Various federal and state laws govern DCFS, and the unit is responsible for monitoring, updating and developing regulations to maintain compliance with these laws.
- Professional Development and Training
  The Professional Development and Training Unit oversees the development, coordination, and delivery of training delivery for DCDS staff statewide. This includes pre-service training, ongoing professional development, and specialized training aligned with Division Policy and practice. The unit manages training contracts, supports curriculum development, and ensures training initiatives align with federal and state requirements, including Title IV-E. oversees the Child Welfare Stipend program and provides IV-E fiscal support for DCFS staff attending training events.
- Planning and Practice Improvement

The Planning Unit's mission is to engage in comprehensive, broad-based program planning with a goal of improving child welfare services in Arkansas. This unit oversees all federally required plans and reports submitted to the federal Children's Bureau.

- Education
  The Education Unit advocates for children in the child welfare system to help them overcome barriers to education and ensures compliance with state and federal laws inclusive of Every Student Succeeds Act and Fostering Connections. The Education Unit works closely with field staff and resource parents regarding the identification, implementation, and monitoring of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Section 504 Education Plans for children experiencing foster care.

MENTAL HEALTH AND TREATMENT SERVICES

The DCFS Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit provides support and consultation to DCFS field staff regarding children with behavioral, emotional, and mental health needs. This unit oversees the Division's Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) contracts and includes Clinical Specialists who assist local staff with discharge planning for youth placed in a variety of residential treatment settings. The DCFS Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit does not provide direct mental health services for clients.

PLACEMENT SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Placement Support and Community Outreach Programs focus on ensuring placements are safe and stable, recruiting and retaining resource homes, and supporting all placement providers so that they have the means to provide quality, individualized care and services to the children placed with them. Placement Support and Community Outreach includes:

- Adoptions and Guardianship
  DCFS helps by providing a full range of adoption services, from finding families to adopt to maintaining a voluntary adoption registry. Services are also available to birth caregivers who chose to place their newborns for adoption. Legal guardianships supported by a subsidy are also available to qualifying kin who have been opened as an approved kinship home for a relative child for at least six (6) months.
- Foster Care
  Resource parent support is a critical role in this unit which is achieved through working with resource parents to address concerns to supporting them in ensuring they have the tools they need to meet the needs of the children placed in their homes. The Foster Care Unit also manages resource home board payments, and assists in guiding resource staff regarding resource and adoptive home approval questions. This unit also processes resource parent and volunteer travel and maintains responsibility for the online Resource Provider Portal.
- Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children
  The Interstate Compact Placement of Children (ICPC) Unit assists in moving children in need of foster care placement or adoption across state lines. When a child requires foster care or adoptive placement outside the resident state, DCFS shall use the ICPC process.

- Specialized Services

  The Specialized Services Unit provides technical assistance to local county offices requiring help in locating or finding placements for children with emotional or behavioral problems. This unit oversees the state's Emergency Shelter and Therapeutic Foster Care contracts and serves as the Division point of contact for Private License Placement Agencies.
- This unit also provides support to the local county staff with the Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) waiver process for children in state custody. Transitional Youth Services The Transitional Youth Services (TYS) Unit works with teens in foster care ages fourteen to twenty-one (14-21) to teach them basic life skills as they transition to adulthood. The program encourages youth to remain in school until graduation from high school and will then assist them with their post-secondary educational needs and training, other programs designed to remove barriers to employment, and entry into the workforce. This includes oversight of the Education and Training Voucher Program, Supervised Independent Living, LifeSet, and the DCFS Driving and Car Insurance Reimbursement Program for youth experiencing foster care.

SHARED SERVICES

Financial and administrative functions related to DCFS are provided to the Division through the shared-services model at the DHS Executive Staff level. There are DHS Chiefs for each of the following areas:

- Finance
- Information Technology (IT)
- Human Resources
- Legal Counsel
- Security and Compliance
- Legislative & Intergovernmental Affairs
- Communications & Community Engagement

DIVISION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CHRIS)

The Division information management system is Arkansas's State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) and is administered by the Office of Systems and Technology (OST) within DHS. The Division information management system provides Arkansas with a single, integrated system to help staff and management in providing more effective and efficient operations within the functions of the child welfare system. The Division information management system is accessible (desktop and 24-hour remote access) and supports the full scope of services provided by the Division. It serves as a centralized source to store information (client, legal and service information) and to manage workloads. The information system also meets DCFS' needs surrounding federal reporting and federal financial

participation requirements, including those required for the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). For data management, OST has moved from individual data warehouses to a consolidated warehouse with a decision support system and is working on dashboard capabilities for all divisions.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

To determine the effectiveness of programs in improving outcomes for children and families, the DCFS Director also oversees a two (2)-prong continuous quality improvement endeavor through the Service Quality and Practice Improvement Unit and DCFS Data Management and Analysis Program. Both are operated via contracts.

The Service Quality and Practice Improvement Unit conducts Quality Services Peer Reviews (QSPR). The QSPR is a monitoring tool used to evaluate the quality of the child welfare system in Arkansas. It is modeled after the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) tool and, as such, also focuses on safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families.

The Data Management and Analysis Program compiles, analyzes, and reviews data of several reports as well as measures the outcomes each area achieves for its service population. Reports include but are not limited to the Quarterly Performance Report and Annual Report Card.

100.2 Division Practice Model

01/2025

Our practice model unites our casework process with an approach that values and supports families at every step of a family's encounter with our system. The goals of our practice model are to:

- Safely keep children with their families
- Enhance well-being in all of our practice with families
- Ensure foster care and other placements support goals of permanency
- Use permanent placement with relatives or other adults, when reunification is not possible, who have a close relationship to the children (preferred permanency option)
- Ensure adoptions, when that is the best permanency option, are timely, well-supported, and lifelong
- Ensure youth have access to an array of resources to help achieve successful transition to adulthood

Along with our goals, we support the practice model by looking for ways to incorporate the following principles into every encounter we have when working on behalf of families. We believe:

- Behavior, change, and the work of change is a part of our daily challenge

- Safety for children is achieved through positive protective relationships with caring family and community members
- Meaningful decisions require close family participation in decision making
- Strengths of families and supporting these strengths contribute to life-long permanent relationships for children
- Families' success depends on community involvement and shared problem solving
- Practice with families is interrelated at every step of the casework process
- Sustainable success with families is the work of a team
- The entire system must support frontline practice to achieve positive outcomes with families
- Every staff position, role, and activity of the division shows continuous effort to build and maintain professionalism
- Skill-based training and consultation form the foundation for successful practice with families
- Quality improvement and accountability guide all of our work
- How we do the work is as important as the work we do

Internal Procedure 101: Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

06/2026

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is committed to balancing transparency with families, partners, and the courts, while ensuring strict confidentiality of sensitive information. Protecting the privacy and dignity of children and families is a core value. This Internal Procedure outlines when, how, and to whom DCFS staff may disclose case information, including child maltreatment investigation records, in compliance with state and federal law. In most instances, disclosure is permitted or required only when the individual is the subject of a maltreatment report.

"Subject of the report" refers to the alleged offender; the custodial or noncustodial parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the child who is the subject of the suspected maltreatment; and the child who is the subject of the suspected maltreatment (Ark. Code Ann. § 12-18-103(24).

The Division shall not release the data that would identify the person who made the report to the Child Abuse Hotline unless a court of competent jurisdiction orders release of the information. Additionally, the name of the reporter shall be provided to the Prosecutor or Local Law Enforcement (LLE) only upon request. These requesters are then responsible for redacting the name of the Reporter prior to releasing any records to the AO (Alleged Offender) or their attorney. (This request is typically to prosecute reporters who make false reports.)

Case records, including permanency, in-home, and prevention, may consist of reports, correspondence, memoranda, case histories, Division information management system contacts, and protected health information. These are governed by Ark. Code Ann. § 9-28-407(h)(1).

Because case records may contain both investigative and general case information, determining what may be released, to whom, and under what circumstances can be complex. The charts below are provided to guide staff in reviewing applicable rules and determining appropriate disclosures.

101.1 Release of Information

When a release of information is requested, DCFS staff will:

A. Maintain confidentiality according to all Division and DHS policies regarding confidentiality. If a Division staff member becomes aware of a violation of confidentiality according to Division Internal Procedure 101: Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information, DHS Policy 1006: Ethical Standards for DHS Employees, specifically Section III: Prohibited Activities, Ark. Code Ann. § 12-18-502 and discloses the reporter to the Child Abuse Hotline unlawfully, or Ark. Code Ann. § 12-18-103(24) and discloses investigative or case records unlawfully:
    1) Immediately provide notification to the direct chain of command:
        a) Notification must be made within two (2) business hours of identification of the violation, at maximum
        b) Initial notification may be made in person, by text, or via phone call
    2) Provide written notification of the violations via email to the Supervisor in the direct chain of command within twenty-four (24) hours of identification of the violation to include:
        a) Name of the staff member committing the violation
        b) Name of others with information or in observance of the violation
        c) Date, time, and location
        d) Details of the violation
        e) Any supporting information deemed pertinent
    3) Complete all follow up requested from the chain of command, to include but not limited to, completing incident reports with other agencies as directed

B. For all disclosure requests:
    1) Information should only be disclosed to individuals or entities identified in law, court order, or DCFS Policy
    2) Consult the Disclosure of Information Chart (below) for guidance on permissible disclosures by audience and information type:
        a) Disclosures beyond those outlined in the charts below require:
            i. Central Registry approval
            ii. Signed release of information, as appropriate
    3) Do not disclose information by telephone unless identity of the recipient is verified and this disclosure is expressly permitted
    4) If the request is for records or Division information management system contacts on a prior case or a case in a separate county:
        a) Send the request to the Division Director for review
    5) Ensure records are redacted and do not include:
        a) Name of the reporter
        b) Social Security numbers

c) Background checks
d) Resource home records:
    i. Exception: To the attorney ad litem and CASA, the home studies on the potential adoptive families selected by the Division to adopt the juvenile or as ordered by the court (A.C.A. § 9-28-407(h)(2)(I)

C. In addition to "A" above, when requested to provide the name of the individual who made the report to the Child Maltreatment Hotline:
    1) Do not disclose who made a report to the Child Maltreatment Hotline unless under order of a judge

D. In addition to the requirements in "A" above, for child maltreatment investigation records, which are governed by the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act (Ark. Code Ann. § 12-18-909,§ 12-18-910, etc.):
    1) Records are confidential and may not be disclosed except as specifically authorized by statute. Permissible disclosure includes:
        a) Alleged offender, their attorney, parents, and guardians (with limitations)
        b) Law enforcement and prosecuting attorneys
        c) The child's attorney ad litem
        d) Court, by order
        e) Entities engaged in providing services to the child and family when disclosure is necessary for treatment or care

E. Document in the Division information management system:
    1) For the request:
        a) The records requested:
            i. Date requested
            ii. Method of request
            iii. Name and title of person making the request
            iv. Specifics of the request (what records are being requested)
        b) The specific records disclosed
        c) The legal authority of the disclosure
        d) The date, method, and recipient of the disclosure

Case records released by local county office in current open cases:

(All requests for closed cases with no agency involvement must go to the Release of Information Unit)

Requestor	Information That May Be Disclosed	Notes
Parents/Guardian	Family Case Plan, court reports, contact details, and service referrals directly involving them on an open case	
Parent Counsel	Same as parents and caregivers; any documents filed with the court	Ensure they are the counsel of record
Attorney ad Litem	Full case information, Safety Assessments, school and medical information	AAL represents the child and has broad entitlement
Court	All case documents required for hearings, reports, or per judge's orders	Always comply with subpoenas and standing orders
CASA	Court reports, Family Case Plans, assessments related to the child	CASA access is limited to case-specific child they are assigned to
Resource Parents	Information necessary for care of the child (medical, educational, behavioral)	Do not disclose information that is not necessary for the care and supervision of the child, including reporter identity, information regarding other children or families, or protected case details not directly relevant to the resource parent's caregiving responsibilities.
Other Professionals	Information necessary for care of the child (medical, educational, behavioral needs)	Must have signed releases or statutory authority
Prosecutors and LLE	Forward requests to the DHS Privacy Office	PA.records.request@dhs.arkansas.gov
Anyone not listed in this table	Forward requests to the DHS Privacy Office	DHS.Doc.Request@dhs.arkansas.gov

Child Maltreatment Investigation Records Released by the Central Registry Unit

Requestor	Information That May be Disclosed	Notes
Alleged Offender	A completed true investigation CFS-232-T1 (true) An unsubstantiated report CFS-252-U	No identifying information about the reporting source or other children. Only records directly listed as the offender.
Parent/Guardian of alleged child victim	A completed true investigation with completed due process CFS-225-T1 (true, caregivers) CFS-244 (unsub, caregiver) CFS-244-U1 (unsub, victim)	Cannot release reporter identity. Limit disclosure to information necessary to protect the child. Only records where they are the parent of the child subjected to suspected maltreatment.
Offender Exempt (Garrett's Law or Religious	A completed true investigation with exemption CFS-232-T2	Cannot release reporter identity.
Attorney as Litem for the child	A pending investigation A completed true investigation that is pending due process An unsubstantiated report	ALL must be appointed to the victim or offender or the subject of the report
CASA	Pending investigations and true findings pending due process if CASA is appointed to the alleged victim or offender True reports with completed due process and unsubstantiated reports if CASA is appointed to the subject of the report	If request is made for a completed investigation, the request should be made to the Central Registry. If the investigation is pending, local office shall ensure that records are redacted for name of the reporter, social security numbers, and background checks.
Law Enforcement Prosecuting Attorney (Also see above)	Overturned decisions once due process is satisfied CFS-261-O	Within ten (10) business days of CR getting notice, but only if notice of true finding was provided previously

Licensing or Registering Authority	Overturned decisions once due process is satisfied CFS-274-O	Within ten (10) business days of CR receiving notice from Office of Appeals and Hearings
Facility Director	Overturned decisions once due process is satisfied CFS-263-O	Within ten (10) business days of CR receiving notice from Office of Appeals and Hearings
DHS Division Director	Overturned decisions once due process is satisfied CFS-270-O	Within ten (10) business days of CR receiving notice from Office of Appeals and Hearings

101.2 Conflict of Interest

To prevent conflicts of interest the Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Immediately provide notification to the direct chain of command when any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest is identified for the Social Service Supervisor:
   1) Notification must be made within two (2) business hours of identification of the conflict of interest
   2) Initial notification may be made in person, by text, or via phone call
   3) Written notification must be provided via email to the Supervisor in the direct chain of command within twenty-four (24) hours of identification of the conflict of interest

B. Immediately restrict access to any DR, investigation, or case impacted by a supervisory conflict of interest by:
   1) In the Division information management system:
      a) Assign the DR, investigation, or case as primary to the Supervisor in the direct chain of command
      b) Restrict the case:
         i. Go to the direct Supervisor's workload
         ii. Select (highlight) the DR, investigation, or case, as applicable
         iii. Go to the bottom of the workload screen and select "restrict"

C. When notified of a potential conflict of interest for a subordinate or other supervisory staff:
   1) Inquire of the individual who reported the conflict on interest and of the Division staff member who may be subject of the potential conflict (if not the same individual) to determine:
      a) The nature of the relationship between the Division staff member and reporter, as applicable
      b) The nature of the relationship between the Division staff member and the individuals with whom the potential conflict was identified
      c) If enough information exists for a reasonable person to feel there is an actual, implied, or perceived conflict of interest
   2) Immediately make a report to Internal Affairs and the DHS Ethics Office as appropriate if:
      a) It is determined a conflict of interest existed

b) It is determined that any violation of DHS Policy1006: Ethical Standards for DHS Employees, specifically Section III: Prohibited Activities occurred

3) If a conflict of interest exists, when determining which Specialist will receive the primary assignment to a DR, investigation, or case:
   a) Do not assign any DR, investigation, or case to a Division staff member with a conflict of interest with the case
   b) When a conflict is identified prior to any interaction between staff members and clients, and no interaction occurs between the staff and clients with the conflict, then no additional reporting of the conflict is necessary

Internal Procedure 102: Response to Secondary Trauma of Staff

09/2025

Secondary Trauma is the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the first-hand trauma experiences of another. For child welfare staff the essential act of listening to trauma stories may take an emotional toll that compromises professional functioning and diminishes quality of life.

Common symptoms of secondary trauma include:

- Absenteeism
- Anger
- Chronic fatigue
- Detachment
- Emotional exhaustion
- Fearfulness
- Intrusive thoughts
- Poor concentration
- Physical illness
- Sadness
- Second guessing

Social Service Supervisors play an important role in recognizing signs of secondary trauma and providing support for their staff. The Social Service Supervisor's role includes:

- Recognizing and identifying when secondary trauma may be impacting job performance of a staff member
- Having an open discussion with Specialists about how they feel about the job, difficulties with which they may be struggling, and how they are coping with their stress
- Providing support and encouraging staff to take advantage of available options such as Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or therapy services through a local provider using their insurance
- Asking the Specialist what types of support the Supervisor can provide to them and their co-workers to mitigate the stress
- Immediately notifying the Area Manager if a major crisis has occurred locally that impacts multiple staff and following up with affected staff within twenty-four (24) hours to provide support and ensure emotional needs are met

Secondary trauma can occur when an event happens in the field that is difficult for staff to manage. Some examples (this is not an exhaustive list) may be:

- Death of a child experiencing foster care (staff that are most connected to child and have been working with child will be most affected)
- Death of infant or child involved in open investigation or in-home services case
- Multiple deaths in short period of time – could be combination of work and personal related deaths
- Staff observe or intervene in a violent attack
- Court experiences including personal experience or observed stressful experiences
- Death of co-worker

When a traumatic event affects multiple staff the County Manager will report the incident to the Area Manager who will report to the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee:

- The Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee will consult with the Assistant Director of Mental Health and Treatment Services
- The Assistant Director of Mental Health and Treatment Services will reach out to and coordinate with local mental health providers to provide crisis intervention services for the affected staff. The purpose of crisis intervention is to assist staff in coping with trauma that results from a crisis and identify staff who need follow-up support
- Staff who require additional support following the crisis intervention should be referred to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) EAP or other therapy services paid by other insurance, depending on their preference

Internal Procedure 103: Inventory and Assets

08/2025

DCFS staff are assigned assets for use and are responsible for the care and whereabouts of assigned assets until the assets are returned to their direct Supervisor. This includes but is not limited to cellular phones, phone charging cords, charging blocks, cellular phone cases, cell phone belt clips, laptop charging cords, laptop carrying cases, office keys, P-cards, keys for state vehicles, projectors, cameras, desktop computers, and monitors.

DCFS staff will:

A. Initial DHS-1164: Property Issuance and Return Checklist beside the appropriate asset each time an asset is issued or returned:
    1) Sign the signature line once all assets have been issued after employment begins
B. Return broken assets to the direct Supervisor, including the date of return and initial return of the asset:
    1) Record and initial issuance of replacement assets
C. Ensure record keeping if a change occurs:
    1) If changing spaces within a county office:
        a) Move all assigned assets to the new office
        b) Indicate a change in physical location for the assets on DHS-1164, as necessary:
            i. Initial all necessary changes
    2) If changing county offices or areas:

a) Move assets to the new area office as practical and approved by the Area Asset Coordinator:
    i. Cell phone
    ii. Special purchase equipment (standing desk, headset, etc.)
b) Receive new assets as necessary:
    i. Desk
    ii. Chair
    iii. Computer
    iv. Filing cabinet
    v. Building key
c) Indicate and initial changes on DHS-1164, as applicable

3) If changing Divisions:
    a) Return all assets listed on DHS-1164
    b) Sign DHS-1164 indicating return of all assets
    c) Obtain a copy of DHS-1164 signed by the direct Supervisor indicating all assets have been returned to the direct Supervisor

D. Report lost or stolen assets:
    1) Notify direct Supervisor immediately of an asset is lost or stolen
    2) Complete an IRIS report for lost or stolen assets
    3) Indicate and initial change on DHS-1164
    4) Provide a police report for stolen assets to direct Supervisor
    5) Complete DHS-1036: Missing Asset Investigation Report, including any police reports for stolen items, and route to the Area Asset Coordinator
E. Return all assigned assets listed on DHS-1164: Property Issuance and Return Checklist to the direct Supervisor upon termination of employment with DCFS:
    1) Request a copy of DHS-1164: Property Issuance and Return Checklist with direct Supervisor's signature indicating all assets were returned
    2) Leave payout cannot be processed until all assigned assets have been returned to the direct Supervisor, including accessories for assets such as charging cords, HDMI cables, and phone or tablet cases

It is the responsibility of each Social Service Supervisor to complete a yearly inventory of all assets assigned to their employees and county office by physically seeing each asset each year. Supervisors are also responsible for maintaining a record of the whereabouts and assignment of assets throughout the fiscal year:

A. Provide notification of any change in asst assignment, location, or functionality to the Area Asset Coordinator within two (2) business days by providing the Area Asset Coordinator with a copy of all DHS-1164: Property Issuance and Return Checklists completed by the Supervisor.
B. InitialDHS-1164: Property Issuance and Return Checklist beside the appropriate asset each time an asset is issued by the Supervisor to staff, or returned by staff to the Supervisor:
    1) Sign the signature line once all assets have been issued after employment begins
    2) Sign the signature line once all assets have been returned by the staff member when their DCFS employment ends
    3) Transfer the DHS-1164: Property Issuance and Return Checklist:
        a) In the employee's personnel file to a newly assigned Supervisor if

the employee changes supervisors
    b) To the Area Asset Coordinator when DCFS employment ends for a staff member

C. Return broken and unused assets to the Area Asset Coordinator:
    1) Indicate the date of receipt from the staff member and initial on the staff member's DHS-1164:
        a) Record issuance of replacement assets and initial staff's DHS-1164
    2) Obtain a copy of DHS-1006: Inventory Transfer, signed by the Area Asset Coordinator, indicating serial number and description of each asset being provided to the Area Asset Coordinator:
        a) Maintain a signed copy in the supervisory records
        b) Provide a signed copy to the Area Asset Coordinator
        c) Email a signed copy to the Division Property Officer in central office

D. Ensure record keeping if a change occurs:
    1) Staff change spaces within the county office:
        a) Move all assigned assets to the new office
        b) Indicate a change in physical location for the assets on DHS-1164, as necessary
        c) Initial all necessary changes
    2) Staff change county offices or areas:
        a) Move assets to the new area office as practical and approved by the Area Asset Coordinator:
            i. Cell phone
            ii. Special purchase equipment (standing desk, headset)
        b) Assign new assets as necessary:
            i. Desk
            ii. Chair
            iii. Computer
            iv. Filing Cabinets
            v. Building keys
        c) Document and initial changes on DHS-1164
        d) Transfer DHS-1164 in employee's personnel file to the newly assigned Supervisor
    3) Staff change Divisions:
        a) Assets that have been transferred to another Division require a completed DHS-1006: Inventory Transfer, signed by transferring and receiving parties
            i. Provide a copy to Area Asset Coordinator
            ii. Provide a copy to the Division Property Officer
        b) Obtain all assets assigned to the staff on DHS-1164
        c) Obtain staff signature on DHS-1164 when all assets are returned and provide the staff with a copy of DHS-1164 signed by Supervisor indicating receipt of all assets
        d) Process staff leave payout, as applicable, only after all assets (including cords, cases, keys, etc.) have been received
        e) Transfer DHS-1164 in employee's personnel file to the newly assigned supervisor

E. Report lost or stolen assets:

1) Notify Area Asset Coordinator immediately if an asset is lost or stolen
2) File an IRIS report for lost or stolen assets
3) Indicate and initial the loss or theft of the asset on DHS-1164
4) Assets that have been lost, stolen, or destroyed require a completed DHS-1036: Missing Asset Investigation Report, including any police report for stolen items, and route to the Area Asset Coordinator

F. Ensure the return of all assigned assets listed on DHS-1164: Property Issuance and Return Checklist upon termination of employment with DCFS:
    1) Provide a copy of DHS-1164: Property Issuance and Return Checklist with Supervisor's signature indicating all assets were returned to the previous employee for their record

G. Complete a physical inventory of all assets once per year:
    1) Scan a copy of all DHS-1164 for each staff to the Area Asset Coordinator once per year on the first business day of March
    2) Physically locate and scan as appropriate each asset listed on the area master inventory and report asset certification as required by the Area Asset Coordinator

The Area Asset Coordinator will be responsible for the master inventory list for all counties in their area:

A. Create DHS-1164: Property Issuance and Return Checklist listing appropriate assets to be
issued to a new employee and provide the DHS-1164 to the employee's direct Supervisor prior to the first day of employment:
    1) Record assignment of the assets to the employee on the area master inventory

B. Update the Area Master Inventory upon notification from the Supervisor of:
    1) Broken assets
    2) Lost assets
    3) Stolen assets
    4) A change in the physical location of an asset
    5) A change in the assignment of an asset

C. Return broken and unused assets to the warehouse:
    1) Indicate the date of receipt from the Supervisor and initial on the member's DHS-1164:
        a) Record issuance of replacement assets and initial staff's DHS-1164
    2) Obtain a copy of DHS-1006: Inventory Transfer, signed by the warehouse, indicating serial number and description of each asset being provided to the warehouse:
        a) Maintain a signed copy in area asset management records
        b) Provide a signed copy to the warehouse representative
        c) Email a signed copy to the Division Property Officer in central office

D. Provide notification to the Division Property Officer of:
    1) Asset deactivation (asset has been returned for Marketing and Redistribution):
        a) Follow DHS Policy 2000: V. Asset Retirement or Deactivation
    2) Assets that have been lost, stolen, or destroyed. These require a completed DHS-1036: Missing Asset Investigation Report, including any policy report for stolen items

E. Create and modify asset records in AASIS using the following standards:

1) Asset Description: The entry in this field will show the description of the item, which includes a category plus the model name/number. The following examples show how an asset description must be entered in this field:
    a) Enter in upper and lower case as shown below with a colon (:) and a space following the category. The manufacturer name should not be included
2) Asset Main No. Text: ASSIS will default to the description in the Asset Description field if left blank. Overwrite this field or add further description if needed
3) Asset Description (2): This is a miscellaneous field that can be used as needed to further describe the asset, its location, individual assignment, or other pertinent information relating to the asset

F. Conduct an annual physical asset sighting and perform the necessary action within ASSIS to update and complete the Division asset listing:
    1) Complete and sign a Certification of Area Assets listing assets for the area and stating all assets are accounted for (can sign the area asset tracking spreadsheet used throughout the year to track assets):
        a) Route to the DCFS Chief Financial Officer no later than June 30 of each year
    2) When updating ASSIS during physical inventory, update the last inventory on date field with the date the asset was sighted
    3) Assets that have been created in error or are a duplicate of another asset require a letter describing the error and showing proof of duplication.

Internal Procedure 104: State Vehicle Safety Program for Employees

07/2026

All drivers operating state vehicles or private vehicles on State business shall participate in the Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program (ASVSP). The document is located on DHS Share under DHS Policy 1004. As stated in the ASVSP guidelines, State Agencies may impose additional or more stringent requirements than those included in the Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program.

Anytime a Division employee is involved in a vehicle accident while conducting DHS business, the employee must submit to post-accident drug and alcohol testing, regardless of fault. The employee must report to a designated testing site within four (4) hours of notification. Failure to do so will result in termination of employment. If the employee tampers with the sample or otherwise falsifies test results, including through the use of masking agents or chemicals, the employee will be terminated and permanently disqualified from re-employment. Failure to provide a requested sample will be treated the same as a positive drugs or alcohol test.

An employee who receives an initial positive drugs or alcohol result shall :

A. Receive a ten (10) days suspension without pay.
B. Enroll in the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), request substance abuse services, and fully participate in recommended services. Prior to returning to work, the employee must provide documentation from EAP verifying enrollment. Failure to complete this requirement will constitute a second offense.
C. Participate in mandatory random drug or alcohol screening for at least one (1) year.

The employee is responsible for the cost of the drug or alcohol testing. Failure to comply with this requirement will constitute a second offense.

D. Sign and comply with DHS-1958: Return to Work Agreement, agreeing to refrain from illegal drug use and alcohol use during work hours. Failure to comply will constitute a second offense.

A second offense, including a second positive drug or alcohol test, will result in immediate termination of employment.

Anytime an employee receives a traffic violation or has an accident that occurs on state business or on personal time, the employee must report to their Social Service Supervisor within twenty-four (24) hours of occurrence or by the next business day after a weekend or holiday. The ticket will be forwarded to DCFS Personnel Unit. Personnel will send the employee a form to complete. Personnel will run a Driver's License check to assess current points. New traffic violation points will be added to current points to determine a course of action. If the traffic violation results in the employee needing to take some type of action (for example: defensive driving) or requires discipline to be administered *and* the employee is disputing the ticket for the traffic violation, the Area Manager will work with personnel to determine next steps until the ticket is officially placed on the employee's record or dismissed.

If because of the driving record, the employee is unable to perform DCFS driving duties, the driving privileges may be revoked, or employment terminated.

Any action that involves child safety such as driving without proper safety restraints will automatically result in a review by the DCFS Director and can be considered as grounds for termination regardless of the driver's total number of driving violation points.

DCFS will not furnish a driver to transport employees while driving on state business.

<u>If an employee receives ten to thirteen (10-13) points on the Traffic Violation Report (TVR)</u>
Driving privileges for the employee will remain suspended pending completion of the required administrative action listed below:

A. A legible copy of the ticket issued for any violation will be submitted to DCFS Personnel Unit:
    1) The employee must participate in a defensive driving course at their own expense: The course must be completed within two (2) weeks
    2) May be taken online
    3) May not be completed during business hours, unless approved
    4) Upon completion, a copy of the signed certificate must be provided to DCFS Personnel Unit
B. The defensive driving certificate will be submitted to personnel and approved by the Division Director or designee before resuming driving on state business.
C. If in a state vehicle and not transporting:
    1) The Supervisor will issue a counseling statement stressing the importance of the State Vehicle Safety Program as it relates to the employee's driving privileges
    2) A copy of the counseling statement must be provided to DCFS Personnel Unit
D. If in personal vehicle and not transporting:

1) Discipline is not required; however, a fact finding may be opened, if necessary

If an employee receives fourteen to seventeen (14-17) points on the TVR

Driving privileges for the employee will remain suspended pending completion of the required administrative action listed below:

A. A legible copy of the ticket issued for any violation will be submitted to DCFS Personnel Unit.
B. Authorization to drive on state business shall be suspended for no less than five (5) business days.
C. The employee must participate in a defensive driving course at their own expense:
    1) The course must be completed within two (2) weeks
    2) May be taken online
    3) May not be completed during business hours, unless approved
    4) Upon completion, a copy of the signed certificate must be provided to DCFS Personnel Unit
D. The defensive driving certificate will be submitted to personnel and approved by the Division Director or designee before resuming driving on state business.
E. If in a state vehicle and not transporting:
    1) The Supervisor will consult with HR to start a fact finding with a recommendation resulting in a written warning stressing the importance of the State Vehicle Safety Program as it relates to the employee's driving privileges
F. If in personal vehicle and not transporting:
    1) Discipline is not required; however, a fact finding may be opened, if needed

If an employee receives eighteen to twenty-three (18-23) points on the TVR

Driving privileges for the employee will remain suspended pending completion of the required administrative action:

A. A legible copy of the ticket issued for any violation will be submitted to DCFS Personnel Unit.
B. Authorization to drive on state business shall be suspended for no less than ten (10) business days.
C. The employee must participate in a Defensive Driving course at their own expense:
    1) Must be completed within two (2) weeks
    2) May be taken online
    3) May not be completed during business hours, unless approved
    4) Upon completion, a copy of the signed certificate must be provided to DCFS Personnel Unit
D. The Defensive Driving certificate will be submitted to personnel and approved by the Division Director or designee before resuming driving on state business.
E. If in a state vehicle and not transporting:
    1) The Supervisor will consult with HR to start a fact finding with a recommendation resulting in a five (5) day suspension without pay
    2) The Supervisor must stress the importance of the State Vehicle Safety Program as it relates to the employee's driving privileges
    3) The five (5) days of suspension will not count towards the ten (10) days of

suspended driving privileges listed above

F. If in personal vehicle and not transporting:
    1) Discipline is not required; however, a fact finding may be opened, if needed

<u>If an employee receives over twenty-four (24) points on the TVR</u>

Driving privileges for the employee will remain suspended pending completion of the required administrative action:

A. A legible copy of the ticket issued for any violation will be submitted to DCFS Personnel Unit.
B. The Social Service Supervisor will consult with HR to start a fact finding with a potential recommendation of termination.
C. If termination is not recommended, DCFS must follow all guidelines outlined in the Arkansas State Vehicle Safety program (located on DHS Share):
    1) Authorization to drive on state business shall be suspended for no less than twenty
    (20) business days. Authorization shall be reinstated only after evaluation and approval by the State Insurance Commissioner
    2) The employee must participate in a Defensive Driving course at their own expense. The course must be completed within two (2) weeks and may be taken online:
        a) The course may not be completed during business hours, unless approved
        b) Upon completion, a copy of the signed certificate must be provided to DCFS Personnel Unit
    3) The Defensive Driving certificate will be submitted to personnel and approved by the Division Director or designee before resuming driving on state business

<u>DUI</u>

The Division will consider a blood alcohol level of .02 and above to be positive. Driving privileges for the employee will remain suspended pending completion of the required administrative action listed below:

A. A legible copy of the ticket issued for any violation will be submitted to DCFS Personnel Unit.
B. If driving is a requirement for performing job duties, a DWI or DUI whether or not this action occurs while in the performance of job duties, will automatically result in termination without prejudice regardless of the driver's total number of driving violation points.
C. The Social Service Supervisor will consult with HR to start a fact-finding with a recommendation resulting in termination.
D. If driving is not a requirement for performing job duties:
    1) The Supervisor will consult with HR to start a fact finding with a potential recommendation of termination
    2) If termination is not recommended, follow all guidelines outlined in the Arkansas State Vehicle Safety program (located on DHS Share):
        a) Authorization to drive on state business shall be suspended for

drivers who receive a TICKET for Driving While Intoxicated (DWI), Driving Under the Influence (DUI), or any type of Driving Without a License. Authorization may be reinstated only after evaluation and approval by the State Insurance Commissioner

b) The employee must participate in a Defensive Driving course at their own expense. The course must be completed within two (2) weeks and may be taken online; however, the course may not be completed during business hours, unless approved. Upon completion, a copy of the signed certificate must be provided to DCFS Personnel Unit
c) The Defensive Driving certificate will be submitted to personnel and approved by the Division Director or designee before resuming driving on state business

Expired Driver's License

Driving privileges for the employee will remain suspended pending completion of the required administrative action listed below:

A. Employee must obtain a valid driver's license within two (2) business days and cannot drive on state business until the license has been renewed.
B. All fees must be paid. Once proof has been provided, the license will need to be re-run to verify through DMV.

Suspended Driver's License

Driving privileges for the employee will remain suspended pending completion of the required administrative action listed below:

A. The Supervisor will consult with HR to start a fact finding. Discipline will be case by case depending on the reason for the suspended driver's license.
B. If termination is not recommended, DCFS must follow all guidelines outlined in the Arkansas State Vehicle Safety program. The document is located on DHS Share:
    1) Shall not be permitted to drive on State Business for the duration of the suspension or the revocation. Authorization will be reinstated only after evaluation and approval by the Division Director. Drivers with restricted permits may be authorized to drive on state business as allowed by the restricted permit and only with the Division Director approval
    2) The employee must provide proof of satisfied judgment and payment of reinstatement fee
    3) The license must be valid and any fees paid
    4) The employee must participate in a defensive driving course at their own expense. The course must be completed within two (2) weeks and may be taken online; however, the course may not be completed during business hours, unless approved. Upon completion, a copy of the signed certificate must be provided to DCFS Personnel Unit
    5) The Defensive Driving certificate will be submitted to personnel and approved by the Division Director or designee before resuming driving on state business
    6) Once proof has been provided, the license will need to be re-run to verify

through DMV

At Fault Accident While Transporting

State Agencies are responsible for reporting all claims and accidents immediately to: BXS Insurance
Monday through Friday 8:00am - 4:30pm Claims Reporting:
501-664-7705 or 1-800-358-7741
After-Hours and Holiday Claims Reporting:
501-664-9252

Driving privileges for the employee will remain suspended pending completion of the required administrative action listed below:

A. If the employee receives a ticket for any moving violation or at-fault accident with passengers (including DCFS client or employees) in a vehicle while performing state business, the Supervisor will consult with HR to start a fact finding with a recommendation resulting in a three (3) day suspension without pay. The Supervisor must stress the importance of the State Vehicle Safety Program as it relates to the employee's driving privileges.
B. The employee must participate in a Defensive Driving course at their own expense. The course must be completed within two (2) weeks and may be taken online; however, the course may not be completed during business hours, unless approved. Upon completion, a copy of the signed certificate must be provided to DCFS Personnel Unit.
C. The Defensive Driving certificate will be submitted to personnel and approved by the Division Director or designee before resuming driving on state business.
D. Per DHS Policy 1087, under Three (3) Levels of Drug Testing to be Used:
    1) Reasonable Cause or Suspicion Test: All employees are subject to reasonable cause drug and alcohol screening due to a reasonable cause or suspicious behavior. Any DHS employee involved in an accident while on DHS business that causes property damage, or an injury to the employee or others will be tested
    2) Under Reasonable Suspicion Drug or Alcohol Testing Process:
        a) Reasonable cause to suspect a violation of the rules may be established by any of the following:
            i. A workplace accident, property damage, or an accident involving a DHS vehicle
            ii. Ticket for Moving Violation While Transporting

Driving privileges for the employee will remain suspended pending completion of the required administrative action listed below:

A. If the employee receives a ticket for any moving violation or at-fault accident with passengers (including DCFS client or employees) in a vehicle while performing state business, the Supervisor will consult with HR to start a fact finding with a recommendation resulting in a three (3) day suspension without pay. The Supervisor must stress the importance of the State Vehicle Safety Program as it relates to the employee's driving privileges.
B. The employee must participate in a Defensive Driving course at their own expense. The

course must be completed within two (2) weeks and may be taken online; however, the course may not be completed during business hours, unless approved. Upon completion, a copy of the signed certificate must be provided to DCFS Personnel Unit.

C. The Defensive Driving certificate will be submitted to personnel and approved by the Division Director or designee before resuming driving on state business.

Internal Procedure 105: Vehicle and Passenger Safety

09/2025

DCFS staff (paid and volunteer) will operate motor vehicles (state-owned or privately owned used on state business) in a safe manner, observing all traffic laws and making allowances for road and weather conditions. They will also promptly report to their Supervisor any accident or traffic violation in which they are involved.

Seat belts will be used in accordance with Arkansas law at all times by drivers and passengers of state vehicles and private vehicles used for state business.

Children who are less than six (6) years old and who weigh less than sixty (60) pounds will be properly restrained in an approved child passenger safety seat. If a child is at least six (6) years old or at least sixty (60) pounds in weight, a standard lap/shoulder seat belt will provide sufficient restraint and safety.

Smoking is prohibited in all vehicles and enclosed areas owned, leased or operated by the State of Arkansas, its divisions and authorities. In accordance with A.C.A. 20-27-1903 smoking is prohibited in any motor vehicle in which a child who is under the age of fourteen (14) is a passenger. However, as second-hand smoke is detrimental to the health of all children, DCFS staff and volunteers may not smoke in a state vehicle or in a private vehicle when a child who is experiencing foster care or receiving other services from the Division is present.

Internal Procedure 106: Travel Related to Official Business

09/2025

In-state travel is an inherent part of many DCFS job duties. There are three (3) types of DCFS travel, each of which is paid through a different funding source when staff request travel reimbursement for driving a privately-owned vehicle due to a state car being unavailable:

- Regular Travel (transporting children and caregivers to family time, family team meetings, court, etc.)
- Medicaid Travel (transporting children to Medicaid-covered services such as PACE evaluations and well-child check-ups)
- Training Travel (mandated staff training or continuing education opportunities staff elect to attend with the appropriate Supervisory approval)

DCFS staff must drive state vehicles, as available, when performing job duties. Staff are required to carpool when traveling to the same destination, as appropriate. All state car requests must be submitted through the Department of Human Services (DHS) Travel Reservation and Integrated Payment System (TRIPS) fleet management tab.

When a state car is not available, DCFS staff members are eligible for reimbursement of mileage when operating private vehicles for state business and are required to submit reimbursement requests according to DCFS Internal Procedure Travel Related to Official Business and DHS Administrative Procedures Manual, Chapter 304. Mileage is automatically calculated based on the exact addresses entered into the TRIPS online application. If staff members carpool, only the staff member driving their personal vehicle is eligible to claim travel for carpool mileage. DCFS staff and volunteers utilizing privately-owned vehicles to travel on official state business are responsible for the maintenance, operational costs, accidents, insurance, fines, towing charge, etc. associated with use of the privately owned vehicle.

Travel reimbursement requests must be made in accordance with DHS Administrative Procedures Manual, Chapter 304: Travel Reimbursement. DCFS staff and volunteers in violation of DCFS Internal Procedure Vehicle and Passenger Safety are subject to disciplinary action, to include ineligibility for travel reimbursement, as appropriate. Violation of DCFS Internal Procedure Travel Related to Official Business may result in administrative review in accordance with DHS Policy 1084. Further instructions on completing travel can be obtained from the DHS TRIPS Training videos located here.

Travel reimbursement must be completed through the online TRIPS for the appropriate travel type: regular, Medicaid, or training. Paper travel reimbursement requests will not be accepted unless TRIPS is unavailable.

Documentation of travel must be completed as a contact in the Division information management system prior to the Social Service Supervisor approving travel reimbursement requests. Staff are not eligible for overtime to complete travel reimbursement requests. When approving travel reimbursement requests, Supervisors will review and compare contacts in the Division information management system for accuracy.

See DHS Administrative Procedures Manual, Chapter 304 for requirements regarding the starting point from which mileage reimbursement must be claimed as well as requirements regarding claiming:

- Daily mileage in excess of 500 miles
- Travel completed outside of normal business hours (holidays or weekends)

Incidental costs (as defined in the DHS Administrative Procedures Manual, Chapter 304) claimed must be supported with receipts submitted to the travel Supervisor or designee by uploading them in the associated TRIPS travel reimbursement request. Receipts for meals purchased out-of-pocket (not by P-card) for wards of the state must have the client's identification number written at the top of the receipt.

Travel reimbursement requests must be submitted to the appropriate travel Supervisor or designee within thirty (30) calendar days of the initial travel date. Employees who do not submit travel reimbursement requests within thirty (30) calendar days of the initial travel date may be subject to disciplinary action. In addition, travel reimbursement requests submitted more than thirty (30) days after the initial travel date will be assigned to the appropriate Area Manager for approval.

Pre-approval for out-of-state travel must be requested through the DHS TRIPS online application. The employee provides justification for the travel and uploads support documents such as a letter of invitation or conference agenda. The pre-approval in TRIPS must be part of the traveler's request for travel reimbursement. In-state travel necessitating overnight stays require prior authorization from the traveler's Area Manager.

The Division may cover lodging expenses for staff if the staff member must stay in the official business destination for more than one (1) day and if that official business destination is fifty (50) miles or more from the employee's home and official workstation. Employees may secure lodging the night before the official business assignment if the associated official business destination is one hundred (100) miles or more from the employee's home and official workstation.

For lodging expenses that are coupled with out-of-pocket expenses for which the traveler is requesting reimbursement, the hotel receipt or folio containing the full legal name of the traveler according to the AASIS vendor record for said traveler must be submitted via TRIPS. Hotel folios for all overnight stays (out-of-state and within Arkansas) must be signed by the traveler (using the traveler's full legal name as it appears on the hotel folio, which must match the traveler's full legal name as reflected in AASIS).

For lodging paid through the Division Business Travel Account (BTA) credit card, the folio must:

- Reflect a "0" balance
- Be returned to DCFS Central Office with the traveler's original, legible signature that matches the name printed at the top of the folio (which in turn must match the full legal name of the traveler according to the AASIS vendor record for said traveler)

For lodging that will be paid through an established purchase order with the Division (hotel stays associated with New Social Service Specialist Training), the folio may reflect a balance greater than "0" and does not have to be submitted to DCFS Central Office. However, the signed folio must still be uploaded with other documentation in TRIPS.

Travelers who pay for out-of-pocket payments expenses during the same travel episode in which lodging is direct billed to the Division or paid via established purchase orders and wish to request reimbursement for the out-of-pocket expenses related to travel must submit the reimbursement requests via TRIPS.

Travel Supervisors are responsible for verifying state car availability, authenticating the documented allowable expenses as official state business, being fiscally responsible by requiring carpooling, ensuring the expenses claimed comply with established guidelines, and ensuring that all travel reimbursements and required supporting documentation are completed accurately prior to approving travel reimbursement requests. Travel Supervisors must be aware that they electronically validate the Certification of Unavailability of a State Vehicle for all online travel reimbursement requests when they approve an online travel reimbursement request through TRIPS.

Refer to DHS Administrative Procedures Manual, Chapter 304: Travel Reimbursement for further information on allowable travel related reimbursements and requirements.

106.1 Reimbursement for Regular Travel Expenses Details

09/2025

DCFS staff will:

A. Request a state vehicle through the TRIPS fleet management online application or arrange to carpool with another employee who has already secured a state vehicle via TRIPS:
    1) If it was determined that the use of the state vehicle or carpooling was not practical, a private vehicle may be used but TRIPS must have a record that a request for a state vehicle was made, or a documented and approved emergency exception must be noted in the TRIPS travel reimbursement request
B. Complete all contacts in the Division information management system prior to submitting a request for travel reimbursement for date of travel.
C. Enter the applicable case ID number for the travel episode in the "Notes" section of the online travel reimbursement request.
D. Complete and submit the online travel reimbursement request to travel Supervisor or designee within thirty (30) calendar days of travel occurring:
    1) Any travel reimbursement request submitted thirty (30) days after the initial travel date in the travel episode must be submitted or reassigned to the appropriate Area Manager for review and approval
E. Submit all travel reimbursement requests in accordance with DHS Administrative Procedures Manual, Chapter 304: Travel Reimbursement including, but not limited to:
    1) Mileage, if applicable
    2) Meals, if applicable:
        a) If meals for wards of the state were purchased out-of-pocket by the employee rather than via a P-card, then the meal expense for the ward of the state will be captured as an "incidental" expense in TRIPS and require the original receipt with client's identification number written at the top of the receipt
        b) Meals for staff are according to actual reimbursement and are not to exceed the allowable per diem. These reimbursement requests are captured under meal expenses in TRIPS and itemized receipts must be uploaded along with the meal reimbursement request
        c) If a receipt is not itemized, the traveler will not be reimbursed for that meal expense
        d) Traveler may only be reimbursed for their meals
        e) Itemized receipts that include alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed
        f) If an employee chooses to purchase alcohol after business hours as part of their meal, the alcoholic beverage must be placed on a separate ticket so that any itemized receipt submitted for reimbursement does not include alcoholic beverages
    3) Hotel stays, if applicable (via Division Business Travel Account credit card, purchase order, or reimbursed)
    4) Incidentals, if applicable

The Travel Supervisor or designee will:

A. Verify no state vehicle or carpooling option was available for use or that use of the state

vehicle or carpooling was not practical prior to authorizing use of a personal vehicle for state business.

B. Verify each travel date claimed is legitimate state business by ensuring contacts in the Division information management system have been entered for each travel episode and approving each contact prior to approving travel reimbursement requests.
C. Verify that the applicable case ID number has been entered in the "Notes" section for each travel episode and that necessary documentation has been attached to the travel reimbursement request per DHS Administrative Manual, Chapter 304: Travel Reimbursement.
D. Approve travel within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt.
E. Verify via review of receipts that:
    1) Actual expenses are claimed
    2) Receipts are itemized
    3) Receipts are only for meals for the employee (verify number of guests on the receipt)
    4) No alcoholic beverages are listed on the itemized receipt submitted for reimbursement purposes
    5) Expenses do not exceed allowable per diem

106.2 Reimbursement for Medicaid Travel Expenses Details

09/2025

DCFS staff will:

A. Request a state vehicle through the TRIPS fleet management online application or arrange to carpool with another employee who has already secured a state vehicle via TRIPS:
    1) If it was determined that the use of the state vehicle or carpooling was not practical, a private vehicle may be used but TRIPS must have a record that a request for a state vehicle was made or a documented and approved emergency exception
B. Select the radio button for Medicaid travel on the travel reimbursement request and enter child's Medicaid number in the appropriate field.
C. Complete all contacts in the Division information management system prior to submitting a request for travel reimbursement for date of travel.
D. Complete and submit travel reimbursement requests to travel Supervisor or designee within thirty (30) calendar days of travel occurring:
    1) Any travel reimbursement request submitted thirty (30) days after the initial travel date in the travel episode must be submitted or reassigned to the appropriate Area Manager for review and approval
E. Submit all travel reimbursement requests in accordance with DHS Administrative Procedures Manual, Chapter 304: Travel Reimbursement.
F. Ensure each travel date and episode claimed is loaded miles (Medicaid eligible client is in the vehicle) and upload completed CFS-352: Episodic (or other documentation from the medical provider's office that provides verification that the appointment took place) to the travel reimbursement request for each medical, dental, optometry, or mental health appointment.

The Travel Supervisor or designee will:

A. Verify Medicaid travel is the appropriate travel type selection.
B. Verify each travel date claimed is legitimate state business by ensuring contacts have been entered for each travel episode and approving each contact in the Division information management system prior to approving the travel reimbursement request.
C. Verify necessary documentation has been attached to the travel reimbursement request per DHS Administrative Manual, Chapter 304: Travel Reimbursement.
D. Verify each travel date and episode claimed is loaded miles (Medicaid eligible client is in the vehicle) and completed CFS-352: Episodic for each medical, dental, optometry, or mental health appointment is uploaded for each travel episode.
E. Approve travel within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt.

106.3 Reimbursement for Training Travel Expenses Details

09/2025

DCFS staff will:

A. Request a state vehicle through the TRIPS fleet management online application or arrange to carpool with another employee who has already secured a state vehicle via TRIPS:
    1) If it was determined that the use of the state vehicle or carpooling was not practical, a private vehicle may be used but TRIPS must have a record that a request for a state vehicle was made or a documented and approved emergency exception
B. Select "General Business" as the reason for travel episode, unless directed otherwise by DCFS Training Program Coordinator or designee.
C. Complete and submit the online travel reimbursement request to travel Supervisor or designee within thirty (30) calendar days of travel occurring:
    1) Any travel reimbursement request submitted thirty (30) days after the initial travel date in the travel episode must be submitted or reassigned to the appropriate Area Manager for review and approval
D. Submit all travel reimbursement requests in accordance with DHS Administrative Procedures Manual, Chapter 304: Travel Reimbursement including, but not limited to:
    1) Mileage, if applicable
    2) Expenses for meals, if applicable:
        a) Meals for staff are according to actual reimbursement and are not to exceed the allowable per diem. These reimbursement requests are captured under meal expenses in TRIPS and itemized receipts must be uploaded along with the meal reimbursement request
        b) If a receipt is not itemized, the traveler will not be reimbursed for that meal expense
        c) Traveler may only be reimbursed for their meals
        d) Itemized receipts that include alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed. If an employee chooses to purchase alcohol after business hours as part of their meal, the alcoholic beverage must be placed on a separate ticket so that any itemized receipt submitted for

reimbursement does not include alcoholic beverages

3) Hotel stays, if applicable (via Division Business Travel Account credit card, purchase order, or reimbursed)
4) Incidentals, if applicable
5) Upload training or conference certificate for each day of training or conference

The training travel Supervisor or designee will:

A. Verify each travel date claimed is legitimate state business by ensuring prior authorization of training or conference occurred and daily agenda is attached.
B. Verify necessary documentation has been attached to the online travel reimbursement request per DHS Administrative Manual, Chapter 304: Travel Reimbursement.
C. Approve travel within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt.
D. Verify via review of receipts that:
    1) Actual expenses are claimed
    2) Receipts are itemized
    3) Receipts are only for meals for the employee (verify number of guests on the receipt)
    4) No alcoholic beverages are listed on the itemized receipt submitted for reimbursement purposes
    5) Expenses do not exceed allowable per diem

Internal Procedure 107: Division Volunteers

07/2025

Volunteers play a supportive role in furthering the Division's mission to serve children and families. DCFS utilizes volunteers in a variety of capacities based on program needs, appropriate supervision, and completion of required approvals. All volunteer involvement must align with the Division standards for safety, confidentiality, and appropriate access to children and information.

General Requirements for Volunteers:

A. Volunteers may serve in a variety of roles based on Division needs, their skills, and completion of required approvals.
B. Volunteers are responsible for the proper care, treatment, safety, and supervision of the children they serve.
C. Volunteers who have direct contact with children or families must complete all required background checks prior to approval. Background checks must be maintained in accordance with Division requirements and renewed every two (2) years.
D. Volunteers must maintain confidentiality of all client information and may not access the Division information management system unless specifically authorized.
E. Volunteers must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age with the exception of stipend and non-stipend interns who must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
F. Each county office will designate a staff member to support and coordinate volunteer activities.

G. Volunteer applications will be processed by the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator in Central Office who also serves as the point of contact for community organizations seeking to recruit their own volunteers.

107.1 Volunteer Application Process and Approval

07/2025

The DCFS county office volunteer designee will:

A. Provide volunteer applicants with a Volunteer Packet and instructions on completion:
    1) The forms in the Volunteer Packet that the volunteer applicant will receive are:
        a) CFS-050-A: DCFS Volunteer Opportunities
        b) CFS-050-C: DCFS Volunteer Application
        c) CFS 050-D: DCFS Volunteer Confidentiality Statement
        d) CFS-050-E: Volunteer Agreement
        e) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
        f) Criminal Background Check Instructions for completing and submitting the checks on-line
        g) Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint card (if not using harvester) for any volunteer applicant who has not lived continuously in Arkansas for the past five (5) years
        h) CFS-593: Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Additional Requirements for DCFS drivers
        i) VSP-01: Authorization to Operate State Vehicles and Private Vehicles on State Business
        j) VSP-02: Authorization to Obtain Traffic Violation Record
        k) Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Manual
    2) The forms in the Indirect Service Volunteer Packet that the volunteer applicant will receive are:
        a) CFS-050-C: Volunteer Application
        b) CFS-050-D: Confidentiality Statement
        c) CFS-050-E: Volunteer Agreement
B. Ask the applicant to submit a W-9 if the volunteer plans to transport clients and wishes to be reimbursed for mileage.
C. Answer volunteer applicant questions, as applicable.
D. Collect the Volunteer Packet forms listed above from the applicant once all forms have been completed including the volunteer applicant's W-9, if applicable.
E. Review Volunteer Packet forms submitted by volunteer applicant.
F. Call the references listed on the application to gather more information.
G. Complete Section A of CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist, as appropriate, to ensure that all documents required of volunteer applicant have been completed.
H. Forward the completed Volunteer Packet, including CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist, to the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator for processing and approval.

I. Provide the transaction number (upon receipt from the DCFS Volunteer Coordinator) to volunteer applicants who:
    1) Have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five (5) years
    2) Choose to use the harvester to conduct the Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check

J. If approval of the volunteer applicant is received from the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator via completed CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist:
    1) Inform the volunteer as soon as possible
    2) Assign the volunteer an appropriate point of contact in the county office prior to commencement of any volunteer activities
    3) Provide the Division orientation to the volunteer prior to commencement of any volunteer activities, but preferably within two (2) weeks of approval notification to volunteer
    4) Establish a mutually agreed upon schedule for volunteer
    5) Complete Section C of CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist and file in the volunteer's record
    6) Handle complaints as needed
    7) Notify the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator if volunteer quits or is asked to leave

K. If approval of a volunteer applicant is not received from the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator:
    1) Inform the volunteer applicant as soon as possible
    2) Place a copy of the completed CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist in volunteer applicant's record

The DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator will:

A. Review forms in the Volunteer Packet using CFS-050-B DCFS volunteer as a guide to ensure all required volunteer applicant forms have been completed and submitted.

B. Route all background check request forms to the appropriate units:
    1) Submit the completed CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check to the Central Registry Unit for each volunteer applicant:
        a) Route each completed CFS-316 to the Central Registry Unit
        b) Document results in the Division information management system
        c) The CFS-316 must be notarized
        d) The Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check must be repeated every two
        (2) years
    2) Submit the completed CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check for each volunteer applicant:
        a) Route each completed paper copy of CFS-342 to the Division Criminal Records Unit
        b) Document eligible or ineligible results in the Division information management system
        c) The CFS-342 must be notarized

d) The Division of Arkansas State Police Criminal Record Check shall be repeated every two (2) years

3) Submit the signed CFS-593, VSP-1, and VSP-2 to the Vehicle Safety Program Coordinator along with a clear copy of the driver's license for each volunteer applicant:
    a) Copy the front and back of the driver's license
    b) Document results in the Division information management system
4) For all volunteer applicants who have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five (5) years, submit the appropriate paperwork for a Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check to the Division Criminal Records Unit to process this check and collaborate with the Criminal Background Check Unit accordingly.
5) There are two (2) options for processing the Federal Bureau of Investigation check:
    a) Electronic fingerprint scanning:
        i. Volunteer applicants do not need to fill out a FBI fingerprint card, as a request for electronic scanning will be done via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check
        ii. The DCFS Criminal Records Unit will use CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check to get a transaction number from the Division of Arkansas State Police
        iii. The Criminal Records Unit will forward the transaction number to the DCFS statewide Volunteer Coordinator
        iv. The DCFS statewide Volunteer Coordinator will forward the transaction number to the DCFS county volunteer designee or community organization liaison to then forward to the volunteer applicant:
            1. Applicants must go to an approved electronic harvester to have their fingerprints scanned
    b) Ink fingerprint:
        i. Volunteer applicants will complete CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check and the Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint card with good, un-smudged prints
        ii. Take care not to staple through the fingerprints on the Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint card. If the prints are not readable, the volunteer will have to resubmit
        iii. Volunteer applicants may not use an electronic harvester if they have already submitted ink fingerprints, and the attempt was unsuccessful
        iv. If a legible set of fingerprints cannot be obtained after a minimum of two (2) attempts, a name-based FBI check will be conducted instead

D. Enter all other required volunteer data into the volunteer management spreadsheet or the Division information management system, as applicable.

E. Maintain other records and correspondence with county office staff and community organization liaisons regarding volunteers.
F. Notify the county office volunteer designee or community liaison, as appropriate, with approval or denial status of the volunteer applicant via completed CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist for record keeping purposes.
G. Maintain a copy of the CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist for record keeping purposes.
H. Assist county office staff and community organization liaisons with orientations for new volunteers upon request.
I. Assist county office staff and community organization liaisons with trouble-shooting volunteer-related issues.
J. Document in the volunteer management spreadsheet or in the Division information management system when volunteer resigns or is asked to leave.

107.2 Volunteer Background Check Renewals

04/2018

The DCFS statewide Volunteer Coordinator will:

A. E-mail the following to the volunteer's home address (as identified in the Division information management system) at least thirty (30) business days prior to the volunteer's two (2)-year anniversary of their last processing of background checks:
    1) A cover letter:
        a) Thanking the volunteer for their volunteer service
        b) Explaining that their background checks will expire soon and must be renewed
        c) Requesting the volunteer complete all enclosed background check forms and return them to the DCFS statewide Volunteer Coordinator within two
        (2) weeks of receipt
        d) Informing volunteer that if all enclosed background check forms are not completed and returned to the statewide Volunteer Coordinator within the required timeframe, they will no longer be eligible to serve as a Division volunteer
    2) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
    3) CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check
B. After providing the information listed above, notify volunteer's County Office Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison, as applicable, that volunteer's background checks must be renewed as soon as possible and that required forms have been provided to the volunteer.
C. Submit returned background check forms to applicable background check units for processing.
D. Notify County Office Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison, as appropriate, with approval or denial status of volunteer based on the background check reevaluation.
E. If volunteer does not return all completed background check forms within requested timeframes outlined in the cover letter:

1) Contact volunteer by phone prior to their two (2)-year anniversary of the last processing of background checks to request that they complete and return required background check forms within one (1) week
2) Document the conversation (or the attempt to contact) with volunteer in the volunteer management spreadsheet or the Division information management system
3) If the volunteer still does not complete and return background checks within the required timeframe:
    a) Document in the volunteer management spreadsheet or Division information management system, as applicable, that volunteer is no longer eligible to serve as a volunteer
    b) Send a letter to the former volunteer informing them that they are no longer eligible to serve as a volunteer
    c) Notify the volunteer's County Office Volunteer Designee via email that the volunteer may no longer serve as a volunteer in the county office

The County Office Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison will:

A. Work with the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator and volunteer as needed to ensure that a volunteer's background checks are renewed when required.
B. If a volunteer does not renew required background checks in the required timeframe, ensure they no longer provide services to or at the local county office or through the community organization that helps to support the Division.

107.3 Kinship Volunteer Application and Process for Approval

04/2018

The Specialist will:

A. Ensure that kin who have already been approved as a provisional placement resource for a child are not referred for processing as a kinship volunteer (individuals already approved as provisional placement resources may also transport the kinship child).
B. If the kinship transporter appears viable:
    1) Interview age-appropriate children to assess how they feel about routine contact with that person
    2) Make individualized decisions on a case-by-case basis in the best interest of the child
C. Speak with the applicant and with the biological family to determine the status of their relationship.
D. Provide the volunteer kinship applicant with a Volunteer Packet and instructions on completion. The forms in the Volunteer Packet that the kinship volunteer applicant will receive are:
    1) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
    2) CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check
    3) Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint card (if not using harvester) for any volunteer applicant who has not lived continuously in Arkansas for the past five (5) years
    4) CFS-593: Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Additional Requirements for

Division of Children and Family Services Drivers:

a) VSP-01: Authorization to Operate State Vehicles and Private Vehicles on State Business
b) VSP-02: Authorization to Obtain Traffic Violation Record

5) W-9 form
6) Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Manual

E. Answer the kinship volunteer applicant questions
F. Collect and review the Volunteer Packet forms listed above from the applicant once all forms have been completed.
G. Route all background check request forms to the appropriate units:
    1) Submit the completed CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check to the Central Registry Unit for each volunteer applicant:
        a) Route each completed CFS-316 to the Central Registry Unit
        b) Document results in the Division information management system relative volunteer tab of "collateral" screen
        c) CFS-316 must be notarized
        d) The Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check shall be repeated every two (2) years
    2) Submit the completed CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check for each volunteer applicant:
        a) Route each completed CFS-342 to the Criminal Records Unit
        b) Document eligible or ineligible results in the Division information management system relative volunteer tab of "collateral" screen
        c) The CFS-342 must be notarized
        d) The Division of Arkansas State Police Criminal Record Check shall be repeated every two (2) years
    3) Submit the signed CFS-593, VSP-1, and VSP-2 to the Vehicle Safety Program Coordinator along with a clear copy of the driver's license for each volunteer applicant:
        a) Copy front and back of driver's license
        b) Document results in the Division information management system under the relative volunteer tab of "collateral" screen
    4) Work with the Division Criminal Records Unit to process a FBI fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check for all volunteer applicants who have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five (5) years. There are two (2) options for processing the Federal Bureau of Investigation check:
        a) Electronic fingerprint scanning:
            i. Volunteer applicants do not need to fill out Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint card, as a request for electronic scanning will be done via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check

ii. The DCFS County Manager or designee will route the completed CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check to the Division Criminal Records Unit
iii. The Criminal Records Unit will use the CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check to get a transaction number from the Division of Arkansas State Police
iv. The Criminal Records Unit will forward the transaction number to the County Manager or designee requesting the checks
v. The County Manager or designee will forward the transaction number to the kinship volunteer applicant
vi. Applicants must go to an approved electronic harvester to have fingerprints scanned
vii. The Supervisor or designee will document eligible or ineligible results in the Division information management system

b) Ink fingerprint:
i. Volunteer applicants will complete CFS-342: State Police Criminal Records Check and the FBI fingerprint card with good, un-smudged prints
ii. Take care not to staple through fingerprints on the FBI fingerprint card
iii. If the prints are not readable, the volunteer will have to resubmit. Volunteer applicants may not use an electronic harvester if they have already submitted ink fingerprints and the attempt was unsuccessful
iv. If a legible set of fingerprints cannot be obtained after a minimum of two (2) attempts, a name-based FBI check will be conducted instead
v. The County Manager or designee will work with the Criminal Records Unit to process the check

5) Enter all other required volunteer data in the Division information management system relative and fictive kin tab of "collateral" screens

H. Provide the transaction number (upon receipt from central office) to kinship volunteer applicants who:
1) Have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five (5) years
2) Choose to use the harvester to conduct the FBI fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check

I. If approval of a kinship volunteer is received via conference with the Supervisor (based on background check results and consultation about Specialist's assessment of the kinship volunteer's appropriateness for contact with the family):
1) Inform kinship volunteer as soon as possible
2) Assign the kinship volunteer an appropriate point of contact in the county office prior to commencement of any volunteer activities

3) Provide W-9 to Area Financial Coordinator and work with Area Financial Coordinator to obtain the kinship volunteer applicant's assigned AASIS vendor number
4) Provide the Division orientation to the kinship volunteer prior to commencement of any volunteer activities, but preferably within two (2) weeks of approval notification to the kinship volunteer:
    a) DCFS travel forms
    b) AASIS vendor number for completion of travel reimbursement requests
    c) Case-specific information pertaining to the location, frequency, duration, and supervision requirements for caregiver-child or sibling family time as appropriate
5) Establish mutually agreed upon schedule for the kinship volunteer
6) Handle complaints as needed
7) Notify the Foster Care Unit and Area Manager if the kinship volunteer quits, concerns or issues arise, or the volunteer is asked to leave

J. If approval of the kinship volunteer is not received from the Supervisor, inform the volunteer as soon as possible.
K. Document in the Division information management system when volunteer resigns or is asked to leave, as applicable.

Internal Procedure 108: On-Call Standby Duty

09/2025

On-call standby duty is assigned during nights, weekends, holidays, or other situations without regular staff coverage. On-call standby duty may apply to Social Service Assistants and Social Service Specialists (hereinafter referred to as frontline field staff) as well as Social Service Supervisors. DCFS county leadership will provide employees who are required to be on-call standby with a schedule of the time and date that the employee will be designated as on-call standby duty.

The following requirements apply to employees when designated as on-call standby:

A. Employees designated as on-call standby staff will be paid 20% of their base, hourly wage during their designated on-call standby time under 1202 Wage Type.
B. When an employee is designated as on-call standby during a state holiday, the employee will receive holiday pay as well as the 1202 Wage Type for the hours in which they are designated as on-call standby.
C. Unless otherwise advised, the employee is not required while assigned to on-call standby duty to remain at their official workstation. However, the employee must remain available by phone or text while offsite and respond to any call or message within fifteen (15) minutes. The on-call standby employee must also have access to state email and the Division information management system as needed:
    1) An employee who fails to respond within fifteen (15) minutes when contacted by phone or text may have their on-call standby pay rescinded and is subject to disciplinary action in accordance with DHS Employee Discipline Policy 1084:

a) DCFS will take into consideration any failing equipment or other malfunctions when determining disciplinary action

D. Staff designated as on-call standby must also return to a designated work site upon notification of the need within the specified response time:
   1) A designated work site is defined as any location in which an employee is conducting emergent official business in which face-to-face interaction with clients or stakeholders takes place for fifteen (15) minutes or more

E. The employee must remain free of the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. In addition, the employee should not take any over the counter or prescription drug that adversely affects their ability to safely and effectively perform their job duties. If an employee has a medical condition and has concerns about complying with this requirement, the employee should consult with the DCFS Human Resources Liaison.

F. An employee cannot be designated as the on-call standby employee for more than forty-eight (48) hours within any seven (7) day period (this is any rolling, seven (7) day period, not only a standard Sunday through Saturday work week):
   1) If extenuating circumstances require an employee to be designated as on-call standby for more than forty-eight (48) hours within a seven (7) day period, the Area Manager will contact the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee

G. If the employee has a conflict and is unable to be on-call during their assigned time, it is the employee's obligation to pre-arrange for a replacement to cover the employee's on-call standby shift and then request approval from the applicable Supervisor or designee of the change:
   1) An employee who fails to find a replacement will not be paid for on-call standby duty and is subject to disciplinary action in accordance with DHS Employee Discipline Policy 1084

H. DCFS will identify positions and employees who are required or may be required as a condition of employment to be assigned on-call standby duty to work outside of the employee's regular shift:
   1) Once DCFS identifies these positions, employees will be notified in writing that the essential functions of their job require the employee to maintain an on-call standby status on either an intermittent or regularly scheduled basis
   2) The employee's position description will also be updated accordingly

I. For travel-related reimbursement please see DCFS Internal Procedure Travel Related to Official Business.

108.1 On-Call Standby Requirements Specific to Frontline Field Staff

When a frontline field staff is designated as on-call standby, that employee will be the staff person who carries the on-call phone or has the on-call line forwarded to their state-issued phone. Any amount of time spent responding to phone calls, voicemails, texts, emails, or working from a state-issued laptop or through Remote Desktop Control will be paid under the 1202 wage type. Frontline field staff will enter assigned 1202 wage type hours into EASE.

Frontline field staff designated as on-call standby who must leave their residence or other location to respond to emergent official business in which face-to-face interaction with clients or

stakeholders takes place for fifteen (15) minutes or more will key ATTN. Such response will be for emergency purposes (as opposed, for example, to catch up on home contacts) and require pre-approval from the on-call Social Service Supervisor.

For each incident in which an employee designated as on-call standby is required to leave their residence or other location to respond to emergent official business, ATTN will be entered for a minimum of two (2) hours even if the actual time spent on emergent official business is less than two (2) hours. Travel time to and from the location in which face-to-face interaction with clients and stakeholders takes place will also be keyed as ATTN. The frontline field staff will inform their Social Service Supervisor when the ATTN duties end during the on-call standby shift.

ATTN will only be keyed when an employee is on emergent official business and in fifteen (15) minute increments. 1202 wage type and ATTN time will not be paid for the same time period.

The first forty (40) hours of ATTN time entered within the work week will be paid at the employee's regular rate of pay. Any ATTN hours entered by an employee for more than forty (40) hours in one week (Sunday-Saturday) is considered overtime which will be paid at a rate of time and a half (1 ½). All ATTN hours are documented by the employee in EASE and approved by the employee's Social Service Supervisor in EASE. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring time entries are correct before approving. Please see DCFS Internal Procedure Overtime and Flex Time for more information.

For frontline field staff serving an on-call standby shift during a state holiday, the employee will key both HLDY for the hours of 08:00-16:00 as well as the 1202 wage type for the hours in which they are designated as on-call standby during the holiday. If at any point the employee must respond to official business in which face-to-face interaction with clients or stakeholders takes place for fifteen (15) minutes or more during the state holiday, the employee will key ATTN for that response time rather than HLDY. Any time keyed as ATTN on a state holiday (between the hours of 8:00-16:00) will result in the employee banking those same number of hours as HLDY for use at another time.

108.2 On-Call Standby Requirements Specific to Social Service Supervisors

A Social Service Supervisor assigned to on-call standby is expected to be available to and support the Specialist who is the designated on-call standby staff. A Supervisor will only receive the pay differential under the 1202 wage type for the hours in which they are designated as on-call standby.

However, if a Supervisor designated as on-call standby must leave their residence or other location to respond to emergent official business in which face-to-face interaction with clients or stakeholders takes place for fifteen (15) minutes or more, the Supervisor must first obtain Area Manager or designee approval. If approved, the Supervisor will be paid under the 1303 wage type for those hours during which face-to-face interaction with clients or stakeholders takes place and associated travel time. The Supervisor will also notify the Area

Manager or designee when the 1303 duties end during the on-call standby shift.

For each incident in which a Social Service Supervisor designated as on-call standby is approved to leave their residence or other location to respond to emergent official business as described above, 1303 wage type will be entered for a minimum of two (2) hours even if the actual time spent on official business is less than two (2) hours.

A Social Service Supervisor serving an on-call standby shift who leaves their residence or other location to respond to emergent official business as described above will be paid straight time for the onsite work.

If a Social Service Supervisor is assigned to serve as on-call standby during a state holiday, that employe will key into EASE both HLDY for the hours of 08:00-16:00 as well as the 1202 wage type for the hours in which they are designated as on-call standby during the holiday. If a Supervisor serving an on-call standby shift during a state holiday must respond to official business in which face-to-face interaction with clients or stakeholders takes place for fifteen (15) minutes or more during the state holiday, the Supervisor will key 1303 wage type for that response time.
Social Service Supervisors will claim both 1202 and 1303 wage types by keying time in EASE. The direct Supervisor will review and approve the timesheet in EASE.

Scenarios

A. Social Service Specialist Sarah is the on-call standby employee for Tuesday evening. Sarah stays at the office from 4:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m. to work a placement crisis that started earlier in the day. While at her home, Sarah responds to a phone call at 9:00 p.m. from a resource parent not related to the previous incident and is on the phone with that resource parent until 9:30 p.m. At 1:00 a.m. Sarah receives a call from local law enforcement that a youth who has been missing has been picked up. The youth ran from the local QRTP provider who has agreed to allow the youth to come back. Sarah picks the youth up from the police station, returns the youth to the QRTP placement provider, and returns home at 3:00 a.m. Time keyed for Specialist Sarah for Tuesday afternoon through Wednesday morning will be:

16:30-19:00	ATTN
19:00-1:00	1202 wage type
1:00-3:00	ATTN
3:00-8:00	1202 wage type

B. Social Service Specialist Susie is the designated standby on-call employee on Thursday evening. She receives a call at 6:00 p.m. requiring her to come pick up a sibling group of six (6). Susie calls the on-call standby Social Service Supervisor Beth to ask permission to call one other non-exempt employee – Social Service Specialist John --to assist with transportation and locating placement. Supervisor Beth approves and comes to the office to assist with making sure children are fed and to help locate placement. Susie leaves her home at 6:15 p.m. and calls John from her car on the way to meet the children. John receives the request at 6:15 p.m. and

leaves for the office at 6:30 p.m. Supervisor Beth leaves her home for the office at 6:15 p.m. New placement is secured for all siblings by midnight. Specialist Susie arrives home at 12:30 a.m. John arrives home at 12:45 a.m. Beth arrives home at 1:00 a.m. Time keyed for Thursday evening into Friday morning for these employees will be:

Specialist Susie
16:30-18:15 1202 wage type
18:15-00:30 ATTN
00:30-8:00 1202 wage type

Specialist John
18:15-00:45 ATTN
No 1202 Wage Type keyed because he was not the designated on-call standby employee for the county on this evening.

Supervisor Beth
16:30-18:15 1202 wage type
18:15-1:00 1303 wage type
1:00-8:00 1202 wage type

C. Social Service Specialist Ben is assigned a Priority I investigation at 3:00 p.m. on Monday. Ben discusses the information in the narrative with his Social Service Supervisor, Callie. Neither Ben nor Supervisor Callie are designated on-call standby that evening, but they decide it will be best for Ben to initiate the investigation that afternoon given the information from the hotline. Ben removes the children at 5:00 p.m. on Monday and brings them back to the office. Callie supports him in calling identified kin. An aunt is identified as a possible provisional placement. At 7:15 p.m. they contact Social Service Specialist Olivia who is the Resource Specialist assigned as on-call standby for the area for that evening.

Olivia leaves her home at 7:30 p.m. to travel to the aunt's home to conduct a visual inspection. Olivia arrives back at her home at 10:30 p.m. Ben places the children with the aunt at 10:45 p.m. and arrives at his home at 11:30 p.m. Time keyed for these employees for Monday afternoon will be:

Specialist (Investigator) Ben
13:00 (return from lunch)-23:30 ATTN

Supervisor Callie
No 1202 or 1303 wage type keyed since Callie was not the designated on-call standby Supervisor for this evening.

Specialist (Resource) Olivia
16:30-19:30 1202 wage type
19:30-22:30 ATTN
22:30-8:00 1202 wage type

D. Social Service Specialist Annie is scheduled as the standby on-call employee from Saturday at 08:00-Sunday at 12:00. At 14:00 on Friday, Annie learns that her father has passed away. Annie asks her friend Specialist Jane to cover for her, and Jane agrees. When Annie reaches out to her Social Service Supervisor Tom to let him know about the change, Tom knows that Jane has already served as standby on-call -for forty-eight (48) hours within this same seven (7) day period (Jane had already served as standby on-call on the preceding Sunday starting at 08:00 through 08:00 Tuesday morning since that preceding Monday was the President's Day holiday), so does not allow Jane to cover but does arrange for Specialist Lee to cover instead.

E. Social Service Specialist Lucy served as the on-call standby employee on Veteran's Day. Her on-call standby schedule for Veteran's Day was Wednesday from 8:00 a.m.-Thursday 8:00 a.m. Lucy was called out by law enforcement on Veteran's Day to assist with a child welfare issue. She left her home on Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. to travel to the scene and returned home at 6:00 p.m. She received no other calls on Veteran's Day.

On Thursday afternoon at the office, Lucy receives a call about a placement disruption of two siblings on her caseload at 3:00 p.m. Lucy picks up the children and works to find another placement until leaving them at a new resource home at 8:00 p.m. and returning to her home by 8:30 p.m. Lucy is not the standby on-call employee for Thursday evening. Lucy asks permission from her Social Service Supervisor to flex out the additional four hours from Thursday evening on Friday morning, which is approved.

Finally, Lucy served as the on-call standby employee on Friday from 4:30 p.m.-Saturday at 8:00 a.m. On Friday night, Lucy receives one call at 7:30 p.m. Friday evening from a placement provider, which lasted 1.5 hours. Time keyed for Wednesday-Friday for Specialist Lucy will be:

Wednesday 8:00-15:00	HLDY + 1202 wage type
Wednesday 15:00-18:00	ATTN
Wednesday 18:00-Thursday 8:00	1202 wage type
Thursday 8:00-12:00 and 12:30-20:30	ATTN
Friday 12:30-16:30	ATTN
Friday 16:30-Saturday 8:00	1202 wage type

Lucy will bank 1.0 hours of HLDY time since the last 1.0 hours of the Veteran's Day holiday she had to enter ATTN for being on the scene of an incident at the request of LLE (rather than HLDY).

F. An employee drives from West Memphis to Little Rock to place a child. After placing the child, the employee conducts personal business in Little Rock. ATTN will not be keyed while on personal business. ATTN will resume when the employees is back enroute to West Memphis.

Internal Procedure 109: Overtime and Flex Time

03/2026

The hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. constitute official business hours for the State of Arkansas. However, the nature of child welfare often requires staff to be available as needed after official business hours, including weekends and holidays. Frontline staff may claim overtime, if necessary, if it is preauthorized by their Social Service Supervisor via the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Authorization to Work Overtime form. Supervisors will carefully consider any overtime requests and make decisions that will balance meeting the needs of children and families involved with the child welfare system and ensuring staff safety and well-being.

DCFS Social Service Supervisors who are assigned their own caseloads as the primary Social Service Specialist in the Division information management system may also claim up to a maximum of ten (10) overtime hours per pay period as allowed by OPM. Supervisors include staff with the OPM job titles of:

- Social Service Coordinator
- Social Service County Manager
- Social Service Supervisor

For a DCFS Social Service Supervisor to claim overtime, one of the following criteria must be met:

A. The Supervisor is covering a caseload for a Specialist who is out on leave for one (1) week or more and that caseload cannot be absorbed by another Specialist due to office vacancies.
B. The Supervisor is assigned as primary for at least five (5) or more cases, referrals, or providers.
C. For Supervisors who carry providers on their caseload that are not resource home providers (for example, TYS Sponsors, hospitals, etc.) those providers that are not resource homes will not count toward the minimum of five (5) assigned cases, referrals, or providers that qualify a Supervisor to claim overtime.

Other exceptional circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis but must receive approval from the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee before a Social Service Supervisor claims overtime for any activities outside of those described in items A and B above.

For a Social Service Supervisor to work overtime, their Supervisor must also preauthorize the request via the Office of Personnel Management's Authorization to Work Overtime form. The OPM Authorization to Work Overtime form must provide clear justification as to why the overtime is needed and detail specific casework-related duties that will be completed while working overtime. Once again, Supervisors will carefully consider any overtime requests and make decisions that will balance meeting the needs of children and families involved with the child

welfare system and ensuring staff safety and well-being. The respective Area Manager will have final approval of the OPM Authorization to Work Overtime form for Supervisors claiming overtime (to include both unit Supervisors and County Managers).

The continued need for Social Service Supervisors carrying caseloads to claim overtime will be evaluated by both DCFS and OPM prior to the beginning of each new state fiscal year (SFY). Staff will be notified by no later than July 1 of each year as to whether the Supervisors who are assigned caseloads may claim overtime for the upcoming SFY.

Both frontline staff and Social Service Supervisors are encouraged to flex time when appropriate but must ensure sufficient office coverage and no outstanding responsibilities of the staff member who is requesting flex time. Accumulated time must be flexed within the week that it is incurred (Monday – Friday) as to maintain a forty (40) hour work week.

Social Service Supervisors are also expected to actively support staff who are on-call or otherwise working outside of official business hours by routinely checking the state-issued phone for texts, calls, and emails, being able to access Supervisor inbox and other Division information management system functions and assisting with finding placement.

109.1 Request for Overtime Documentation and Review

09/2025

Staff who are eligible for overtime will:

A. Complete the Authorization to Work Overtime form and receive approval of said form prior to working overtime:
    1) The form will provide summary of the work that requires overtime to include applicable case numbers for verification purposes
B. Retain a copy of submitted and approved Authorization to Work Overtime forms for their own records.
C. Ensure all time is keyed in military time when entered into EASE and use the ATTN wage type code for overtime hours:
    1) This requirement to key time into EASE also applies to Supervisors who are carrying caseloads and approved to work overtime

The Social Service Supervisor of the staff approved to work overtime will:

A. Compare the Authorization to Work Overtime form to what is keyed by staff in EASE:
    1) It is imperative that Supervisors closely review dates and times that are keyed in EASE

Internal Procedure 110: Employee Internships

09/2025

One (1) of the guiding principles of the Arkansas “At One Table” Practice model is the pursuit of ongoing learning and professional development. To that end, DCFS supports employees pursuing degrees and certifications to further their professional development. However, the Division must also balance the pursuit of learning with successfully meeting client needs and

ensuring comparable workloads for employees.

As such, DCFS staff may complete internships to satisfy degree requirements provided that internship hours completed during the standard work week are limited to no more than eight (8) hours per week. This may be distributed over several days or taken as one (1) full day out of the office for the internship. The internship schedule must be approved by the employee's Supervisor and Area Manager before beginning the internship. The schedule must be accompanied by a clear plan outlining how the Social Service Supervisor will address:

- How and when each employee will make up the hours dedicated to their internship to ensure that the employee still completes forty (40) hours of DCFS work each week
- How court will be handled if the employee must testify during what would normally be their internship hours
- How on-call will be handled when the employee is completing internship hours after-hours or on the weekends (if the employee is typically a staff member who serves on the on-call rotation, the employee will have to work with their internship placement as it relates to on-call; employees are not exempt from on-call due to an internship)

Staff approved for a flexible schedule to complete an internship are not eligible for remote work. Any internship must be completed with an agency or organization outside of DCFS (no internships where a Social Service Specialist functionally serves as an Investigator but then completes their internship hours within the Resource Unit are permitted).

When requesting approval to flex work hours to complete an internship, staff must take into consideration that the limit of eight (8) hours per week will not change even though the employee's degree program requirements for internship hours may increase.

Internal Procedure 111: Professionalism in the Courtroom

07/2025

Given DCFS's duty to provide services to protect children, legal intervention becomes necessary at times causing DCFS to report information on a routine basis to courts. Courts are formal by nature and require specific etiquette and a high degree of professionalism. While it is understood that each judge establishes regulations for their individual courtroom, DCFS staff are expected to abide by the judges' expectations as well as the following DCFS protocols in every courtroom:

A. No gum, food, or drink in the courtroom.
B. No sunglasses or hats are to be worn in the courtroom.
C. Cellular phones are silenced while in the courtroom and should not be used unless court-related business is being conducted.
D. Enter the courtroom and remain seated quietly during hearings. Talking or shuffling papers in the gallery and movement in the courtroom are distractions.
E. Staff should complete and distribute court reports for hearings to parties fourteen

(14) days prior to every hearing. An addendum can be completed, as necessary, prior to hearings.

F. Blaming other staff during hearings is not appropriate. All DCFS staff work for the same employer. Issues should be addressed as Division issues rather than attributed to individual offices or employees.
G. Staff will adhere to the dress code set out below when entering the court room (even if only to transport a client).

The following are prohibited when appearing in court:

A. Bare shoulders, midriff, or thighs.
B. Visible cleavage or buttocks.
C. Polo or T-shirts.
D. Jeans, capris, or leggings.
E. Open toed shoes, open toed sandals, or flip flops of any kind.
F. Sneakers or tennis shoes unless required for medical reasons.
G. Large or excessive jewelry, facial jewelry.

Internal Procedure 112: Hiring Pool Process

07/2026

Division vacancies will be filled from a pool of allotted positions. To ensure consistency, accountability, and appropriate oversight of staffing resources, all requests to fill vacant positions must follow the process outlined in this procedure.

No requisition may be created, submitted, advertised, or otherwise initiated until all required approvals have been obtained and a position number has been assigned from the hiring pool.

Hiring officials are expected to make diligent efforts to fill approved vacancies within forty-five (45) days of approval. Failure to demonstrate reasonable recruitment efforts may result in reassignment of the position at the discretion of the Division Director.

Hiring officials shall follow the DCFS Hiring Guide and document all hiring activities on the area Hiring Tracking Log.

112.1 Upon Resignation or Termination

The Supervisor will:

A. Follow all requirements outlined in the DCFS Employee Departure Guide and all applicable DHS personnel procedures:
    1) Complete DHS-1161: Request for Personnel Action and route to the Division Human Resources (HR) Liaison:
        a) Immediately upon termination of employment
        b) Within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of a formal notice of resignation or retirement
    2) Complete DHS-0359: Systems Access Request to ensure all account and

security access is discontinued by the employee's final day of employment
3) Transfer the employee's workload to other staff in the Division information management system

B. Complete DHS-1177: Resignation/Termination Checklist for an employee who has resigned or is terminated, to include all steps on the checklist such as:
1) Following DHS Policy 1049: Resignation/Termination
2) DHS-1164: DHS Property Issuance and Return Checklist:
a) Follow Internal Procedure 103: Inventory and Assets
3) DHS-1161: Request for Personnel Action
4) Place a copy of the Complete DHS-1177 in the employee's personnel file

C. Submit resignation letter and DHS-1161 to the Human Resources Manager within forty-eight (48) hours of a resignation or termination occurring.

The Program Administrator in the Field Operations Unit will:

A. Log the resignation in the area's Resignation Tracking Spreadsheet.
B. Update the vacancy on the area's Organizational Chart:
1) Share updated Organizational Chart with:
a) Relevant stakeholders
b) Central Office

The Human Resources Manager will:

A. Process DHS-1161 and Resignation letter.
B. Add the position to the Pool Position Tracking Spreadsheet.
C. Move the position underneath DCFS Director in Central Office.

112.2 Filling Positions from the Hiring Pool

The Hiring Official will:

A. Ensure no recruitment activity occurs until written approval to fill a position and an assigned position number has been received.
B. Complete and submit a CFS-031 Position Justification Form to the Area Manager to include information to support the request, including:
1) Position title and location
2) Operational need for filling the vacancy
3) Impact to service delivery of the vacancy remains unfilled
4) Any barriers that may impact timely recruitment

C. Within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of an approved position number:
1) Submit all required recruitment documents in accordance with the DCFS Hiring Guide

D. Make diligent efforts to fill the vacancy within forty-five (45) days.

When a position is filled the Area Manager or designee will:

A. Update the vacancy on the area's Organizational Chart:
1) Update the position number as well as the demographic information for the new employee

The Area Manager will:

A. Review the CFS-031: Position Justification form within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt:
    1) Approve or deny the request
    2) Return denied requests to the hiring official with an explanation for the reasons for denial
    3) Forward approved requests to the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee

The Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee will:

A. Review approved CFS-031: Position Justification requests within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt:
    1) Approve or deny the request:
        a) Return denied requests to the Area Manager and hiring official with an explanation
        of the reasons for denial
        b) Forward approved requests to the Division Director

The Division Director or designee will:

A. Review approved requests within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt:
    1) Approve or deny the request:
        a) Return denied requests to the Assistant Director of Field Operations
        b) Forward approved requests to the Assistant Director of Field Operations and Human Resources Manager

The Human Resources Manager will:

A. Ensure no position is posted, advertised, or otherwise processed until written approval and an assigned position number has been received from the Division Director.
B. Review the recruitment requests for completeness and process then in accordance with DHS and DCFS hiring procedures.

Internal Procedure 114: Contract Management

09/2026

The Arkansas Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) utilizes contracts with outside agencies, organizations, vendors, consultants, and providers to deliver services that support the Division's mission and improve outcomes for children and families.

Effective contract management ensures contracted services are delivered in accordance with the executed agreement, public funds are expended appropriately, contractor performance is monitored, concerns are identified and addressed timely, and the Division receives the services and outcomes for which it contracted.

Each contract shall have an assigned Program Manager responsible for day-to-day programmatic oversight of the contract throughout its lifecycle, including implementation, monitoring, financial oversight, performance management, renewal planning, and contract closeout.

Nothing within this procedure authorizes modification to contractual terms, obligates Division funds, authorizes work outside the scope of the executed agreement, or approves procurement actions outside of their delegated authority.

114.1 Roles and Responsibilities

A. Executive staff shall:
   1) Approve significant changes in contract scope, budget or deliverables when such changes require Executive Staff approval.
   2) Approve contract renewals, non-renewals, and amendments requiring Executive Staff approval.
   3) Review significant, repeated, or unresolved contractor performance concerns.
   4) Provide direction regarding significant corrective actions, suspension of services, non-renewal, or contract termination, when appropriate.
   5) Review other contract matters elevated for executive decision-making based on programmatic, fiscal, operational, legal, or safety concerns.

B. The DCFS Finance Unit shall:
   1) Process contractor payments following appropriate programmatic approval.
   2) Maintain required fiscal and payment records.
   3) Coordinate payment and invoice issues with Program Managers.
   4) Monitor overall contract expenditures and available contract balances.
   5) Notify Program Mangers of identified fiscal concerns, discrepancies, or expenditure trends requiring attention.
   6) Assist Program Managers with fiscal information needed for contract monitoring, renewal, amendment, and closeout activities.

C. The Program Manager serves as DCFS's primary programmatic representative for the assigned contract and is responsible for ensuring contracted services are delivered in accordance with the executed agreement. They shall:
   1) Monitor contractor compliance with the scope of work, deliverables, performance measures, timelines, reporting requirements, and other programmatic requirements contained in the contract.
   2) Maintain regular communication with the contractor regarding service delivery, performance, implementation, and identified concerns.
   3) Review invoices and supporting documentation to verify that billed services or deliverables were provided and are consistent with the executed contract before authorizing the invoice for payment processing.
   4) Monitor expenditures in coordination with the Finance Unit and identify unusual spending patterns, anticipated funding issues, or other fiscal concerns.
   5) Maintain documentation sufficient to demonstrate ongoing contract monitoring and management.
   6) Identify and address contractor performance concerns timely.
   7) Coordinate with the Finance Unit, Office of Procurement, Executive Staff, Office of Chief Counsel, or other appropriate parties when issues require additional review or action.
   8) Initiate and make recommendations regarding amendments, renewals, non-renewals, corrective actions, or contract closeout, as appropriate.
   9) Ensure required contract monitoring and closeout activities are completed within established timeframes.

114.2 Contract Assignment and Transition

A Program Manager shall be identified for each DCFS contract. When responsibility for a contract is reassigned, the outgoing Program Manager, when available, shall provide the incoming Program Manager with relevant contract records and information regarding current performance, outstanding deliverables, fiscal status, identified concerns, pending amendments, upcoming deadlines, and other matters necessary to ensure continuity of oversight.

This person shall become familiar with the complete executed contract and applicable amendments before authorizing payments or directing programmatic implementation.

114.3 Contract Implementation

Following execution of a new contract or significant amendment, the Program Manager shall:

A. Ensure expectations for implementation are understood by the contractor.
B. As applicable, implementation activities should include review of:
    1) Scope of work and required services
    2) Contract deliverables and performance expectations
    3) Reporting requirements and due dates
    4) Invoice requirements and payment procedures
    5) Required documentation
    6) Communication and points of contact
    7) Monitoring expectations
    8) Applicable implementation deadlines
    9) Procedures for reporting and resolving concerns
C. Address questions or discrepancies identified during implementation and consult the Office of Procurement, Finance Unit, Office of Chief Counsel, or Executive Staff when the matter exceeds the Program Manager's authority.

114.4 Ongoing Contract Monitoring

Contract monitoring shall occur throughout the term of the contract and shall be proportionate to the nature, value, complexity, and risk associated with the contracted services. Monitoring may include, as applicable:

A. Review of required reports and deliverables.
B. Review of performance measures and outcome data.
C. Comparison of actual service delivery to contractual requirements.
D. Review of invoices and supporting documentation.
E. Monitoring expenditures and remaining contract balances.
F. Monthly meetings or other communication with the contractor.
G. Review of complaints, incidents, service concerns, or other information relevant to contractor performance.
H. Site visits or direct observation of contracted services, when appropriate.
I. Follow-up regarding previously identified deficiencies or corrective actions.
J. Maintain documentation of monitoring activities sufficient to demonstrate DCFS oversight of the contract.
K. Monitoring documentation shall identify significant concerns, actions taken, communications with the contractor, required follow-up, and resolution, when applicable.

114.5 Invoice Review and Payment

Prior to approving an invoice for payment processing, the Program Manager shall verify that:

A. The invoiced services or deliverables are authorized by the executed contract.
B. Services or deliverables billed were provided during the applicable billing period.
C. Rates and amounts are consistent with the contract.
D. Required supporting documentation has been provided.
E. Identified discrepancies have been resolved or appropriately documented.

Approval of an invoice by the Program Manager represents programmatic verification that the invoiced services or deliverables were received and are consistent with the contract. It does not authorize a change in contract terms, rates, scope, or total contract value.

The Finance Unit shall process payment following required programmatic and fiscal review.

Invoices containing discrepancies shall be returned or otherwise held for resolution, as appropriate.

114.6 Contractor Performance Concerns and Corrective Action

Program Managers should address performance concerns at the lowest appropriate level while ensuring concerns are documented and escalated when warranted.

When a performance concern is identified, the Program Manager shall:
A. Determine the nature and extent of the concern.
B. Review the applicable contractual requirement.
C. Communicate the concern and expected resolution to the contractor.
D. Establish an appropriate timeframe for correction when necessary.
E. Document the concern, communication, and required follow-up.
F. Monitor the contractor's response and determine whether the concern has been resolved.

Routine concerns that are corrected timely may be managed by the Program Manager through normal contract oversight.

Concerns shall be elevated to appropriate Division leadership and, when applicable, the Finance Unit, Office of Procurement, or Office of Chief Counsel when the concern:
A. Is significant or repeated.
B. Remains unresolved after reasonable efforts to obtain compliance.
C. May affect the health or safety of a child or family.
D. Creates a significant risk of interruption or reduction of required services.
E. Involves potential misuse or inappropriate expenditure of public funds.
F. May constitute a material failure to comply with the contract.
G. May require withholding payment, formal corrective action, amendment, non-renewal, suspension, or termination.
H. Otherwise presents significant programmatic, fiscal, operational, or legal risk to the Division.

When formal corrective action is necessary, the Program Manager shall coordinate with appropriate Division leadership and other required parties to establish the corrective action, responsible party, required actions, completion dates, and method for verifying completion.

Significant unresolved concerns and the status of corrective actions shall be communicated to Executive Staff until resolved.

114.7 Contract Changes and Amendments

Program Managers may communicate with contractors regarding implementation and administration of existing contractual requirements. Program Managers shall not verbally or informally authorize changes to the scope of work, deliverables, rates, contract amount, contract term, or other material contractual requirements.

When a contractual change is needed, the Program Manager shall document the business and programmatic need for the proposed change and obtain approval from the Division Director before proceeding. Upon Director approval, the Program Manager shall coordinate with the Office of Procurement and other appropriate parties to initiate the contractual change. Procurement will determine whether additional approvals or reviews are required, including review or approval by the appropriate legislative committee, when applicable. Contractual changes may include, but are not limited to, changes to contract terms, funding, scope of work, deliverables, or other provisions requiring formal modification.

All required approvals shall be obtained and the amendment or other contractual action fully executed before the contractor implements the change, unless otherwise authorized in accordance with applicable procurement requirements.

114.8 Contract Renewal and Non-Renewal

Program Managers shall evaluate the continued need for contracted services sufficiently in advance of the contract expiration date to allow required review and procurement activities to occur.

Renewal recommendations should consider, as applicable:

A. Continued programmatic need.
B. Contractor performance.
C. Achievement of required deliverables and outcomes.
D. Identified performance concerns and corrective actions.
E. Expenditure history and anticipated funding.
F. Continued appropriateness of the scope of work and performance measures.
G. Changes in law, policy, practice, or Division priorities.
H. Availability of alternative service-delivery options.

A recommendation to renew a contract does not constitute authorization to continue services beyond the existing contract term. Required approvals and procurement actions must be completed before services continue under a renewed contract.

114.9 Contract Closeout

At the conclusion of a contract, the Program Manager shall coordinate with the Finance Unit, Office of Procurement, and other appropriate parties to ensure required closeout activities are completed.

Closeout activities shall include, as applicable:

A. Verification that required services and deliverables have been completed.
B. Resolution of outstanding performance concerns.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

DCFS provides a variety of concrete, financial supports to the children and families it serves to help keep children safe, keep families together when possible, facilitate reunification of families where children are experiencing out-of-home placement, or to facilitate other permanent placements when safe reunification is not possible.

Internal Procedure 201: Family Support Fund

07/2025

201.1 Cash Assistance for Families in In-Home Cases

07/2025

The Social Services Specialist will:

A. Complete the CFS-496: Assessment for Income Assistance to determine the basic unmet needs and appropriateness of using the fund to address the need.
B. Route the CFS-496: Assessment for Income Assistance to their Supervisor or designee for review and approval.

The Social Service Supervisor or designee will:

A. Review and approve or deny requests.
B. Ensure completion of process to develop the purchase order.
C. Monitor activities to ensure payment to service providers and management of funds.
D. Obtain receipts for services rendered and maintain them in the client's hard file.

201.2 Permanency Case Incidentals

07/2025

The Social Services Specialist will:

A. Assess and determine the needs of the child experiencing foster care and the appropriateness of using the fund to meet the assessed need.
B. Gather documentation of need for the expense from the placement provider.
C. Request the use of the fund from their Supervisor or designee.
D. Complete any additional paperwork required by the method of payment chosen by the Supervisor.
E. Provide a receipt to the Supervisor or designee within two (2) business days following the dating of the check:
    1) If the amount of the check exceeds the amount of the receipt, the balance must be returned to the Supervisor or designee immediately

The Social Service Supervisor or designee will:

A. Monitor the allocation to ensure funds are sufficient to meet client needs.
B. Approve or deny the request.

C. For approved requests, the Supervisor will access the Family Support Fund in one (1) of the following ways:
    1) Trust Accounts, if available and ample for purchase:
        a) Fill out the CFS-334: Foster Care Authorization for Billing for amount of purchase and submit to the Financial Support Unit
    2) Purchase Order using the DHS-1914: Department of Human Services Requisition or P-card requisition:
        a) Follow guidelines in the Purchase Order Manual

Internal Procedure 202: State Purchasing Card Program

08/2025

Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA), Office of State Procurement (OSP), and the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) each have policies governing the State Purchasing Card (P-card) program. The P-card is used by the Department of Human Services (DHS), including the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), to facilitate the purchase of goods and services necessary to conduct official business.

The P-card is a US Bank Visa issued for allowable DHS and DCFS business expenses only. P-cards are issued to specific DCFS employees who have completed the required P-card training and agreed to the program's terms and conditions. DHS retains liability for payment of P-card transactions, but the P-card holder is responsible for ensuring purchases comply with all applicable policies and procedures.

Questions related to P-card use should be directed to the DCFS Financial Support Unit (FSU), including designated staff from the Area Manager or the Area Financial Coordinator. DCFS FSU staff serve as liaisons to DFA State Purchasing, DHS Purchasing, or Accounts Payable when addressing issues related to purchases, payments, or card usage. Each DCFS Area Financial Coordinator is assigned a specific FSU staff member to support purchase and payment processes.

P-card accounts have a monthly limit of $5,000 and single purchase limit (SPL) of $2,000.00 per transaction.

Failure to submit proper documentation in a timely manner may result in suspension of P-card privileges and could impact the employee's ability to perform their assigned duties.

DCFS employees seeking authorization to use a P-card must complete all required DFA and DCFS training. Authorization forms can be found on CHRIS Net Forms.

The DCFS P-card user will:

A. To obtain a P-card, submit completed documents to DCFS.P.Card.Applications@arkansas.gov:
    1) State of Arkansas Purchasing Card Application Form
    2) State of Arkansas Purchasing Card Agreement Form

3) DCFS Purchasing Card approval form

B. Upon suspension or termination of employment, turn the P-card in to the direct Supervisor.

The direct Social Service Supervisor of any DCFS employee who resigns or is subject to suspension or termination will:

A. Notify the DCFS Financial Support Unit staff by email immediately:
    1) Include:
        a) Area Manager
        b) Area Financial Coordinator

Prior to making a purchase using the P-card, The P-card user will:

A. Complete DHS-1914: Request to Purchase with the following information:
    1) Name of P-card holder (person purchasing)
    2) Amount of purchase
    3) Client's first initial and last name
    4) Type of purchase
    5) IV-E eligibility status of client
    6) Date of birth of client
    7) Client's case number in the Division information management system
    8) Client I.D.
    9) Vendor Name
B. Email completed 1914 to obtain approval signatures on 1914 from:
    1) Direct Supervisor
    2) Area Manager
    3) Copy the Area Financial Coordinator
C. Send approved 1914 to the Area Financial Coordinator for review and approval.
D. If the purchase exceeds $1,000.00 provide justification to the appropriate person approving their request to purchase.
E. Upon receipt of approved 1914:
    1) Complete purchase with forty-eight (48) hours
    2) Submit P-card transaction log, receipts, and other documents to the Area Financial Coordinator within twenty-four (24) hours after shopping
    3) If a purchase cannot be completed within forty-eight (48) hours:
        a) Request a name change for an alternate shopper to complete the purchase within forty-eight (48) hours:
            i. Notify the Area Financial Coordinator of the need to assign an alternate shopper and provide the name of another P-card holder who has agreed to complete shopping
    4) If a change in the vendor must occur:
        a) Notify the appropriate Area Financial Coordinator, prior to or immediately after purchasing
F. For emergency or weekend purchases for clients:
    1) Obtain approval from the Area Manager or County Manager for emergency purchases

2) Submit P-card purchase packet to the Area Financial Coordinator:
    a) Prior to close of business on the first business day after the purchase is completed
    b) Include a justification for emergency purchases that details:
        i. The nature of the emergency
        ii. The name and title of the individual approving the emergency purchase

G. Within twenty-four (24) hours of completing purchase:
    1) Complete and sign a separate P-card transaction log for *each* transaction
    2) Prepare the original receipt by putting the following information on the receipt:
        a) Signature of the purchaser
        b) Division information management system case #
        c) Client id
        d) Client dob

H. Submit to the Area Financial Coordinator:
    1) Signed transaction log
    2) Copy of receipts
    3) Fully approved 1914

I. Notify Area Financial Coordinator via email of any missing documents that cannot be submitted within the required timeframe for payment processing:
    1) Copy the Area Manager and Financial Support Unit
    2) Immediately begin working with the vendor to obtain a replacement original receipt (reprint)

J. Purchases made between the 10th and the 14th of the month will be completed immediately and documents provided to the appropriate Area Financial Coordinator to accommodate the billing cycle ending date for payment.

The Area Financial Coordinator will:

A. Prior to purchasing:
    1) Review the completed 1914 to ensure all information is included and all necessary approvals are documented, including coding and IV-E eligibility status
    2) Sign and date if approved
    3) Email the completed 1914:
        a) To the appropriate contact in FSU for normal purchases
        b) To the Transitional Living Program Manager in Central Office for requests from Transitional Living Coordinators
    4) Receive approved 1914 from FSU contact and forward approvals to requesting P-card holder denoting approval to complete purchase within forty-eight (48) hours

B. Upon request for change in vendor:
    1) Immediately notify the appropriate FSU staff of a change in the vendor

C. Once purchasing is complete:
    1) Verify the receipt contains:
        a) Purchasers' signature
        b) Client's first initial and last name

c) Division information management system case #
d) Client id
e) Client dob

2) Verify the purchases and receipts match the approved 1914
3) Within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt from shopper, submit to the FSU via email:
    a) Signed transaction logs
    b) Receipts
    c) Approved 1914s

D. Purchases made between the 10th and 14th of the month will be provided to the FSU immediately via email:
    1) Notify Area Manager and FSU via email of any missing documents that cannot be submitted within the required timeframe for payment processing
E. Immediately notify FSU via email of any DCFS employee who resigns or is subject to suspension or termination.

DCFS Central Office Financial Support Unit will:

A. Prior to approving a 1914 purchase request:
    1) Review all information to ensure accuracy including:
        a) Accounting coding
        b) IV-E eligibility status
        c) Compliance with state purchasing laws
        d) Compliance with regulations and policies of DHS Office of Administrative Services
    2) Notify DFA of any necessary request for an increase in the single purchase limit (SPL) for transactions exceeding $1,000 (including taxes)
    3) Sign and date the 1914 verifying reviewal and approval
    4) Email the completed 1914 to the appropriate Area Financial Coordinator
B. Serve as the liaison between DCFS staff and DFA, DHS purchasing and Accounts Payable.
C. Establish a tickler file for tracking the submission of required documentation.
D. Perform a daily review of completed purchases in the Bank of America on-line system:
    1) Enter the appropriate accounting code corrections
    2) Notify appropriate Area Financial Coordinator via email of any missing documents not received for processing during the monthly billing cycle
E. Change in the vendor on an approval for purchases:
    1) Upon notification of a change in the approved vendor make the appropriate changes to the pending 1914
F. Once purchasing is completed:
    1) Coordinate activities with Area Financial Coordinator to ensure all original invoices and copies are received in the DCFS Financial Support Unit by close of business no later than the 15th of the month for the current billing cycle:
        a) Provide a report weekly to Financial Support Unit Manager during the billing cycle on outstanding transactions
    2) Verify receipts contain:
        a) Signature of P-card shopper
        b) Clients first initial and last name
        c) Division information management system case #

d) Client id
e) Client dob

3) Verify the purchases against the approved request for purchase items and amount

G. Upon notification of resignations, suspensions or terminations:
1) Immediately contact DFA and cancel the employee's P-card

Internal Procedure 203: Gas Cards for Clients

09/2025

The Division recognizes that gas cards can be a critical support to families struggling with transportation issues, particularly as it relates to them attending court and other Family Case Plan-related services.

To access gas cards for clients, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Complete the CFS-496: Assessment for Income Assistance and DHS-1914: Requisition to purchase a gas card for clients.
B. Send the above paperwork to the Supervisor for approval.
C. If the gas card request is approved by all levels of the chain of command described below, purchase a gas card or designate another colleague to purchase the gas card:
1) This is a card specific to a gas station: Shell, Exxon, Valero, Circle K, Casey's
2) Do not purchase a Visa, Mastercard, Walmart, or other types of gift card
D. Secure any gas cards not immediately distributed to clients in a locked location in the county office.

The purchaser of the gas card will:

A. Ensure a CFS-035: Gas Card Chain of Custody form is completed as required by the Arkansas Office of State Procurement:
1) A separate chain of custody form will be completed for each card purchased
B. Make a copy of the gas card (front and back) to send with the CFS-035: Gas Card Chain of Custody form and P-card paperwork to the Financial Support Unit for audit purposes.
C. Document a contact in the Division information management system when the gas card is given to the client.
D. Submit all P-card paperwork including the CFS-035: Gas Card Chain of Custody form to the Area Financial Coordinator for processing within two (2) business days of purchase.
E. Secure any gas cards not immediately distributed to clients in a locked location in the county office.

The Social Service Supervisor or designee will:

A. Review and approve or deny, as appropriate, the gas card request.
B. If approved, send the request to the Area Manager or designee.
C. If denied, inform the Specialist of the denial and reasons for denial.

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Review and approve or deny, as appropriate, the gas card request.
B. If approved, send the request to the Area Financial Coordinator.
C. If denied, inform the Supervisor of the denial and reasons for denial.

The Area Financial Coordinator will:

A. Submit the request to the Central Office Finance Unit for approval to purchase.
B. Process all related P-card paperwork related to the gas card purchase upon receipt.

Internal Procedure 204: Initiating a Request for Medicaid

11/2025

When children enter an out-of-home placement, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Initiate a request for Medicaid within one (1) business day of the date the child enters DCFS custody:
    1) If the Specialist has been notified that the Division information management system will be down, and they cannot transmit the Initial Medicaid Application within the one (1) day time frame, only then will they complete and scan a paper copy of the CFS-487: Application for Title IV-E Payments/Medicaid to the Eligibility Unit
B. Route the signed court order to the Family Support Specialist in the central office Eligibility Unit.
C. Apply for title IV-E Payments/Medicaid:
    1) Complete the "Application for Social Security Card" (SS-5) if the child does not already have a social security number or the number is not known
    2) Sign the SS-5 as the DCFS representative for the case
    3) Route the SS-5 to the Social Security Administration and copy to the Family Support Specialist
D. Enter income, debts, and asset information in the Division information management system for each member of the removal household.
E. Enter necessary information on the Medicaid/IV-E Application screen (four tabs) in the Division information management system to complete the application and click "Send" to transmit the application to the Eligibility Unit:
        1) Send the completed Medicaid/IV-E Application to the Eligibility Unit within seven (7) business days from the date the child entered the out-of-home-placement
    2) Other information needed to establish title IV-E Medicaid eligibility (birth certificate, social security number, removal order, petition that led to removal) should also be sent to the Eligibility Unit if available at that time
F. Obtain any additional requested information and forward it to the Family Support Specialist within ten (10) business days.

G. Within ten (10) business days of any delay, notify the Family Support Specialist of the information which cannot be obtained and the reason.

Internal Procedure 205: Case Re-evaluation for Medicaid Redetermination

11/2025

The Division information management system generates a notice for all IV-E re-determinations on the second (2nd) Monday of the month before the re-evaluation is due. Non-IV-E Medicaid re-determinations notices are system-generated in ARIES.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Make timely documentation of any of the following changes. Any of these changes generate an automatic system notification to the Eligibility Unit and potentially affect IV-E Medicaid eligibility:
    1) Child aged eighteen (18)
    2) Child left care
    3) Runaway
    4) Child placed for adoption
    5) Placement or address change
    6) Begin and end detention
B. If a child is born to a child in the Division custody, check "Client Gave Birth" on the changes tab of the Re-determination/Changes screen in the Division information management system.
C. Respond promptly to any request for additional information requested by the Eligibility Unit for re-determination on non-IV-E Medicaid.

Internal Procedure 206: Resolution of Denial of Medicaid Service

09/2008

When a particular service is denied for an otherwise Medicaid eligible child experiencing foster care, the Division will attempt to resolve the issue by discussing the issue with the appropriate representative. If the issue cannot be resolved internally, the Division will file an appeal.

If a Medicaid eligible child experiencing foster care is denied a Medicaid service and the Social Service Specialist disagrees with the denial, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Notify the DCFS Client Advocate.
B. Complete a Departmental Appeal form (DHS-1200) and provide to the Client Advocate.

The Client Advocate will:

A. Contact the DMS Director or their designee and attempt to resolve the issue by providing any additional information and documentation regarding the child and their need for the denied service. The issue must be resolved prior to the expiration of the thirty (30)-day Medicaid appeal timeframe, to allow for a formal appeal in the event that the issue cannot be resolved internally.

B. Notify the Specialist when DMS decides the outcome of the internal appeal.
C. If the denial is upheld:
    1) The Client Advocate may initiate an external appeal:
        a) Consult with and obtain permission from the DCFS Director to begin the process of external appeal
        b) Once approved by the DCFS Director, notify the contract attorney for children experiencing foster care that an appeal is necessary

The contract attorney will:

A. File an appeal on behalf of the child according to the guidelines established by DMS.
B. Complete a Departmental Appeal form (DHS-1200).
C. File the form with the Office of Appeals and Hearings within thirty (30) days of the date on the notification letter.

The Office of Appeals and Hearing will make a final decision regarding eligibility for a Medicaid service and send written notification of the final agency determination to the appropriate parties.

Internal Procedure 207:Trust Accounts for Children

06/2026

DCFS maintains Trust Accounts for children experiencing foster care who receive Supplemental Social Security (SSI) and/or Social Security Administration (SSA) Title II Benefits.

When a child is receiving benefits, the Division shall manage those funds in accordance with applicable federal and state requirements and in the best interests of the child.

SSA Title II benefits shall be conserved in an account established by the Division for the benefit of the child and utilized only for approved expenditures that support the child's unmet needs, well-being, permanency, or successful transition into adulthood.

207.1 Opening a Trust Account

06/2026

When a child enters foster care and is already receiving income, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. List the income source, amount, and frequency on the child's income screen in the Division information management system.
B. Within five (5) business days of the child entering foster care, email the Eligibility Unit at central office and provide:
    1) Notification that a child entering foster care is receiving income to include:
        a) The type of income (SSA or SSI)
        b) The amount of income received monthly
C. For children receiving SSA title II benefits:

1) SSA Title II benefits shall be conserved in an account established by the Division for the benefit of the child and utilized only for approved expenditures in the child's best interest
2) The Division shall serve as the representative payee for SSA Title II benefits unless an exception is approved and documented by the DCFS Eligibility Unit Supervisor or designee based upon documented circumstances demonstrating that an alternate payee arrangement is in the child's best interest:
    a) The Division shall make individualized determinations and shall prioritize parents, relatives, or other appropriate adults when available and in the best interest of the child
    b) Resource parents shall not routinely or automatically be designated as representative payees for SSA Title II benefits while the child remains in foster care
    c) SSA Title II benefits conserved on behalf of a child shall remain the property of the child:
        i. Conserved funds may be utilized for approved expenditures that directly support the child's:
            1. Educational needs
            2. Extracurricular, enrichment, or normalcy activities
            3. Transition to adulthood
            4. Housing, transportation, or startup expenses upon exit from foster care
            5. Other expenditures approved in the child's best interest

D. For children receiving SSI:
    1) After thirty (30) days of entering care determine if the child's resource parent wishes to become payee for the child's funds:
        a) For those children the resource parent wishes to become representative payee for:
            i. Notify the Eligibility Unit
            ii. Assist the resource parent in becoming payee for the child's benefits
            iii. Update the child's payment information in the Division information management system to reflect benefit amount:
                1. Board payments shall be reduced dollar for dollar by the amount of the SSI benefit received to ensure the total payment does not exceed the approved monthly board rate
    2) Speak with resource parents, the child's family, and the child during monthly family contacts to monitor needs of the child and ensure the assigned payee is properly utilizing funds to meet the child's needs
    3) During each family team meeting, discuss with parties present and determine if the child has any needs which should be met utilizing conserved funds

E. For children receiving any other source of income:
    1) Notify the Eligibility Unit

The IV-E Eligibility Unit will:

A. After thirty (30) days of the date a child enters foster care, or upon notification from the Specialist, submit a change of payee request for a child receiving cash benefits who has been court ordered into foster care.
B. Update the income payee screens in the Division information management system.
C. For SSA:
    1) Conserved funds shall remain in the child's trust account until approved for disbursement
    2) Upon request from a Specialist to use personal needs funds, will make the determination for approval

207.2 Closing a Trust Account

06/2026

Upon a child's exit from care, conserved funds shall be released in accordance with Social Security Administration requirement and applicable Division procedures.

To close a trust account when a child returns home, exits care, or is adopted the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Exit the child from foster care in the Division information management system.
B. Ensure the name and address of the child's caregiver, and the relationship to the child are correct in the Division information management system.

The IV-E Eligibility Unit will:

A. Complete forms to close out the account and send the closeout packet to the Office of Finance and Administration.

207.3 Change of Payee Request

06/2026

The Social Service Specialist will:

C. Notify the DCFS Eligibility Unit within five (5) business days of any circumstances that may require a change in representative payee, including but not limited to:
    1) Change in placement
    2) Reunification
    3) Adoption
    4) Guardianship
    5) Exit from foster care
    6) Identification of another approved representative payee arrangement determined to be in the child's best interest
D. Provide update placement, caregiver, and contact information in the Division information management system to support the payee review process.

The DCFS Eligibility Unit will:

A. Review the request and determine whether a change in representative payee is appropriate in accordance with Social Security Administration requirements and Division procedures.
B. Submit required documentation and notifications to the Social Security Administration when a payee change is approved or required.
C. Upon notification form the Social Security Administration that a new representative payee has been selected:
    1) Update the Division information management system
    2) Coordinate closure or transfer of the child's conserved funds account, as applicable

207.4 Requests for Trust Account Funds

06/2026

Division staff making the purchase for the child will, for all purchases:

E. Verify funds availability in the client assets screen in the Division information management system.
F. Complete the appropriate sections of CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing, indicating the amount and purpose for the funds being requested.
G. Request approval from the County Manager or designee and Area Manager or designee.
H. When the approved CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing is received from the Area Financial Coordinator with an approval and hold number attached, complete the purchase:
    1) Within forty-eight (48) hours of receiving approval if the purchase will be made with a P-card
    2) Within five (5) days of receiving approval if the purchase will not be made with a P-card
I. For P-card purchases:
    1) Within three (3) business days of purchase:
        a) Complete and sign a separate P-card Transaction Log for each transaction
        b) Sign receipt and write in:
            i. Case number
            ii. Trust account ID
            iii. Client date of birth
        c) Submit to the Area Financial Coordinator two (2) legible copies:
            i. P-card Transactional Log
            ii. Copies of receipts
            iii. CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing
        d) Place copies of the receipts and CFS-334 in the child's hard file
        e) Complete CFS-335: Confirmation of Receipt of Goods for Youth Experiencing Foster Care and submit to the Financial Support Unit
J. For non-P-card purchase:
    1) Prior to purchase:
        a) Verify if the vendor is already entered into the applicable system and, if not, request a W-9 from the Area Financial Coordinator

2) Within five (5) business days of purchase:
    a) Sign receipt and write on the receipt:
        i. Case number
        ii. Trust ID
        iii. Client date of birth
    b) Submit to the Area Financial Coordinator two (2) legible copies of:
        i. Receipts
        ii. CFS-334: Foster Care Services- Authorization for Billing
    c) Place copies of receipts and CFS-334 in the child's hard file
    d) Complete CFS-335: Confirmation of Receipt of Goods for Youth Experiencing Foster Care and submit to the Eligibility Unit

The County Manager or designee will:

A. Review completed CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing and send to Area Manager or designee if approved.
B. If denied, return to Division staff who requested the approval with reason for denial or requested changes.

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Review completed CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing and send the approved CFS-334 and justification to the Area Financial Coordinator.
B. If denied, return to the County Manager or designee with reason for denial or requested changed and include the Area Financial Coordinator on the email.

The Area Financial Coordinator will:

A. Forward the CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing and justification to the Eligibility Unit.
B. Upon completion of purchase with P-card:
    1) Review P-card Transaction Log, receipts, CFS-334: Foster Care Services - Authorization for Billing, and copies of documents from Division staff who made the purchase
    2) Verify information on the receipt
    3) Verify the purchases were made as approved on the CFS-334
    4) Scan and email all materials referenced above to the applicable central office Financial Support Unit Budget Specialist
C. Upon completion of purchase for non-P-card purchases:
    1) Review receipts, CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing and copies of documents from Division staff who made the purchase
    2) Verify information on the receipt
    3) Verify purchases were made as approved on the CFS-334
    4) Send all materials referenced above to the Eligibility Unit

The DCFS Eligibility Unit will:

A. Assess the hold request:
    1) If the hold request is denied, notify the Area Financial Coordinator of the denial
    2) If the hold request if approved, assign trust account hold number (as appropriate) based on CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing approvals:
        a) Email the approved CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing to the Division staff who will complete the purchase
B. Upon completion of purchase for non-P-card purchase:
    1) Review receipts, CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing, and copies of documentation from Division staff who made the purchase
    2) Verify information on the receipt
    3) Verify purchases were made as approved on the CFS-334
    4) Send all materials referenced above to the Eligibility Unit Supervisor or designee for review

The Central Office Financial Support Unit will (for P-card purchases):

A. Receive email with approval and hold number from the Eligibility Specialist.
B. Place documentation in pending file for Division P-card shopper.
C. Notify Department of Finance and Administration to request an increase in single purchase limit if necessary.
D. Notify appropriate staff if a transaction amount exceeds allowed amount.
E. Serve as liaison among Financial Coordinator, DCFS, and Accounts Payable.
F. Prepare documents for Office of Systems and Technology (OST) to deduct purchases from trust account.

The DCFS Eligibility Unit Supervisor or designee will (for non-P-card purchases):

A. Review all materials sent by Eligibility Specialist as outlined above.
B. Sign the CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing for central office.
C. Deliver material to Accounts Payable.

Accounts Payable will (for non-P-card purchases):

A. Review all material sent by the Eligibility Unit.
B. Send check to vendor for goods and services.

207.5 Reporting Information Changes to the Eligibility Unit

06/2026

Status changes that affect a child experiencing foster care's trust account will be coordinated between the DCFS Eligibility Unit and the DHS Office of Finance.

The Specialist will update and keep current all placement information in the Division information management system to ensure accuracy of auto-generated reporting to the Social Security Administration:

K. Placement changes to or from a detention, medical, or psychiatric treatment facility, or run-away status.

L. The child exits foster care or is deceased.
M. Errors are found in the Trust Account Report or on the assts screen in the Division information management system.

207.6 Monitoring Trust Accounts for Accuracy and Compliance

05/2026

The County Manager or designee will:

N. Supervise the trust account work carried out by Specialists.
O. Review and sign each approved CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing.
P. Monitor trust account balances to ensure they do not exceed resource limits. Resource limits are:
    1) Two-thousand dollars ($2,000) for non-IV-E Foster Care Medicaid (category ninety-one (91))
    2) Two-thousand dollars ($2,000) for Foster Care EC Medicaid (category ninety-six (96)), DDS Waiver Medicaid, Foster Care Spend Down Medicaid (category ninety-seven (97)), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)(category forty-five (45)), Long Term Care Medicaid
Q. Carry out any trust account related responsibilities delegated by the Area Manager.

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Monitor Trust Reports for their DCFS service area, ensuring:
    1) Compliance with state and federal resource limits
    2) Accuracy of basic information (county placement, duplicate accounts, etc.)
    3) Necessary actions by Specialists
    4) Reimbursement of board payments
B. Monitor CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing for duplicate, repeat, or unusual purchases prior to submission to the Office of Finance and Administration-General Operations Section.
C. Monitor reports of trust funds being held or conserved for action by county staff.
D. Ensure Trust Reports (available electronically through the Division information management system) are used to the full extent necessary.

Internal Procedure 208: Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Accounts

08/2025

DCFS maintains ABLE accounts for children experiencing foster care. Funds may be placed in ABLE accounts to support a better life experience for those with disabilities.

208.1 Opening an ABLE Account

02/2025

The IV-E Eligibility Unit will:

A. Determine if the child meets eligibility guidelines for an ABLE account.
B. When appropriate, prepare documents necessary to open an ABLE account and submit documents to Ascensus.
C. When appropriate, prepare appropriate forms and deliver to DHS Accounts Payable.
D. Send all necessary paperwork, and the check to Ascensus.

208.2 DCFS Transfer of an ABLE Account

08/2025

To close an ABLE account when a child returns home, is emancipated, enters a guardianship, or is adopted, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Before exiting the child from foster care, check the asset screen to determine if the child has an ABLE account.
B. Exit the child from foster care in the Division information management system.
C. Ensure the name and address of the child's caregiver, and the relationship to the child are correct in the Division information management system.
D. Immediately report the case closure to the Eligibility Unit designee.

The IV-E Eligibility Unit will:

A. Send forms for completion to the caregiver of record upon exiting foster care along with a request for completed forms to be returned to the Eligibility Unit.
B. Complete change forms to transfer the ABLE account to the designee.
C. Send forms completed by the family and change/transfer forms completed by the Eligibility Unit to Ascensus to have the account transferred.

208.3 ABLE Account Funds

08/2025

Division staff making the purchase for the child will:

A. Verify the child has an ABLE account in the client assets screen in the Division information
management system and if an ABLE account is present:
    1) Contact the Eligibility Unit designee to verify funds availability in the ABLE account (amounts in the assets screen reflect initial funds used to open the account and do not reflect current assets)
B. Ensure any child ages fourteen (14) or older has a current, approved Transitional Life Plan, that is fully executed and includes signatures of the parties and the child.
C. Ensure that requested expenses fall in one (1) or more of the following categories:
    1) Education (private tuition, tutoring, summer program, fees, books, laptop)
    2) Housing (housing modifications, rent, mortgage, utilities, property taxes)
    3) Transportation
    4) Health, Prevention, and Wellness (medical services and special equipment)
    5) Funeral and burial

D. Complete the appropriate sections of CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing:
    1) Indicate the amount of funds being requested
    2) Attach a letter indicating:
        a) How the use of the funds to make the specific purchase will improve the quality of life for the disabled child and how the purchase relates to the child's disability
        b) Why other funding sources are not being used for the purchase. ABLE funds cannot supplant (be used instead of) other funds such as SNAP, Medicaid,
        Chafee, private insurance, or SSI
        c) If other funds are available for the same purpose, then those funds must be used to make the purchase
E. Request approval from the County Manager or designee and Area Manager or designee.
F. When the approved CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing is received with approvals from the Financial Coordinator then:
    1) Complete an Agency Generated Invoice (AGI), for the desired vendor and provide to the Area Financial Coordinator for submission to the Eligibility Unit program administrator
    2) Within five (5) business days of the vendor receiving payment:
        a) Obtain a copy of the receipt for the purchase
        b) Sign receipt and enter case number, trust ID, and client date of birth on the receipt
        c) Submit copies of receipts, CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing, and two (2) legible copies to the Area Financial Coordinator and Eligibility Unit Program Administrator
        d) Place copies of receipts and CFS-334 in the child's hard file
        e) Scan copies of receipts and CFS-334 into eDoctus
        f) Complete CFS-335: Confirmation of Receipt of Goods for Child Experiencing Foster Care
G. Report information changes to the Eligibility Unit Program Administrator when a child with an ABLE account:
    1) Exits foster care
    2) Death occurs

The manager, or designee, will:

A. Review completed CFS: 334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing:
    1) If approved, send to the Area Manager or designee
    2) If denied, return to Division staff who would have completed the purchase with reason for denial or requested changes
B. Supervise the ABLE account related work carried out by the Specialist.
C. Carry out any account related responsibilities delegated by the Area Manager.

The Area Manager, or designee, will:

A. Review completed CFS: 334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing:

1) If approved, send to CFS-334 and send justification to the Area Financial Coordinator
2) If denied, return to County Manager or designee with reason for denial or requested changes and include Area Financial Coordinator on the email

B. Monitor ABLE Reports for their DCFS service area, ensuring:
    1) Compliance with state and federal limitations on supplanting funds
    2) Accuracy of basic information (county placement, duplicate accounts, etc.)
    3) Necessary actions by Specialists
C. Monitor CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billings for duplicate, repeat, or unusual purchases prior to submission.

The Area Financial Coordinator will:

A. Forward the CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing and justification to the Eligibility Analyst.
B. Upon completion of purchase:
    1) Review receipts, CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing, AGI, and copies of documents from Division staff who made the purchase
    2) Verify information on the receipt
    3) Verify purchases were made as approved on the CFS-334
    4) Send all materials referenced above to the Eligibility Unit Manager

The Eligibility Unit Program Administrator will:

A. Review CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billings for ABLE trust account hold:
    1) Contact Ascensus to:
        a) Verify the purchase request meets established guidelines
        b) Verify available funds held in the ABLE account
    2) If approved:
        a) Notify Area Financial Coordinator of the approval and that a check is being sent to the vendor
    3) If the hold request is denied:
        a) Notify the Area Financial Coordinator of the denial
B. Upon completion of purchase:
    1) Review receipts, CFS-334: Foster Care Services – Authorization for Billing, and copies of documents from Division staff who made the purchase:
        a) Scan the documents into eDoctus
        b) Verify information on the receipt
        c) Verify purchases were made as approved on the CFS-334
    2) Monitor ABLE accounts for accuracy and compliance with state regulations
    3) Assist DCFS field staff with:
        a) ABLE account related problems as necessary
        b) Training staff on new or revised ABLE account policies and procedures
    4) Review and forward requests to open, close, hold, release, or update ABLE accounts or funds

208.4 Outside Contributions to ABLE Accounts

08/2025

When an individual or provider wishes to contribute to an ABLE account for a child experiencing foster care the contributing party must contact the DCFS Eligibility Unit Program Administrator and provide notification of the intent to make a contribution and the contribution amount.

The Eligibility Unit Program Administrator will:

A. Provide a pre-filled Contribution Form to the party listing:
    1) Child's name
    2) ABLE account number
    3) Blank line for the party to designate an amount they wish to deposit
    4) Mailing address to send the form and contribution check to
B. Notify the contributing party that they need to:
    1) Copy the specific form, updating only the contribution amount for each deposit, and use the form for each contribution
    2) E-mail the Eligibility Unit Program Administrator each time a contribution is made, with the following information:
        a) Account owner's name
        b) Check number
        c) Check amount
        d) Date the check was mailed
C. Verify in the online AR ABLE account:
    1) That the check was deposited into correct ABLE account
    2) The amount matches the information previously provided by the contributing party
D. Work with Ascensus and the party making the contribution to resolve and discrepancies.

208.5 Death of an ABLE account owner when DCFS is the Authorized Organization

08/2025

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Provide notifications of change to the caregivers and assigned parties to the case as required in Internal Procedure Emergency Changes in Out-of-Home Placement.
B. Follow Policy 9 CAR § 40-1014: Child Fatality Notification.
C. Provide notification to OCC and the Eligibility Unit via email within twenty-four (24) hours:
    1) Of the details of the death
    2) That the youth was the owner of an ABLE account and has assets that must go through probate as managed by OCC

3) Costs associated with burial arrangements
4) Provide any information requested in follow up within twenty-four (24) hours of the request

The Eligibility Unit will:

A. Notify Ascensus of the death of the account owner.
B. Notify field staff that no additional funds can be deposited or withdrawn from the account until further notice.
C. Provide OCC with information requested to process the probate case, to include, but not limited to:
    1) Dollar amounts held within the ABLE account
    2) Receive probate documents from OCC and forward probate documents to Ascensus
D. Manage final ABLE Account funds according to guidance from Ascensus:
    1) 1st for any funeral, burial, or outstanding disability expenses
    2) 2nd for any outstanding medical bills
    3) If any funds remain after funeral and burial, remaining balances will be payable to the deceased's estate and sent to the entity, person, or agent listed in the legal document submitted

OCC will:

A. Pursue a probate case on behalf of the deceased's estate.
B. Ensure the following are obtained during the probate process and are forwarded to the DCFS Eligibility Unit :
    1) A certified copy of the account owner's death certificate
    2) A certified legal document (small estate affidavit or probate document) that names the administrator of the estate and establishes who should be permitted to request funds from the ABLE account
    3) A letter of instruction that addresses:
        a) Who the check should be made payable to
        b) Amount of check
        c) What the check is for:
            i. Funeral and burial expenses
            ii. Remaining funds in the account

Internal Procedure 209: Personal Needs Allowance for Children

08/2025

For children experiencing foster care who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Administration (SSA -- Title II) benefits and for whom the Division is the payee of those juveniles' SSI or SSA benefits, there is an "SSA Personal Needs" hold type for foster care trust accounts. When the Division is the payee for an SSI or SSA/Title II beneficiary, a hold of $30 is

placed each month for those children at the time the funds are integrated into the system. The held funds may be used or saved for the beneficiary children but, if used, must be used for items permitted as "SSA Personal Needs" expenditures. Examples of personal needs expenditures include:

- Clothing: athletic shoes, bathing suits and caps, boots, disability-related adaptive clothing, gloves, hats, scarves, seasonal garments, shoes, slippers, etc.
- Convenience Items: clocks, clothes hamper, radios, stationery, TVs, wristwatches, etc.
- Health and Hygiene Items: bath scale, brushes, combs, cosmetics, cosmetic surgery, dermatology treatments, elective or cosmetic dental treatments, hairdresser/barber cost, soaps, toilet articles, etc.
- Hobby and Craft Items: art supplies, cameras, film, photo albums, etc.
- Living Area Furnishings: bedspreads, blankets, carpets, curtains, lockable chest/trunk, mirrors, pictures, pillows, posters, quilts, recliner, rocking chair, etc.
- Miscellaneous Items: magazine subscriptions, reasonably priced holiday presents for family and friends, restaurant meals, telephone expenses for call to and from out of town relative, etc.
- Therapeutic Equipment: if recommended by a doctor or appropriate therapist, and not covered by another source: book holders, crawlers, electric wheelchairs, feeding aids, hearing aids, orthopedic shoes, shower and bathroom chairs, toilet aids, walkers, etc.
- Transportation Expenses: trips to contact family or for relatives to contact patient in special cases, trips to amusement parks, state fairs, summer camps, etc.

All personal needs purchases will reflect an individualized evaluation of the children's situation and needs. The utilization of SSI or SSA monies to purchase items normally provided by a facility or covered under a State or Federal program is prohibited.

SERVICE PROVISION APPLICABLE TO ALL CASE TYPES

Internal Procedure 300: Ensuring Child Safety With Immediate Safety Planning

07/2025

DCFS utilizes the Structured Decision Making® Safety and Risk Assessments Tools (hereafter referred to as the Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment) and approach to assess the safety of:

A. All children for whom a report is made to and accepted by the Child Abuse Hotline
B. All families who request prevention services from the Division
C. All children who are members of a household where the Division has an open case

If a safety threat is identified during any Safety Assessment, safety planning is required to identify and implement specific actions to ensure a child's immediate safety. DCFS staff will utilize the Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment to determine if a safety threat exists and to complete Immediate Safety Planning. If a safety threat is identified, there are only two (2) options to implement during the safety planning process:

- Develop an Immediate Safety Plan to mitigate the identified safety threats to allow the child to remain safely in the home
- Take protective custody and remove the child from the home (see Internal Procedure Protective Custody of Child in Immediate Danger)

When any safety threats are present, an Immediate Safety Plan must be developed to address each identified safety threat if the child remains in the home. An Immediate Safety Plan is a written plan developed by DCFS staff in conjunction with the family, including age-appropriate children, and the family's network to address identified safety threats. The actions and any services needed to address safety threats contained in an Immediate Safety Plan will depend on the dynamics of a particular household and their network. This documentation describing the actual use or consideration of using protective interventions establishes reasonable efforts to prevent removal of the child from the home.

The Immediate Safety Plan:

A. Must include the input and involvement of at least one (1) safe and appropriate member of the family's network who was not part of the harm to the child.
B. Can not be based solely on an action step that involves a caregiver's promise to not use actions or behaviors that they have already done that resulted in harm to a child.
C. Must be developed and receive DCFS supervisory approval prior to DCFS staff leaving the home.
D. Must be sufficient to manage and control safety threats based on a high degree of confidence that it can be implemented, sustained.
E. Must be closely monitored by DCFS in partnership with the household's identified network.
F. Serves as a written agreement between the Division, the family, and the family's identified network.

G. Must clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of the people involved.
H. Contain contingency actions detailing the action steps to be taken by the family and network when the established plan is not working well to ensure child safety.
I. Will be provided (a printed copy or photo of the plan) to the caregiver and to other members participating in the plan prior to the DCFS staff person leaving the home.
J. Will be documented in the Division information management system within two (2) business days of its creation along with any other actions that were taken or services that were put in place to ensure the safety of the child victim or other children in the home.

Regardless of the actions included in an Immediate Safety Plan, Immediate Safety Planning and oversight on the part of the Division continues throughout involvement with the household if safety threats are present.

Immediate Safety Plans may not:

A. Make a change to the current physical or legal custody arrangement of the child.
B. Limit the right of a caregiver, legal guardian or legal custodian to have access to their child. This includes placing any restriction on court-ordered family time contacts, *unless:*
    1) A dependency-neglect petition is first filed with the court to address identified safety threats and a corresponding court order is obtained to make a change to the current custody arrangements or otherwise limit the right of the caregiver to have access to their child
    2) An alternate method of ensuring child safety must be implemented until the required court order is issued to alter custody or family time arrangements

When it is necessary to file a dependency-neglect petition to ensure a child's safety in the home, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Contact their OCC attorney immediately (or at the start of the next business day if the Safety Assessment occurred after hours or on the weekend) to request OCC file the appropriate petition.
B. With support from their Supervisor, determine exactly what the Division is requesting the court to order, if applicable, to address the identified dependency-neglect issues.
C. If the requested court order is issued:
    1) Update the Immediate Safety Plan, as applicable, to reflect the orders of the court as well as any other actions or information that need to be included in the Immediate Safety Plan to ensure child safety
    2) Thoroughly explain any changes to the caregivers, household members, and other individuals in the family's network who may be a part of the Immediate Safety Plan

300.1 Immediate Safety Plan Monitoring, Review, And Reassessment

All Immediate Safety Plans (those developed during an investigation and those developed when an immediate safety threat is identified in an open case) will be monitored via face-to-face contact with the household, to include alleged victims, alleged offenders, and any other children in the home:

A. Within seventy-two (72) hours and then via a minimum of weekly face-to-face contact for the duration of the Immediate Safety Plan.
B. The Immediate Safety Plan will be formally reviewed:
    1) Within fourteen (14) days of its implementation
    2) Within twenty-eight (28) days of the date on which the Immediate Safety Plan was implemented:
        a) If after this formal reassessment is performed, the Division determines that a substantial risk of harm to the health and safety of the child remains and that the Immediate Safety Plan must stay in place to ensure the health and safety of the child, then the Division will file a petition for dependency-neglect prior to thirty (30) days unless the caregiver is not:
            i. The alleged offender
            ii. Alleged to have failed to protect the juvenile
        b) If a case connect has already occurred during an investigation, then the assigned Caseworker Specialist and Investigator Specialist who implemented the Immediate Safety Plan will collaborate to reassess the Immediate Safety Plan and provide the affidavit and a copy of the CFS-200: Immediate Safety Plan to OCC to file any necessary petitions for dependency-neglect at thirty (30) days
        c) A corresponding Family Case Plan, informed by the Family Case Plan Tool, will be filed with the court within thirty (30) days per A.C.A. 9-27-402

For investigations, the Investigator will:

A. Complete the Safety Assessment upon initial contact with the child and any household members present.
B. Make the safety determination.
C. Confer with the Supervisor and receive approval of the plan before leaving the home.
D. Enter the Safety Assessment into the Division information management system within two (2) business days of contact with the household and updated as needed throughout the family's involvement with DCFS.
E. On all subsequent contacts with the family, assess any safety threats present as well as any acts of protection by the caregivers:
    1) Update the Safety Assessment as needed
F. Review the ISP in a formal family team meeting with Supervisor, the family, and the network within fourteen (14) days of the plan's implementation.
G. Review the ISP in a formal family team meeting with Supervisor, the family, and the network within twenty-eight (28) days of the plan's implementation to determine whether the safety threat still exists and whether a petition for dependency neglect must be filed prior to thirty (30) days.
H. Coordinate with the Caseworker Specialist if the case connect has already been done and continue to monitor the Immediate Safety Plan until a Caseworker Specialist has been assigned.

When a safety threat is identified in a household with an open case, the Caseworker Specialist will:

A. Assess whether an Immediate Safety Plan can be developed with the family and its network.
B. Follow all steps set out above to develop and monitor the plan.

300.2 Safety Determinations

Refer to the Safety and Risk Assessments Manual for detailed information on conducting a Safety Assessment.

Internal Procedure 301: Team Decision Making

07/2025

Team Decision Making (TDM) is an evidence-informed practice with a defined protocol. It is used when a safety threat has been identified using the Safety Assessment and a decision must be made about the placement of the children. An initial TDM is designed to ensure all placement decisions regarding child safety are the shared responsibility of a diverse group of people.

Initial TDM Focus and Prompts

The focus of the initial TDM meeting is to ensure the safety and well-being of children while making every effort to keep their family intact. The group carefully reviews the threats to child safety, as reflected in the Safety Assessment, and seeks to clarify relevant protective factors to build Immediate Safety Plans that will enable children to remain or immediately return home with appropriate support and services. When this is not possible, the team creates a plan that reflects the least restrictive option possible that will both keep the child safe and preserve and nurture the child's familial and community connections.

The prompts for an initial TDM are:

A. Caregiver action or inaction threatens a child's safety (safety threat identified).
B. Possible court action sought or judge orders child into care on a seventy-two (72)-hour hold.
C. Adoption or guardianship disruption.

301.1 Team Decision Making Participants and Their Roles in the Process

A. Caregiver:
    1) The caregiver who is the expert on the family and children. They are essential to the TDM process
    2) The caregiver identifies and invites their support people to the meeting, with Division encouragement and support
B. Children:
    1) Children aged ten (10) and over are required to be invited and encouraged and supported to attend unless a specific and credible reason exists for them not to participate
    2) Accommodations should be made for children to participate only in certain stages of the meeting if full attendance is not appropriate or they wish to participate in only some of the meeting

3) If the child is unable to attend their voice should be represented in the meeting by the Social Service Specialist. Specialists should use tools such as Three Houses or Safety House to bring children's voices to the table
4) Children under the age of ten (10) can participate in a TDM if it is in their best interest

C. Extended family and non-related support people, including representatives from the family's community – with the consent of the caregiver. Caregivers are welcome to invite an attorney, but they will not be invited to the TDM by Division staff. If a caregiver attends the meeting with an attorney, the Division will request to have an OCC attorney present.
D. Professionals involved with the case (resource parents, service providers, MDT members).
E. Division staff:
    1) The Social Service Specialist who assessed the presence of a safety threat:
        a) Initiates the TDM meeting
        b) Prepares the caregiver, other family members, and members of the family's support network for the TDM meeting
        c) Takes the lead in the TDM meeting to discuss the safety threats and concerns
        d) Maintains openness and receptivity to the input of team members regarding safety, stability, and out-of-home placement. This includes the recognition that the results of the TDM discussion may be a plan that permits children current in care on a seventy-two (72)-hour hold to safely return home before the seventy-two (72)-hour hold expires
        e) Monitors the TDM plan for safety
    2) Social Services Supervisor of the Specialist who assessed the safety threat, or the Supervisor who approved the safety decision (if different):
        a) Helps prepare the Specialist for the TDM, including a pre-TDM conference
        b) Attends the TDM, actively participates, and supports the Specialist
        c) Maintains openness and receptivity to the input of team members regarding safety, stability, and out-of-home placement. This includes the recognition that the results of the TDM discussion may be a plan that permits children currently on seventy-two (72)-hour hold to safely return home before the seventy-two (72)-hour hold expires
    3) Area TDM Scheduler:
        a) Prioritizes referrals and schedules the date, time, and location of the TDM meeting
        b) Manages a TDM calendar that ensures that TDMs following a removal can be conducted before the seventy-two (72)-hour hold expires
        c) Invites Division staff and service providers, and notifies them of the date, time, and location of the TDM
    4) TDM Facilitator:

a) Leads the group through a structured six (6)-stage process, focusing on child safety, and modeling respectful family engagement throughout
b) Seeks to bring the group to a consensus decision regarding what plan will best balance the child's physical safety needs with the need for continuity in family relationships and assure that any placement is in the least restrictive setting possible that still ensures child safety

5) Others:
a) When a review is called by the TDM Facilitator, the Area Manager or designee may be brought into the meeting

301.2 Time Frames for TDM Meetings

A. An initial TDM meeting sis held in the following time frames:
1) When an Immediate Safety Plan has been put in place, a TDM meeting is held:
a) As quickly as possible
b) No later than three (3) days after a safety threat was identified and an Immediate Safety Plan was put in place
c) Ideally within forty-eight (48) hours
2) If the children were removed from their home on an emergency basis:
a) Ideally, conduct the TDM within twenty-four (24) hours:
i. If the decision at the TDM is that the child remains in an out of home placement then complete the affidavit, including that a TDM was held
ii. If the decision at the TDM is to implement an Immediate Safety Plan allowing the children to return safely to their home:
1. Do not complete an affidavit of removal
2. Complete an Immediate Safety Plan and monitor according to 9 CAR § 40-313: Investigation of Child Maltreatment Reports
b) When the TDM cannot be completed within twenty-four (24) hours:
i. Complete the affidavit of removal and hold submission of the affidavit to OCC until after the TDM is held within forty-eight (48) hours

301.3 Initiation of a Team Decision Making Meeting Referral

The Social Service Specialist who assessed the presence of a safety threat that necessitated the TDM:

A. Initiates the referral for a TDM meeting through an email, or phone call to the TDM Scheduler within two (2) hours of identifying a safety threat and making a safety decision.
B. Uses TDM Scheduling Form (CFS-356) to provide the TDM Scheduler with the information needed for the Scheduler to complete their tasks. It should be sent as soon as possible.

C. Because fidelity to the TDM model requires the facilitator to be an objective individual with no prior role in the case, it is very important that the Social Service Specialist, Supervisor, or any other Division staff person does not discuss case details or provide a copy of the Immediate Safety Plan to the Facilitator before the TDM meeting. Note: The TDM Facilitator may be given information on the safety threat identified.
D. Notifies the family and their supports of the date, time, and location of the TDM.
E. Notifies and initiates TDM referrals made after hours, on weekends, or during holidays, through email. When the Social Service Specialist emails the area TDM Scheduler during these situations and has not heard back by 8:00 a.m. the next business day, the Specialist will contact the DCFS Facilitator Supervisor by phone or email with the referral information.

The TDM Scheduler:

A. Reviews the referral for basic information about the case and its urgency.
B. Collects information about any issues that may affect scheduling, such as a history or present concern around family violence, need for language interpreter, childcare needs, etc.
C. Determines the need for separate TDM meetings if the referral form indicates that a family has a history of domestic violence, or if the Social Service Specialist suspects such activity.
D. Assigns the date, time, and location for the TDM and notifies Division staff and ensures they know the day, time, and location of the meeting.

301.4 Preparation for the Team Decision Making Meeting

The Social Service Specialist who assessed the safety threat and initiated the request for TDM:

A. Prepares the caregiver, children, and other family members for the TDM meeting.
B. Informs the caregiver that they are required to attend the TDM meeting and explains the purpose and goals of the TDM meeting.
C. Helps the family identify people they would like to attend the TDM as their support to help plan for safety. These people may be both formal and informal supports.
D. Uses a Genogram, Circles of Safety and Support, Support Network Grid, or Ecomap to assist in identifying and developing the support network with the family.
E. Collects contact information for people the family plans to invite and ensures they receive an invitation to the meeting.
F. Whan an Immediate Safety Plan is in place, explains that people who have a role in the Immediate Safety Plan must attend and participate in the TDM meeting and gathers their contact information to invite them to the TDM meeting.
G. Notifies caregiver and invites children aged ten (10) or older, developmentally appropriate children under age ten (10), and members of the family's support network to the TDM meeting.
H. Ensures that the voices of all children are heard at the TDM meeting by using tools such as Safety House or Three Houses.
I. Assesses the need for childcare arrangements during the meeting and works with the Scheduler to coordinate childcare arrangements.

J. Assesses the presence of actual or suspected domestic violence in the family, including whether either caregiver has a Domestic Violence Safety Plan in place.
K. Determines if there are any court orders in place relating to the safety of adults and children in the family:
    1) Clarifies the current custody, placement, and contact with non-custodial parents or caregivers for the children in the family
    2) Determines whether there are any court orders related to domestic violence in the family
    3) Determines if there are any court orders related to an adult family member's access to and contact with any children in the family
L. Assesses for affiliation and identification as an American Indian or Native Alaskan by any member of the family and notifies the tribe of the meeting.
M. Confers with their Supervisor or the Supervisor who approved the safety decision to prepare for the TDM meeting.

The Social Service Supervisor of the Specialist who initiated the TDM meeting or the Supervisor who was involved in the safety decision will:

A. Confer with the Specialist prior to the TDM meeting.
B. Ensure the Specialist can present the immediate safety threats identified and can describe in behavioral terms the caregiver's actions or inactions that led to the children's safety being threatened.
C. Confer with the Specialist to assess whether children under age ten (10) are developmentally able to understand and participate in the TDM meeting. Discuss ways to ensure the voices of all children in the family can be heard at the TDM meeting.
D. Ensure the pre-meeting Safety Check-In is completed.

301.5 Safety Check-In Prior to Team Decision Making Meeting

When both caregivers plan to attend the TDM meeting, there is a pre-meeting Safety Check-In, regardless of whether there is domestic violence or suspected domestic violence occurring in the home. Before the TDM meeting starts the Social Service Specialist who assessed the safety threat or the Supervisor who approved the safety decision conducts the Safety Check-In before the meeting.

The Social Service Specialist or Supervisor conducting the Safety Check-In will:

A. Meet with each caregiver before the TDM meeting begins and assess their concerns for safety:
    1) If either caregiver expresses concerns for safety, determine:
        a) The persons whom the caregiver does not feel safe around
        b) How best to have a conversation about the child's exposure to domestic violence
        c) How participants will know if the offending caregiver's behavior is escalating
        d) Any topics that should be avoided. Discussions about the behavior or lack of behavior that caused children to be unsafe cannot be avoided

e) Mutually understood code word, statement, or signal to indicate the need to take a break or separate meeting participants

301.6 Conducting the Team Decision Making Meeting

The TDM Facilitator will:

A. Ensure that caregivers and youth are seated first.
B. Stay attuned to safety through all stages of the meeting.
C. Lead the meeting using a structured process which uses a six (6) stage model.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Explain what prompted the meeting.
B. Present the relevant case information and history as related to current threats to safety.
C. Explain concerns using behaviorally specific language.
D. Explore family strengths and protective factors.
E. Contribute and consider all options discussed at the meeting.
F. Participate in decision making; if consensus cannot be reached, make the final recommendation.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Support the Social Service Specialist.
B. Participate in discussion.
C. Coach the Social Service Specialist as needed.
D. Serve as a role model in the process.

301.7 Responsibilities Following the Team Decision Making Meeting

The TDM Facilitator will:

A. Immediately following the TDM meeting, debrief the meeting with the Social Service Specialist and Supervisor, seeking and providing feedback about the process, not about case specifics:
    1) If not possible immediately after the meeting, schedule a time to conduct the debriefing within twenty-four (24) hours
B. Input the required data into the Division information management system for each meeting within two (2) business days.

The Social Service Specialist who initiated the request for a TDM meeting will:

A. Continue to monitor the TDM Action Plan throughout the completion of the investigation until another Specialist is assigned to monitor the plan.
B. Update the CFS-200: Immediate Safety Plan if needed based on the outcome of the TDM meeting.
C. Enter all information in the Division information management system including address, telephone number for family, demographics, and completed Safety Assessments.
D. If the child was removed on a seventy-two (72)-hour hold and the plan is for the child to remain in Division custody:

1) Update the affidavit to reflect that a TDM was conducted
2) Coordinate with OCC on filing for the Emergency Hearing

E. If a TDM Action Plan is not functioning as planned at the fourteen (14) day review, reconvene the original support network to review and reinforce the plan with child safety as a primary focus.
F. If at thirty (30) days the TDM Action Plan is still not functioning as planned, file a thirty (30) day petition with the courts.

The Social Service Supervisor of the Specialist initiating the TDM will:

A. Ensure the Specialist implements the TDM meeting's recommendations and action steps.
B. Provide feedback to the Specialist and facilitator.

The TDM Scheduler will:

A. Follow up with the Specialist at fourteen (14) and thirty (30) days to track outcomes of the TDM Plan.

301.8 Review of Team Decision Making Decision

Review of a TDM meeting decision may be requested by any Division staff person in attendance who is concerned the decision leaves a child unsafe, is not the least restrictive placement that ensures safety, or violates a policy or law.

The staff member requesting the review will:

A. Notify the entire TDM team of the intent to seek a review prior to the end of the TDM meeting.
B. Following the Facilitator's explanation of the review process, present a summary of the meeting and reason for the review to the TDM Reviewer.

The Facilitator will:

A. Notify the appropriate Area Manager or designee.
B. Explain the review process to the TDM group (group must contain all the TDM participants).

The Social Service Area Manager or designee will:

A. Join the meeting in person or by conference call during the meeting.
B. Listen to both the summary of the plan and the summary of the concerns with the plan.
C. Determine whether adjustments need to be made to the decision.

After the review, the decision is final. All Division staff are expected to support and implement it.

301.9 Team Decision Making On-Call

11/2025

TDM teams may be convened after business hours. On-call coverage for TDM will operate Monday through Friday between 4:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Area Managers and Program

Administrators will develop and maintain a separate TDM on-call schedule for their perspective areas. On-call schedules will be shared by the following areas for TDM:

A. Areas 1, 2, and 5
B. Areas 3 and 4
C. Areas 6, 7, and 10
D. Areas 8 and 9

All procedures and expectations for on-call TDMs are the same as those occurring during business hours, with the only difference being the timeframes and initiation process for TDMs conducted outside of standard hours.

To initiate a TDM while on-call, the Social Service Specialist who assessed the presence of a safety threat will:

A. Prior to leaving the household, initiate the referral for a TDM meeting by calling the area's on-call TDM Facilitator to:
    1) Notify the on-call Facilitator that a TDM needs to be held
    2) Schedule a time and location for the TDM based on what works best for the family and their supports

The on-call Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Prepare the on-call Specialist for the TDM, including a pre-TDM conference.
B. Attend the TDM, actively participate, and support the Specialist.
C. Maintain openness to the input of all team members regarding safety, stability, and out-of-home placement. This includes recognizing that a TDM discussion may result in a plan permitting a child currently in care on a seventy-two (72)-hour hold to return home safely before the hold expires.

To facilitate an after-hours TDM, the on-call TDM facilitator will:

A. Answer or return calls within fifteen (15) minutes.
B. Collaborate with the on-call Specialist to schedule the TDM as quickly as possible, and always within twenty-four (24) hours of the identification of a safety threat:
    1) Prioritize referrals and schedule the date, time, and location of the TDM
    2) Invite Division staff and service providers
    3) Notify them of the date, time, and location of the TDM
C. Lead the group through the structured six (6)-stage TDM process, maintaining focus on child safety, family voice and choice, and respectful family engagement throughout.
D. Guide the group toward a consensus decision that balances the child's safety with the need for stability and connection in family relationships, ensuring any placement is in the least restrictive setting that still ensures child safety.
E. Immediately following the TDM meeting, debrief with the Specialist and Supervisor. The debrief should focus on the TDM process itself; what went well and what could be improved, rather than specific case details. If an immediate debrief is not possible, schedule the discussion to occur within twenty-four (24) hours.
F. Enter all required data into the Division information management system within two (2) business days of the meeting.

G. Key time for after-hours TDM on-call in accordance with Internal Procedure On-Call Standby Duty.

The Area Manager will:

A. Collaborate to develop TDM on-call schedules monthly.
B. Make decisions regarding TDM Waiver requests:
    1) Immediately provide notice of the disposition to the requesting Supervisor
    2) Track TDM waivers:
        i. Maintain a record of requested waivers to include:
            1. Requesting county, Supervisor, Specialist
            2. Division information management system investigation or case number
            3. Date safety threat was identified and waiver was considered
            4. Reason for waiver being requested
            5. Reason for granting or denying the waiver
C. Notify the TDM Program Manager of any area needs regarding TDM:
    1) Emergencies
    2) Dispute processes
    3) Training facilitation
    4) On-call schedules
    5) Coaching and mentoring
    6) Program fidelity

301.10Team Decision Making Program Manager Responsibilities

08/2026

The role of the TDM Program Manager will be to:

A. Schedule and conduct monthly meetings with all TDM Facilitators:
    1) Collaborate with Area Manager and Area Program Administrator to develop an agenda for meetings that is supportive of needs
    2) Travel to all ten (10) geographical areas as necessary to support ongoing TDM meeting outcomes and area leadership requests
B. Complete a monthly report on TDM activities, observations, and needs and submit to the Assistant Director of Policy, Planning, and Training by the 11th day of each month.
C. Support Area Managers and Area Program Administrators by:
    1) Helping resolve emergencies
    2) Participating in dispute processes
    3) Facilitating on-going Division TDM trainings
D. Provide TDM oversight through:
    1) Participation in TDM reviews
    2) Collections and analysis of TDM program data
    3) Supporting areas through direct provision of and coordination of area TDM coaching and mentoring

Internal Procedure 302: Family Assessments

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Refer to the Arkansas Ongoing Tools Manual on CHRIS Net for detailed instruction on all instruments described below.
B. Explain the general purpose of the Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Family Case Plan Tools to the family.
C. Meet several times with the caregivers, children, service providers, and the family's identified network including extended family members and kin to conduct a thorough and complete assessment. Using the Family Case Plan Tool:
    1) Complete the initial assessment within thirty (30) days of the case opening date, or if the child entered foster care, complete the assessment within thirty (30) days of the date the case was opened or thirty (30) days from the date the child entered foster care whichever came first
    2) Reassess the family at a minimum of every ninety (90) days
    3) For in-home cases:
        a) Complete the Risk Reassessment before each required ninety (90) day review but no earlier than thirty (30) days before the review
        b) Use information from the Risk Reassessment and information from other contacts with the family and the family network members to guide the completion of the Family Case Plan Tool and to update the Family Case Plan
    4) For permanency cases:
        a) Complete the Reunification Assessment before each required review but not earlier than thirty (30) days before the review
        b) Use the information from the Reunification Assessment, the Family Time Assessment, and information from all other contacts with the family and the family network members to guide the completion of the Family Case Plan Tool and to update the Family Case Plan
        c) If the court orders a child home against the recommendations of the Division:
            i. Do not use the reunification assessment
            ii. Complete the Safety Assessment
            iii. If a safety threat is identified develop an Immediate Safety Plan with the family and the network
            iv. If no viable Immediate Safety Plan can be developed, confer with the Supervisor to determine next steps
D. Reassess the family prior to case closure using the risk re-assessment tools.
E. Attach the assessment to the Family Case Plan.
F. Provide the caregivers and other parties to the case with a copy of the family assessment.
G. Provide a copy of the family assessment output document to anyone else involved in the development of the assessment upon request, within the parameters of A.C.A. 9- 28-407.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Refer to the Arkansas Ongoing Tools Manual on CHRIS Net for detailed instruction on all instruments described below.
B. Conference with the Specialist as necessary during the completion of the Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Family Assessment tools:

1) Ensure that the family assessment tools have been thoroughly and accurately completed for each assessment:
    a) Approve the assessment only if the assessment tools have been sufficiently completed and support the recommendation
2) Approve the Family Assessment within thirty (30) days of the case opening date or, if the child entered foster care, within thirty (30) days of the date the child entered out-of-home placement or thirty (30) days of the date the case was opened whichever came first
3) Review and approve the updated assessment every three (3) months after the initial family assessment
4) Review and approve the updated Safety and Risk Assessments prior to case closure

Internal Procedure 303: Family Case Plans and Concurrent Permanency Plans

01/2026

The Family Case Plan is a written document that is a discrete part of the family's case record. It outlines a strategy to:

A. Identify the harm and safety threats to the children and the worries that will be addressed by the plan.
B. Articulate the worries related to child safety.
C. Identify needed behavioral changes by the caregiver that will ensure child safety.
D. Identify the roles of all family members, household members, network members, kin, and other parties and the specific actions each will undertake to ensure child safety.
E. Identify any services needed by the family and provide appropriate time frames in which each action or service listed on the Family Case Plan will be completed.
F. Describe how the services and supports will facilitate the needed behavioral changes.
G. Address other permanency options on cases where children are experiencing foster care and safe return to the caregivers from whom they were removed is not possible.

In addition, to ensure timely permanency when children have been removed from their home and are experiencing foster care, a concurrent permanency plan is a required component of the Family Case Plan. Concurrent planning includes working towards the goal of returning the child to the person from whom the child was removed, while *at the same time* working on alternative permanent placements and lifelong connections.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Review the:
    1) Most current Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, Risk Reassessment, Reunification Assessment, and Family Case Plan tool, depending on whether it is an initial Family Case Plan or an update to the Family Case Plan at a ninety (90) day review
    2) Investigation allegation
    3) Determinations from the allegation
    4) Reason for removal, if applicable
B. Develop the Family Case Plan in consultation with the family and identified network members to increase the family's ownership of the Family Case Plan.

C. Have all applicable family members sign the completed Family Case Plan.
D. Provide the family, all parties to the case, and any network members assigned with responsibilities within the Family Case Plan with copies of the signed Family Case Plan:
    1) Copies may be printed or electronic
E. Assemble the Family Case Plan packet
F. Ensure the signed Family Case Plan is in the client record.
G. File the Family Case Plan with the court no later than thirty (30) days after the date the petition was filed, if applicable, or the child was first (1st) placed out-of-home, whichever is sooner.
H. Review and update as necessary during family team meetings, held at a minimum of every three (3) months for both in-home and permanency cases.
I. Document tasks completed and services provided that support reunification and other permanency activities.

FAMILY CASE PLAN PACKET FOR NON-COURT INVOLVED FAMILY CASE PLANS:

A. Family Case Plan Report.
B. Completed Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Family Case Plan tool.
C. Any case specific attachments (such as grades or provider information) as appropriate.

FAMILY CASE PLAN PACKET FOR COURT INVOLVED CASES

A. Family Case Plan Report.
B. Completed Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and family assessments.
C. If children are in DCFS custody:
    1) Placement Plan Report
    2) Placement History Report
    3) Family Time Report
    4) Client Medical and Psychological Information Report which includes but is not limited to:
        a) Record of the child's immunizations
        b) Child's known medical problems
        c) Regularly updated information regarding any medical conditions that cause the child to be incapable of attending school
        d) Child's medications
    5) Education records which include but are not limited to:
        a) Assurance that each child who has reached the minimum age for school is a full-time elementary or secondary student or has completed secondary school
        b) Names and contact information of educational providers
        c) Child's grade level performance
        d) Child's school records
        e) Assurances that the placement considered the proximity to the school where the child was enrolled at the time of placement into foster care
    6) Addendum A: Family Time Plan (form for Specialist to type in info)
    7) Completed Comprehensive Health Assessment

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with Specialist throughout the development of the Family Case Plan.
B. Approve the Family Case Plan once it is sufficiently completed by the Specialist within:
    1) Thirty (30) days of opening the case (whether in-home or permanency case) or a child's entering an out-of-home placement
    2) Every three (3) months thereafter for in-home and permanency cases

CONCURRENT PLANNING

08/2025

While a formal concurrent plan is only required on permanency services cases, concurrent planning begins at the first family assessment and continues with each family contact as the Division identifies and documents kin who can support the family and children throughout the time a case is opened. Should the children experience foster care and reunification is not a safe option, these kin may be able to be a permanent placement for the children.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Inform the family of the concurrent planning process.
B. Emphasize the importance of family involvement and partnerships in establishing permanency for children experiencing out-of-home placements.
C. Request caregiver input in identifying kin who may be appropriate caregivers and initiate contact and home studies. The family will be required by court order to provide information identifying other kin.
D. Use the identified contact information to locate and contact named kin to assist in the child's placement. Information on the putative caregiver or any absent caregiver should be obtained and submitted on the CFS-408: Federal Parent Locator System Information to the local OCC Attorney. CLEAR search may be used if appropriate.
E. In considering permanent placements, resource parents should be viewed as a permanency resource.
F. Initiate the completion of the Life Story Book for all children experiencing foster care.
G. Complete the initial Family Case Plan within thirty (30) days and document all concurrent planning activities in the appropriate section of the Family Case Plan.
H. Complete the CFS-456: Birth Family Background Information within sixty (60) days of case opening.
I. At the second family team meeting (90 days), invite the Adoption Specialist if the court determines reunification services are not required, or the Division is recommending termination of parental rights:
    1) The Family Case Plan developed from this FTM should assign tasks and responsibilities to the Social Service Specialist and Adoption Specialist
    2) Invite the Adoption Specialist to participate in the sixth (6^{th}) month, ninth (9^{th}) month, and eleventh (11^{th}) month family team meeting if it appears likely that the child will not return home or if the goal for the child is adoption. The Family Case Plan will assign tasks and responsibilities to the Specialist and Adoption Specialist.
    3) If the permanency plan is not adoption, determine the most appropriate permanency goal.

The Adoption Specialist will:

A. Participate in the sixth (6^{th}) month, ninth (9^{th}) month, and eleventh (11^{th}) month family

team meeting if it appears likely that the child will not return home or if the goal for the child is adoption.

B. The Family Case Plan will assign tasks and responsibilities to the Social Service Specialist and Adoption Specialist.

Internal Procedure 304: Family Team Meetings

04/2025

A family team meeting (FTM) is a meeting of all involved parties for the purpose of assessing the current status of what's working well for the child and family, identifying ongoing worries and safety threats for the child and family, and developing or updating the Family Case Plan or other related plans (for example, family time plans, transitional plans). FTMs will address the questions central to all family planning:

A. What are we worried about?
B. What's working well?
C. What needs to happen next?

A family team meeting may be held for various reasons based on the threats or worries for the child and family. Situations which require a family team meeting include but are not limited to:

A. Developing the initial Family Case Plan
B. Reviewing the Family Case Plan at least every ninety (90) days:
    1) Reviews during subsequent family team meetings will include discussion regarding the progress made on the Family Case Plan goals, behavioral change demonstrated by the caregivers, to include acts of protection, the need for ongoing services and supports, and any new factual circumstances
    2) Subsequent FTMs will include discussing progress and changes to the transitional plan for a youth fourteen (14) years of age or older experiencing foster care
C. Addressing challenges that bring a child or family into a state of crisis
D. Permanency planning no later than the eleventh (11th) month of case opening, the Adoption Specialist will be invited if they are not already involved:
    1) If, at any point during the case, it appears adoption may become the most viable case goal, the Adoption Specialist may be invited to an FTM
E. Preparing for case closure and creating a plan with the family and their network establishing actions of protection to ensure sustainable child safety prior to case closure.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Invite caregivers, age-appropriate children, identified network members, and court parties' (attorneys, resource parents, placement providers), as applicable.
B. Inform families of their right to have attorneys present.
C. Furnish written notice of the FTM via CFS-590: Invitation to Family Team Meeting or other approved method to all participants at least two (2) weeks prior to the FTM to include notice to children involved in the case who are ten (10) years of age or older.
D. Maintain copies of the CFS-590: Invitation to Family Team Meeting.
E. If the child was unable to attend, document the reason in the Division information management system.
F. Document on the Family Case Plan signature sheet any caregiver's unwillingness to

participate. Provide this written documentation to the caregiver when they are available.

G. Review the Family Case Plan at each FTM and update as necessary to reflect progress made, behavioral change demonstrated by the caregivers, to include acts of protection, new factual circumstances, new worry statements, and new goal statements.
H. Conduct a permanency planning FTM no later than the eleventh (11th) month of case opening to prepare for the permanency planning hearing, which must occur no later than twelve (12) months from the date the child began experiencing foster care:
    a. Invite the Adoption Specialist and all other parties involved in the case
I. Conduct a FTM prior to closing a case and develop an aftercare plan with the family to ensure the child remains safe after DCFS is no longer working with the family.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Social Service Specialist as necessary regarding family team meeting preparation or outcomes.
B. Attend family team meetings when possible and when the Specialist is unavailable due to illness or other extenuating circumstances.

Internal Procedure 305: Teamwork Among Staff for Service Quality

09/2025

DCFS will ensure that families have continuity of services throughout their involvement with DCFS regardless of the county of residence of the family or their children, or other factors that may result in the family working with multiple DCFS staff. When a case involves multiple counties, those staff members will collaborate to ensure coordination of timely services, regular assessment of family time schedules for caregivers, children, and siblings, and the smooth transfer of a case and associated services if a family relocates to another county or a child experiencing foster care is placed in another county.

Regular communication between county of origin and resident county staff is critical for the Social Service Specialist in the county of origin to coordinate service provision, assess for safety, make investigative determinations, update family assessments, Family Case Plans, and prepare court reports. Such communication is vital for the resident Social Service Specialist to provide quality services and supports. Regular communication is defined at a minimum to include:

A. A thorough review of case contacts that are entered each week.
B. A monthly phone conversation between the Specialists in the county of origin and resident county.
C. Other telephone calls, texts, and emails to occur as needed to ensure quality and timely service coordination and delivery.

While the resident county Social Service Specialist will typically conduct the majority of monthly home contacts to the children on their caseload, the Social Service Specialist in the county of origin is encouraged to make at least one face-to-face home contact to children on their caseload each quarter in an effort to maintain a connection with the clients. Contacts to each residence will be completed according to best practice. Further, the county of origin Specialist will, at a minimum, have monthly phone or videoconference contact with the children on their caseload as age and developmentally appropriate (in addition to the quarterly face-to-face contact).

Regardless of the staff member who conducts a contact in the home or has other types of contact with families, all staff will make safety decisions and service referrals immediately upon identification of need while keeping all other staff involved in the case abreast of any changes or needs. This applies to all staff, to include but not limited to, Social Service Specialists, TYS Coordinators, Health Service Assistants, Social Service Supervisors, Financial Coordinators, and assistants.

305.1 Details Regarding Teaming During Differential Response

09/2025

The DR Social Service Supervisor from the county of origin will:

A. Contact the DR Supervisor in the receiving county by phone or email to alert the receiving county of the assignment.

The DR Specialist will:

A. Complete a thorough Division information management system history search prior to conducting assessments (the DR Specialist conducting the assessment is the individual who will conduct the history search for the person they will assess).
B. Assess all applicable subjects in their county within required timeframes.
C. Document assessments in the Division information management system within two (2) business days of the assessment.
D. Complete the Safety and Risk Assessments in the Division information management system with information obtained during assessments they conducted (staff who did not complete the assessment will not complete the safety or Risk Assessment):
    1) Refer to Internal Procedure Differential Response for required actions if a safety threat is identified during the assessment
E. Arrange a telephone call to occur no later than two (2) business days, but sooner if needed, as pertinent information emerges during interviews to discuss with the other Specialist assisting with the DR:
    1) Any identified safety threats and supporting documentation (statements made by children, observations of children, caregiver statements)
    2) Determination of any additional children, elderly people, or individuals with a disability or mental illness who may be at risk
    3) Other people assessed, their relationship with the family, and how information provided was obtained (first-hand, hearsay, observations)
    4) Verification of identity of people assessed
    5) Projected completion date for assessment if not completed at time of phone conference
F. Document the call between the Specialists as a contact in the Division information management system.
G. Ensure the other DR Specialist has a copy of any hard file information related to the DR within two (2) business days after receipt.
H. When a DR is transferred from one (1) county to another and the child who is the subject of the report or any other children believed to reside in the home where the report originated have not been seen, interview or observe as age-appropriate within seventy-two

(72) hours.

305.2 Details Regarding Teaming During Investigation

09/2025

The Investigator will:

A. Complete thorough history search prior to conducting interviews (the Investigator conducting the interviews is the individual who will conduct the history search for the person they will interview).
B. Interview or observe, as appropriate, all applicable subjects in their county within required timeframes.
C. Document interviews in the Division information management system within two (2) business days of the interview.
D. Complete the Safety and Risk Assessments in the Division information management system with information obtained during interviews they conducted (staff who did not complete the interview will not complete the safety or Risk Assessments).
E. Arrange a telephone call to occur no later than two (2) business days, but sooner if needed, as pertinent information emerges during interviews to discuss with the other Specialist assisting with investigation:
    1) Any identified safety threats and supporting documentation (statements made by children, observations of children, caregiver statements)
    2) Determination of any additional children, elderly people, or individuals with a disability or mental illness who may be at risk
    3) Provisions of the ISP if one has been implemented
    4) Other people interviewed, their relationship to the family, and how information provided was obtained (first-hand, hearsay, Investigator observations)
    5) Verification of identity of people interviewed
    6) Projected completion date for investigation if it is not completed at time of phone conference
F. Document the call between the Specialists as an investigation contact in the Division information management system.
G. Ensure the other Investigator has a copy of any hard file information related to the investigation within two (2) business days after receipt.
H. When an investigation is transferred from one county to another and the victim or any other children believed to reside in the home where the report originated have not been seen, interviewed, or observed as age-appropriate within twenty-four (24) to seventy-two (72) hours.

305.3 Teaming During an Open Case Involving Clients in Multiple Counties

03/2025

The Social Service Supervisor of the county of origin Specialist will:

A. Notify (telephone or email) the Supervisor of the resident county Specialist prior to placing or moving clients.
B. Within twenty-four (24) hours following the above notification:
    1) Assign the resident county Specialist on the Assign/Transfer screen in the Division information management system to include:

a) County of origin Specialist's cell number
b) Summary of services needed (TYS, encumbrances, family time frequency, transportation, educational needs, drug screen requirements)

2) Ensure all contact information is correct in the client demographics screens in the Division information management system
3) Schedule and conduct a phone conference with the Specialist from each county and the resident county Supervisor to develop a written family time plan, as applicable, for the family detailing:
    a) The date and logistics for the first family time (ensuring family time occurs per court order), kin, and sibling family time, as applicable:
        i. The first caregiver-child family time session after a removal should occur within two (2) business days of placement change
        ii. Weekly schedule for subsequent family time:
            1. Description of who is providing transportation for family time
            2. Location of family time sessions
            3. Supervision requirements for family time and details of person responsible for providing supervision, as applicable
        iii. Contingency plan in event of cancellation by the family or the Division (who will call whom to ensure everyone, including but not limited to resource parents, is aware of the cancellation and plans for making up the missed family time session):
            1. Rescheduled family time needs to be rescheduled within the same week if possible and must adhere to all court orders
4) Communicate all scheduled requirements for the family (court hearings, educational testing, medical appointments, TYS needs, health service assistant needs, drugs screening, counseling appointments) with emphasis on transportation requests of resident county

C. Monitor Specialist contact in all cases with involvement from multiple counties:
    1) Facilitate stability for the client by ensuring each client is assigned and meets regularly with the same Specialist, whenever possible and appropriate
    2) Monitor home contacts in Safe Measures to ensure Specialist contact occurs by the 20th of each month and that quality home contacts are being completed and documented
    3) When a home contact has not been documented by the 20th of the month, email the applicable Specialist and Supervisor requesting a time frame for the face-to-face contact to occur prior to the 30th of the month
    4) Monitor subsequent contacts and ensure a home contact is completed prior to the end of the calendar month but in accordance with all relevant established time frames (once per week during the first month of a new placement and within thirty (30) calendar days of completed home contact on the prior month)

The Social Service Specialist in the county of origin will:

A. Within twenty-four (24) hours:

1) Email resident county Social Service Specialist a list of important dates and a summary of service needs for the client to include:
    a) County of origin Specialist's cell phone number
    b) Scheduled court dates
    c) Scheduled Family Team Meetings
    d) Previously scheduled transportation needs (to PACE evaluations, family time)
    e) Other relevant information (approved contact list, special medical needs, supervision needs, psychological needs, educational needs, transitional youth services)
2) Attend phone conference set by county of origin Supervisor
3) Create a written family time plan for the family in their Family Case Plan including the assigned Specialists and Supervisors from each county in the conference call
4) Provide a written, signed copy of established family time plan to caregivers, resource providers, and court parties within five (5) business days of change in residence

B. Provide resident county Specialist with a copy of the current court order, current court report, signed current Family Case Plan and other case file documents, as requested or necessary.
C. Coordinate any necessary change in PCP for a child experiencing foster care within twenty-four (24) hours of placement change.
D. Coordinate education enrollment and transportation for educational services with appropriate parties:
    1) Complete CFS-384: Notification to Local Education Agency of Changes in Child Placement, Changes in Schools or Experiences of Traumatic Events and provide to the applicable school within one business day of placement change
    2) Email completed CFS-384: Notification to Local Education Agency of Changes in Child Placement, Changes in Schools or Experiences of Traumatic Events to resident county Specialist within twenty-four (24) hours of placement change
    3) Speak with school district Foster Care Liaison and other pertinent parties to coordinate transportation services as necessary
E. Develop the initial Family Case Plan and subsequent changes with input from the resident county Specialist and other staff, providers, clients, and stakeholders involved in the case.
F. Arrange family team meetings as needed or required and ensure that the resident county Specialist is invited to family team meetings, to include a call-in option, and that all applicable case information is gathered from resident county Specialist for necessary adjustment of assessment ratings and case service planning.
G. Conduct at least one (1) face-to-face contact each quarter with child experiencing foster care and caregivers of child or caregiver in case live outside of county of origin:
    1) If face-to-face is not an option, videoconferencing is acceptable
H. Maintain a case file including legal and medical document and other pertinent documentation and information.
I. Provide the following to the resident county Specialist by email within five (5) business days of the resident county Specialist being assigned:
    1) Educational records, as applicable
    2) Medical records, as applicable

3) Completed intake packet for service requested, as applicable
4) Birth certificate copy
5) Social security card copy
6) Current court order demonstrating custodial relationship
7) Immunization record

If proper documentation is not provided to enable resident county Specialist to complete necessary medical or psychological assessments, county of origin Specialist will be responsible for attending the appointment to provide the necessary information.

J. Key Family Case Plan changes into the Division information management system as appropriate.
K. Request Medicaid determinations and reevaluations by the DCFS Eligibility Unit and submit needed documentation.
L. Contact the resident county Specialist a minimum of once monthly by phone or email regarding service provision or other coordination of Family Case Plan activities:
    1) Staff are encouraged to enter a contact into the Division information management system documenting the phone call or email above that demonstrates the collaboration of service provision
M. Coordinate and ensure transportation is provided for caregiver, child, and sibling family time:
    1) Consideration will be given to use of kinship volunteers when appropriate
    2) Consideration will also be given to transporting caregivers rather than children to decrease travel hardships for children
    3) For virtual family time sessions, the DCFS staff person supervising the virtual family time will enter the contact for that occurrence:
        a) For virtual family time not supervised by DCFS staff, the Specialist from the county of origin is responsible for getting updates about family time from the caregiver, child, and any other adult involved in family time and then entering a contact about family time using the information gathered
N. Complete court reports and distribute them to children over the age of ten (10), caregivers, resource parents, and court parties fourteen (14) days prior to all scheduled hearings:
    1) Gather current information from:
        a) Resident county Specialist via contacts in the Division information management system as well as routine email and phone contacts
        b) The following individuals, preferably via face-to-face contact (regardless of location of face-to-face contact), but minimally via phone, Skype, or similar video platform:
            i. Child
            ii. Caregiver, to include non-custodial or putative fathers
            iii. Placement provider
        c) Service providers via direct request for written progress report or coordinated effort with resident county Specialist to obtain said report
    2) Request a court report addendum from resident county Specialist as needed
    3) Attach all written progress reports from service providers and resident county Specialist and written family time plan to court report
    4) Provide seven (7) calendar days-notice to resource parent via CFS-343: Notification of Court Appearance for all scheduled hearings

5) Provide seven (7) calendar day notice to resident county Specialist if mandatory attendance is required for the upcoming hearing

O. Email notification of changes in court ordered services to resident county Specialist and resident Supervisor within two (2) business days of court hearing, attaching a copy of written order as available.
P. Notify the resident county Specialist immediately of any other changes in plans for care of the child.

The resident county Social Service Specialist or other staff, as applicable will:

A. Enter contact narrative documenting a quality home contact was completed in the Division information management system for each completed case contact within two (2) business days of contact occurring.
B. Request medical records, educational records, personal documents, medical passport, court documents, and a phone contact list, if not already provided by county of Specialist within five (5) business days of resident county Specialist assignment.
C. Coordinate education enrollment and transportation for educational services with appropriate parties for youth:
    1) Speak with school district Foster Care Liaison and other pertinent parties to coordinate transportation services as necessary
    2) Attend educational conferences as scheduled and invite resource parents to attend educational conferences
D. Participate in family team meetings and Family Case Plan development.
E. Assist the resource home or other placement provider with implementing Family Case Plan goals by monitoring progress for each goal and making service referrals as necessary.
F. Take lead on completing necessary paperwork for purchases and completing purchases upon receipt of approved requisitions while keeping originating county Specialist apprised of purchase needs and completions.
G. Keep county of origin Specialist informed of all progress, problems and client experiences through the Division information management system documentation and during monthly and as needed contact with county of origin Specialist:
    1) Issues needing immediate attention will be documented in an email to the Specialist in originating county and their Supervisor
H. Coordinate with county of origin Specialist to obtain progress reports from service providers as necessary and provide electronic copy of reports to county of origin Specialist within two (2) business days of obtaining reports.
I. Obtain a progress report from congregate care staff every month following a child's placement in a congregate care setting and forward a copy to county of origin Specialist:
    1) If the court orders progress reports from the placement provider, then staff will deliver a copy of the written court order by certified mail, restricted delivery, or by process server to the applicable placement provider
J. Notify county of origin Specialist within twenty-four (24) hours of any change in the plans for care of the child.
K. Make regular resource home contacts with children and residential contacts with caregivers, as appropriate and per the approved client contact waiver and in adherence with any court orders.

L. Enter contact narrative in the Division information management system for each completed case contact within two (2) business days of contact occurring.
M. Assist county of origin Specialist with arranging for the caregiver, child, and sibling family time as outlined by the written Family Case Plan.
N. Complete any necessary incident reports (disruption, runaway, human trafficking) and provide the county of origin Specialist with a copy.

Internal Procedure 306: Court Involvement and Reporting

01/2020

306.1 Considerations Regarding Court and Documentation

A. DCFS staff must be able to show and document behavioral actions on their part that prove the Division made reasonable efforts to:
    1) Prevent removal of the children
    2) Reunify the children with their caregivers when children could not safely remain at home
    3) Achieve timely permanence if safe reunification is not possible
B. When DCFS exercises a seventy-two (72)-hour hold, the Division must complete an affidavit of facts and submit to the court and obtain an emergency order of custody based on the facts in the affidavit. The affidavit must contain:
    1) Demographic information, to include information regarding Indian heritage, regarding all adult caregivers and children in the care or custody of the caregivers
    2) Facts regarding the dangers to the immediate safety of the children to include:
        a) Caregiver actions or inactions causing harm or putting the children in danger
        b) Observations of the physical environment
        c) Attempts to prevent removal from the home (efforts to develop an Immediate Safety Plan)
    3) Efforts to locate kin and information regarding the appropriateness of those assessed:
        a) Reasonable efforts to identify and locate incarcerated parents
        b) Known information regarding the fitness of the noncustodial parent to be considered for custody, placement, or family time with the child
    4) Prior history with the family
    5) Recommendations regarding family time schedules and supervision
C. DCFS, the family, and the family's network must develop a Family Case Plan and file it with the court at the adjudication hearing:
    1) See Internal Procedure Family Case Plan and Concurrent Permanency Plans for a list of documents that must be included in the plan for in-home cases and for permanency cases
D. DCFS must complete and file a court report fourteen (14) days prior to each scheduled court review hearing and permanency planning hearing. Court reports are not necessary for probable cause, adjudication, or termination of parental rights hearings (unless requested by the individual judge). All court reports must contain:

1) Recommendations regarding custody of the children
2) Efforts to achieve timely permanency for each child (concurrent planning)
3) Efforts to locate kin, including, but not limited to:
    a) Non-custodial caregiver
    b) Putative fathers
    c) Custodians to any siblings to the children experiencing foster care
    d) Grandparents to the children who are entitled to notice
4) Efforts to achieve reunification (service details)
5) Information regarding family time and recommendations regarding expansion of family time or any other change to the plan, to include details regarding any current threat to the health and safety of the children
6) If siblings are not in the same placement, details regarding efforts to reunify siblings and details regarding current sibling family time
7) Recommendations for changes (if any) to the Family Case Plan or family time plan

E. The court may order progress reports from providers whenever a child is placed out-of-home and in a setting other than a DCFS resource home. The report shall include, but is not limited to:
    1) Reason for admission
    2) Projected length of stay
    3) Identified goals and objectives to be addressed during placement
    4) Progress of the child in meeting goals and objectives
    5) Barriers to progress
    6) Significant behavioral disruptions and response of provider
    7) Recommendations upon the child's release

Court orders become effective the minute the judge issues the order verbally. Orders remain in effect while under appeal unless and until reversed.

306.2 Court Hearings for Children Experiencing Out-of-Home Placement

08/2013

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Receive the confirmed court date from the OCC attorney.
B. Provide OCC with the name and address of any grandparent who is entitled to notice.
C. Provide notice to the parties at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the hearing, if the Division is the requesting party.
D. Complete a court report for all review hearings and PPH hearings:
    1) Submit court report to Supervisor for review and approval prior to review hearings
    2) Submit the supervisor approved court report or PPH Report to OCC, CASA, AAL and all parties no later than fourteen (14) days before the scheduled hearing. Document distribution of court reports to all parties or their attorneys and CASA, if applicable, in the Division information management system
E. Invite the out-of-home placement provider to all hearings.

F. Provide the out-of-home placement provider with a copy of the court report and court order for each child while the child is placed in the provider's home.
G. Attend all hearings and be prepared to provide testimony regarding services offered or provided, family progress, behavior changes, and recommendations to the court.
H. Bring case files to all hearings (but do not take the files to the stand while testifying).
I. Discuss orders of the court with the family, the family network, and age-appropriate children during family contacts.
J. For PPH hearings: make a recommendation to the court to allow family time between siblings and with appropriate kin if this is in the child's best interest. Document the recommendation in the Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report (This is only a recommendation. Kin family time after TPR must have court approval and cannot continue without court approval).

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Review and approve all court reports prior to review hearings.
B. Conference with and support Specialist regarding permanency issues related to the case as necessary.

306.3 Termination of Parental Rights

08/2013

DCFS INITIATES TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

09/2008

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Consult the OCC Attorney to determine if legal grounds exist for a disposition recommendation of termination of parental rights.
B. Schedule and conduct a permanency planning family team meeting prior to the permanency planning hearing to determine if continuing contact with the custodial and non-custodial caregivers or putative caregiver could cause harm to the child and to determine the likelihood that the child will be adopted if the termination petition is granted. Those invited to participate in the family team meeting are the custodial and non-custodial caregivers, attorney for the caregiver, age-appropriate child, OCC attorney, County Manager, Adoption Specialist, attorney ad litem, and resource parents.
C. Prepare a Permanency Planning Court Report and submit it to the OCC Attorney at least fourteen (14) days before the Permanency Planning Hearing.
D. Work with the OCC Attorney to file a petition to terminate parental rights.
E. Work with the OCC Attorney to prepare for termination of parental rights hearing within thirty (30) days from the date of the entry of the court order.
F. Provide the OCC Attorney with information on the CFS-408: Federal Parent Locator System Information regarding the custodial and non-custodial caregivers or putative caregivers so that notice of the termination petition can be provided.
G. Provide the OCC Attorney with the name and address of any grandparent who is entitled to notice (based on the conditions listed in Internal Procedure Notification of Kin When

a Child is Taken into Custody by the Division).

The Adoption Specialist will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting if adoption is to be considered as a permanent plan for a child.
B. Work with the OCC Attorney to prepare for the termination of parental rights hearing.

COURT INITIATES TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

Sometimes the court will determine that the goal should be termination of parental rights when it is not the recommendation of the Division. In these instances, the following procedures will apply:

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Work with the OCC Attorney to file a petition to terminate parental rights within thirty (30) days from the date of the entry of the court order.
B. Notify the Area Manager in writing with a copy of the order attached.
C. Consult the County Manager and OCC attorney immediately to assess whether the order should be appealed or if a rehearing is appropriate.
D. Work with OCC attorney to prepare for termination of parental rights hearing.
E. Schedule and conduct a permanency family team meeting, if applicable, to determine if continuing contact with the birth and legal caregivers or putative caregiver could cause harm to the child and to determine the likelihood that the child will be adopted if the termination petition is granted. Those invited to participate in the permanency family team meeting are the birth and legal caregiver(s), attorney for the caregiver, age-appropriate child, OCC attorney, County Manager, Adoption Specialist, attorney ad litem and resource parents.
F. Provide the OCC attorney with the name and address of any grandparent who is entitled to notice.
G. Provide the OCC attorney with the name and last known address of birth, legal, and putative caregivers so that notice of the termination petition can be provided.

CUSTODIAL OR NON-CUSTODIAL CAREGIVERS REQUESTS TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

When caregivers want to relinquish custody to the Division and free a child for a permanent placement the Specialist or the Adoption Specialist (for unborn or newborn infants only) will:

A. Discuss service options and offer services to maintain the family unit.
B. Read to the caregiver the section of the consent form (OCC-410) that explains the right to withdraw consent to termination of parental rights form.
C. Notify OCC Attorney.

If the caregiver still wishes to relinquish custody to the Division after efforts to preserve the family have been offered, the Specialist or the Adoption Specialist (for unborn or newborn infants only), will:

A. Present an OCC-410: Consent to Termination of Parental Rights to the caregivers and explain the form:
    1) Read the section related to the caregivers right to withdraw consent to the

caregiver (OCC-410 on CHRIS Net is titled OPLS-410)

B. Notify County Manager in writing if caregivers sign OCC-410, with a copy attached.
C. Notify OCC attorney in writing with the original OCC-410 attached.
D. If, within ten (10) calendar days from the signature date on the OCC-410, the caregiver wishes to withdraw their consent to termination of parental rights, assist the caregiver in filing the affidavit to withdraw parental consent. If the ten (10) day period ends on a weekend or legal holiday, the caregiver may file the affidavit the next business day. No fee shall be charged for the filing of the affidavit.
E. Schedule and conduct a family team meeting, if applicable, to determine if continuing contact with the custodial and non-custodial caregivers or putative caregiver could cause harm to the child and to determine the likelihood that the child will be adopted if the termination petition is granted. Those invited to participate in the family team meeting are the custodial and non-custodial caregivers, attorney for the caregiver, age-appropriate child, OCC attorney, County Manager, Adoption Specialist, attorney ad litem and resource parents.
F. Work with the OCC attorney to prepare for termination of parental rights hearing.
G. Provide the OCC attorney with the name and last known address of custodial and non-custodial caregivers or putative caregivers so that notice of the termination petition can be provided.
J. Refer to Internal Procedure Fast Track Adoption Under Garrett's Law, and Internal Procedure Birth Caregiver Relinquishing Infants For Adoption Under the Safe Haven Act if applicable.

306.4 Legal Counsel for Children Experiencing Foster Care

09/2008

The person making the referral (field staff, Supervisor, Area Manager) will:

A. Send the request via email to the Special Assistant to the Director. The request must include the child's name, county responsible, and reason for the referral.
B. The Special Assistant to the Director will review the referral and, if accepted, forward to the attorney via email.
C. The Special Assistant to the Director will notify the person making the referral and the Area Manager of the decision via email within ten (10) business days of receiving the request.

If the child is involved in an administrative proceeding, Fair Hearings will send a notice to provide an attorney directly to the Special Assistant to the Director, who will send a copy of the notice via email to the Area Manager.

Internal Procedure 307: Division Contacts

05/2025

The Division shall maintain an adequate level of contact with the family to:

A. Protect the safety of the child.
B. Protect the child from further child maltreatment.

C. Provide family support.

When a report of child maltreatment is true, it is determined that the child shall remain in the home, and an assessment of risk of future involvement indicates a services case is needed, the appropriate frequency for contacts to the child and family shall be no less than weekly in the home during the first month that the case is opened. If the case is open longer than one (1) month, Division staff may consult with one another to determine if contacts may safely be held less frequently than weekly. Contacts with the family in the home, with a face-to-face contact with the child, will be held at least once a month. Less frequent contact shall be dictated by the assessment of safety of the child and family and must have prior approval by Division supervisory staff. Division supervisory staff must review the current Safety and Risk Assessments for the child before granting a waiver.

307.1 Social Service Specialist Contacts – All Children Are In the Home

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Contact the child and family in the home to address their assessed needs.
   If there is a reason why the contact did not occur in the home, document the reason in the case record.
B. Make weekly face-to-face contacts with the family during the first month that the case is opened:
   1) A face-to-face contact is defined as an in-person contact with the offender, victim or caretaker for the purpose of observation, conversation or interviews about substantive case issues
   2) Safety and Risk Assessments, service planning, Family Case Planning or Family Case Plan progress, are examples of substantive case issues
   3) A weekly or family contact is completed once contact is made with the victim child and primary caretakers to assess the child's health and safety and Family Case Plan progress
C. Contacts by other DCFS staff (for example an assistant or Supervisor) will count as a weekly contact after the case has been opened thirty (30) days.
D. If the case is open longer than one (1) month, and the Supervisor has approved less frequent contacts than weekly then contact the family in their home, with a face-to-face contact with the child as frequently as approved, but at least once a month:
   1) High-risk cases must continue to have at least weekly face-to-face contact
   2) Moderate or low risk cases must have at least monthly face-to-face contact
E. Contacts can occur in other locations, however, there must be a once a month contact in the home.
F. Contacts by other DCFS staff will not count as monthly contacts.
G. Engage family members in meaningful activities as dictated by the Family Case Plan.
H. Document weekly contacts in the Division information management system client information screen by clicking on services/contacts and selecting 'New' for each new client contact.
I. Weekly contacts must be maintained for cases with high risk levels and for families where the child's or family's situation raises protective concerns and where weekly contact is

necessary to monitor the family situation and assure child safety.

J. Specialist should maintain weekly contacts if the child is experiencing a period of crisis in the home, school, or community and contact with the Specialist can be of assistance to the child in coping with the crisis.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Review the Specialist's documentation in the Division information management system.
B. Click on the Weekly Contacts Waiver check box:
    1) Key in the mandatory explanation field to include documentation that the Safety and Risk Assessments have been reviewed for less than Weekly Contacts to be approved
    2) Under no circumstances can a waiver be granted for less than weekly contacts based on staff shortages without other appropriate justification

307.2 Social Service Specialist Contact – At Least One Child is Experiencing Foster Care

If at least one (1) of the children has been removed from the home and is experiencing foster care the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Regularly inform the child and placement provider when contacts will take place (though unannounced contacts are allowable when necessary):
    1) Keep all scheduled contact appointments or, if unable to do so, inform the child and provider about the cancellation and reschedule as soon as possible
B. Document contacts with the child in their out-of-home placement on the contact screen with the "Face to Face Placement Provider" selected as the type and "Foster Child Weekly/Monthly" selected as the purpose.
C. Document all other forms of contact with the child in the Division information management system contact screens.
D. Speak with any assistants, secondary Specialists, interns, or volunteers who have interacted with the child to gather information regarding those interactions and review the Division information management system contacts entered by other Division staff.
E. Conference with the Supervisor about information collected during regular contacts and other contact with the child.
F. Update the Family Case Plan tool and Family Case Plan as appropriate based on contacts and other contact with the child.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist regarding regular contacts and other contact with the child.
B. Conduct contacts with the child in the out-of-home placement if needed.

The Social Service Assistant will:

A. Share information gathered during their contact with children in out-of-home placements with the child's Specialist and the assistant's Supervisor.
B. Document contacts with children in out-of-home placements in the Divisions' information management system.

307.3 Contacts with Caregivers of Children Experiencing Foster Care

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Conduct the first face-to-face contact with the biological caregivers within five (5) days of the child entering an out-of-home placement to:
    1) Introduce themselves, if not already completed
    2) Ensure the caregivers understand the reason for removal
    3) Collect any information critical to their child's health and well-being not already given to the Investigator Specialist or on-call Specialist at the time of removal including but not limited to:
        a) Child's allergies
        b) Child's medications
        c) Child's school and other educational information
        d) Behavioral information regarding the child
        e) Child's likes and dislikes
        f) Support items for the child such as stuffed animals
        g) Names and contact information for potential kinship placements
    4) Begin gathering information about the strengths and needs of the family to assist with the completion of the Family Case Plan tool and Family Case Plan
B. As part of meeting due diligence in establishing in-person contact with the caregivers, complete as many of the following activities necessary to complete the first in-home contact or any contacts thereafter:
    1) Conduct the appropriate Division of County Operations (DCO) record checks to attempt to obtain a valid address for the caregivers
    2) Ask the local, county, and state law enforcement agencies to check their records for information that may the caregivers
    3) Ask kin and friends of the caregivers to provide information to help locate the caregivers
    4) Contact the local post office, utility companies, and schools to request a check of their records
    5) Conduct a CLEAR search to attempt to locate the caregivers
    6) Utilize CFS-155: Unable to Locate Checklist for additional efforts to locate the caregivers
    7) Document contacts with biological caregivers in the Case Contact screen (workload/case/services/contacts) with the purpose of "Family Contact"
C. Update the family assessment and the Family Case Plan as appropriate based on caregiver contacts and other contact.

Internal Procedure 308: DCFS and Law Enforcement Interfaces

07/2025

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Accompany the officer arresting an individual for interference with custody.
B. Take the minor into temporary Division custody pending further proceedings from a court

of competent jurisdiction.

C. Contact OCC immediately.

Internal Procedure 309: Child Involved in a DCFS Services Case Who Is Missing

05/2025

Occasionally there are instances when a child or youth involved in an open prevention, in-home, or permanency services case may run away or otherwise leave a placement without permission. In all instances of missing children who are part of an open services case, the Division will collaborate with the child's family, law enforcement, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to locate the child.

Children experiencing foster care who are located after they run away from Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) approved placements in another state are handled by the DCFS ICPC office. However, if a pick- up order is issued, the Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ) applies.

The Social Service Specialist will issue a Protective Services Alert if all the following are met:

A. The family has left the county of origin and moved with their children to another county or state.
B. The new address is unknown.
C. The child's health or safety is deemed to be in immediate danger because the family is involved with DCFS and has an identified safety threat.

Neither ICJ nor ICPC are applicable to children who are not experiencing foster care and are kidnapped (by either a custodial or non-custodial parent) and taken to another state. These situations are a matter between the legal custodian and law enforcement. However, for children with whom the Division comes into contact due to an interference with custody issue not related to a child who is in DCFS custody, please refer to Policy 9 CAR §40-743 : Interference with Custody.

All children from families where the Division has an open case who have returned after being missing will be assessed within three (3) days for possible human trafficking.

PREVENTION AND IN-HOME CASES: CHILD WHO MAY HAVE BEEN TAKEN WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION OR THE FAMILY HAS ABSCONDED WITH THE CHILDREN

If the family or Division has reason to believe the child was taken from their caregivers without authorization by another individual, then upon notification, the family's Specialist and the Specialist's Supervisor will ensure the following individuals are notified of the child's disappearance:

A. Area Manager.
B. Assistant Director of Field Operations, or designee.
C. The Assistant Director of Field Operations, or designee will then notify the DCFS Director.

PERMANENCY SERVICE CASE: CHILD WHO MAY HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM A FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT

If the placement provider has reason to believe the child was taken from the placement without authorization by another individual, then the placement provider will immediately notify the youth's primary Specialist and their Supervisor. The out-of-home placement provider will also begin an immediate search for the child or youth. The search will entail the following actions:

A. Searching the immediate premises.
B. Searching the community to contact the child's friends and other contacts who may know of or have information regarding the child's whereabouts.

Upon notification from the placement provider, the youth's primary Specialist and Supervisor will ensure the following individuals are notified of the child's disappearance:

A. Area Manager.
B. Assistant Director of Field Operations, or designee.
C. The Division Manager of Field Operations or designee will then notify the DCFS Director.

PREVENTION AND IN-HOME SERVICES CASE: CHILD WHO MAY HAVE RUN AWAY

If the family, Division, or both have reason to believe the child independently left their home of their own accord (for example, if they ran away), then upon notification, the family's Specialist and the Specialist's Supervisor will ensure the Area Manager is also notified of the child's disappearance.

PERMANENCY SERVICES CASE: CHILD WHO MAY HAVE RUN AWAY

If the placement provider has reason to believe the child left the out-of-home placement of their own accord, such as if they run away, then the out-of-home placement provider will begin an immediate search for the child or youth. The search will entail the following actions:

A. Searching the immediate premises.
B. Searching the community to contact the child's friends and other contacts who may know of or have information regarding the child's whereabouts.

If the child is located within one (1) hour of initiating the search, the placement provider will notify the primary Social Service Specialist and Specialist's Social Service Supervisor of the incident no later than the next calendar day. The child's Specialist will document the incident, such as, if the child ran away but was located within one (1) hour), accordingly in the Division information management system. The county of origin or resident county Specialist, as appropriate, will also conduct a contact with the child and placement provider by the next business day to assess why the child ran away and what immediate steps may need to be taken to better support both the child and placement provider.

If the child who is believed to have run away of their own accord cannot be located within one (1) hour of initiating the search, then at that point the out-of-home placement provider will immediately notify the youth's primary Specialist and Specialist's Supervisor.

309.1 When a Child is Reported Missing from a Prevention or In-Home Services Case

07/2024

The following applies to situations in which the child has been taken from their caregivers without authorization and to situations in which the child has run away independently from the home. After receiving notification of the child's disappearance from the child's family or by other means, the Specialist will:

A. Notify their Supervisor and the child's attorney ad litem (if there is court involvement and an AAL is assigned) within two (2) hours. This notification may occur via email, phone, or text.

B. Determine within two (2) hours whether the child's caregivers have filed a missing person report with the local police department or sheriff's office:

1) If the caregivers have filed a missing person report, obtain the missing report number from the caregivers

2) If the caregivers have not filed a missing person report, encourage them to file the report with the local police department or sheriff's office as soon as possible and obtain the missing person report number from the caregivers as soon as possible

3) If the caregivers refuse to file a missing person report within one (1) business day, contact the local police department or sheriff's office immediately to file a missing person report and provide the following information where reasonably possible:

a) Child's name

b) A description of the child's physical features such as height, weight, sex, ethnicity, race, hair color, and eye color

c) A photo of the child:

i. Any published photo or other information published to help locate the child shall not identify the child as being involved with DCFS

d) Child's date of birth

e) Circumstances of the missing child's disappearance, including the date the child went missing or was last seen and if the child indicated a destination , what the destination was

f) Any other factual, biographical, or historical information that may assist with locating the missing child

g) Endangerment information such as the child's pregnancy status, prescription medications, suicidal tendencies, vulnerability to being sex trafficked, and other health or risk factors

h) A request for law enforcement to enter the information into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database of the FBI:

i. If the local police department or sheriff's office will not allow DCFS to file a missing person report on behalf of the family, document the attempt to file the missing person report in the Division information management system

C. Once a police report has been filed, contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited

Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) no later than twenty-four (24) hours after receiving information on missing or abducted children or youth to provide the following information where reasonably possible to NCMEC per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DCFS and NCMEC:

1) Child's name
2) A description of the child's physical features such as height, weight, sex, ethnicity, race, hair color, and eye color
3) Photo of the child:
    a) Any published photo or other information published to help locate the child shall not identify the child as being involved with DCFS
4) Child's date of birth
5) Name and contact information of the Specialist and Supervisor
6) Investigating law enforcement agency name, contact information, and case number (missing person report number)
7) Circumstances of the missing child's disappearance, including the date the child went missing or was last seen
8) Any other factual, biographical, or historical information that may assist with locating the missing child
9) Endangerment information such as the child's pregnancy status, prescription medications, suicidal tendencies, vulnerability to being sex trafficked, and other health or risk factors

D. Upon NCMEC's request, release to NCMEC any addition requested information or records in the Division possession that are relevant to locating the missing child.
E. Maintain regular communication with law enforcement agencies and NCMEC in efforts to provide the safe recovery of a missing or abducted child, including sharing information pertaining to the child's recovery and circumstances related to the recovery.
F. Update contacts in the Division information management system regarding the missing child and efforts to locate the missing child.
G. If the child:
    1) Is not found and there are other children in the home:
        a) Continue to provide services to the family and other children as appropriate
        b) Continue contacting previously identified parties to determine whether additional information is available and provide newly available information
        c) If appropriate, extend the search to other counties and states
    2) Is not found within sixty (60) calendar days and is the only child in the home:
        a) Update the family's assessment to determine if additional services (such as counseling) may be appropriate for the caregivers
        b) Close the case if the family does not need further services

After notification of the child's disappearance by the family or by other means, the Supervisor will:

A. Notify the Area Manager or designee of the child's disappearance.
B. Conference with the Specialist as needed.

309.2 When a Child is Reported Missing from an Out-of-Home Placement

07/2024

After receiving notification of the child's disappearance by the placement provider, the primary Specialist will:

A. Notify the child's custodial or non-custodial parent of the discovery of the child's disappearance within two (2) hours (or sooner depending on the age of the child) by phone, or preferably a contact at the home if possible:
    1) If the parents currently reside in a county outside the primary Specialist's county, the resident county Specialist or an appropriate Supervisor may conduct the home contact to notify the parents that their child is currently missing
    2) If the custodial or non-custodial parent's current or correct address or telephone number is unknown, a letter will be written to the parent's last known address

B. Notify Supervisor, child's county of resident Specialist, TYS Coordinator (if applicable), and attorney ad litem within two (2) hours via email, phone, or text.

C. Notify the state police, local police department, or sheriff's office, as applicable, within two (2) hours after receiving information on missing or abducted children or youth. The notification, which may occur via email, text, or phone will include where reasonably possible:
    1) Child's name
    2) A description of the child's physical features such as height, weight, sex, ethnicity, race, hair color, and eye color
    3) A photo of the child:
        a) Any published photos or other information published to help locate the child shall not identify the child as a child experiencing foster care
    4) Child's date of birth
    5) Circumstances of the missing child's disappearance, including the date the child went missing or was last seen, and if the child indicated a destination, what the destination was
    6) Any other factual, biographical, or historical information that may assist with locating the missing child
    7) Endangerment information such as the child's pregnancy status, prescription medications, suicidal tendencies, vulnerability to being sex trafficked, and other health or risk factors
    8) A request for law enforcement to enter the information into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database of the FBI

D. Once a police report has been filed, contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) no later than twenty-four (24) hours after receiving information on missing or abducted children or youth, to provide the following information where reasonably possible to NCMEC per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DCFS and NCMEC:
    1) Child's name
    2) A description of the child's physical features such as height, weight, sex, ethnicity, race, hair color, and eye color

3) Photo of the child:
    a) Any published photos or other information published to help locate the child shall not identify the child as a child experiencing foster care
4) Child's date of birth
5) Name and contact information of the primary Specialist and Supervisor
6) Investigating law enforcement agency name, contact information, and case number, including a missing person report number
7) Circumstances of the missing child's disappearance, including the date the child went missing or was last seen
8) Any other factual, biographical, or historical information that may assist with locating the missing child
9) Endangerment information such as the child's pregnancy status, prescription medications, suicidal tendencies, vulnerability to being sex trafficked, and other health or risk factors

E. Upon NCMEC's request, release to NCMEC any additional requested information or records that are relevant to locating the missing child.
F. Maintain regular communication with law enforcement agencies and NCMEC in efforts to provide a safe recovery of a missing or abducted child, including by sharing information pertaining to the child's recovery and circumstances related to the recovery.
G. Contact the local OCC and request OCC to complete and file a pick-up order and a motion and order to notify the court that the child is missing no more than twenty-four (24) hours after receiving notification of a missing child:
    1) The motion requesting the pick-up order and the proposed order will put the court on notice that the child is missing
H. Provide the order regarding the missing child to the designated TYS representative in DCFS Central Office who will assist in locating the youth.
I. Update the child's placement information in the Division information management system within two (2) business days, to include completion of fields regarding the required reports made to local law enforcement and NCMEC:
    1) Even when the child is placed on runaway status, the child's Medicaid case will remain open. If the child is still on runaway status at the time of their Medicaid redetermination, such as the anniversary of their entering foster care, then the Medicaid case will be closed at that time
J. Communicate regularly with the child's resident county Specialist, TYS Coordinator, and designated TYS representative in central office, as applicable.
K. When an Arkansas child experiencing foster care has run away and is located in another state, notify the Administrator of the Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ) of the Division of Youth Services:
    1) ICJ will process all out-of-state runaway probationers, runaways, and children experiencing foster care
L. If the child is not found:
    1) Continue to call previously contacted parties and inquire for information, furnish further information that becomes available, and if appropriate, extend the search to other counties and states

2) Update the custodial or non-custodial parents to assure them that the search continues no less than weekly when current contact information for the custodial or non-custodial parents is available:
    a) This requirement does not apply to parents whose parental rights have been terminated

After receiving notification of the child's disappearance from the Specialist, the Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Notify the Area Manager or designee of the child's disappearance.
B. Conference with the Specialist as needed.

309.3 When a Child Missing from an Out-of-Home Placement is Located

07/2024

When a child missing from an out-of-home placement is located, the primary Specialist will:

A. Ensure the child has a physical exam by their primary care physician, if possible, within seventy-two (72) hours of locating the child or immediately in the case of a medical emergency.
B. Notify immediately (but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the child has been located) all parties and individuals previously notified of the child's disappearance that the child has been located to include, but not limited to:
    1) Resident county Specialist, if applicable
    2) TYS, if applicable
    3) Supervisor
    4) Area Manager
    5) Placement provider
    6) Local OCC attorney
    7) Child's attorney ad litem
    8) Custodial and non-custodial parents
    9) Law enforcement
    10) NCMEC:
        a) This notification may occur via email, phone, or text as appropriate
C. Conduct a contact with the child and placement provider by the next business day after the child has been located to determine what immediate needs the child and placement provider may have and what immediate steps may need to be taken to better support both the child and placement provider (this contact may be conducted by the resident county specialist as appropriate).
D. Update the child's placement in the Division information management system within two (2) business days of locating the child.
E. Determine the primary factors that contributed to the child's running away or otherwise being absent to include:
    1) Updating the child's assessment in the Division information management system thirty (30) days of locating the child
    2) Determining if the child is a possible sex trafficking victim based on responses to

the updated assessment and any other information gathered:

a) If there is reason to believe the child is, or is at risk of being, a victim of sex trafficking:
    i. Document accordingly in the Division information management system and conference with the Supervisor to determine appropriate next steps for additional screening related to sex trafficking victims and referral to appropriate services
    ii. Report information on children or youth who have been identified as being a sex trafficking victim to local law enforcement immediately, and in no case later than twenty-four (24) hours after receiving the information
    iii. Document in the Division information management system when local law enforcement is notified of a child being identified as a sex trafficking victim

F. Communicate regularly with the child's resident county Specialist and TYS , if applicable.

The resident county Specialist will:

A. Collaborate with the county of origin Specialist as needed to ensure:
    1) The child has a physical exam by their primary care physician, if possible, within seventy-two (72) hours of locating the child
    2) All appropriate parties are notified that the child has been located

The Social Service Supervisors will:

A. Conference with the Specialists as needed.
B. Notify the Area Manager or designee.

Internal Procedure 310: Missing and Exploited Youth Coordinator

06/2026

The Missing and Exploited Youth Coordinator plays an integral role in locating children missing from foster care by supporting the youth's Specialist in these efforts.

The missing child's assigned Social Service Specialist will:

A. Report within two (2) hours of the child going missing the information on the missing or abducted child to the law enforcement agency where the child was last seen for entry into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC; see Division Policy 9 CAR § 40-834: Child Missing from an Out of Home Placement for more details):
    1) A photo of the missing or abducted child or youth
    2) A description of the child's or youth's physical features, such as height, weight, sex, ethnicity, race, hair color, and eye color
    3) Endangerment information, such as the youth's pregnancy status, disabilities, prescription medications, suicidal tendencies, substance use disorders,

vulnerability to being sex trafficked, and other health or risk factors
4) Whether child indicated a destination
5) If the individual was traveling by car, the make and model number, license plate number, as well as registration (if possible)
6) Name of the individual who last saw the missing person

B. Obtains a report number and the contact information for the officer assigned to the case and documents the report number in the Division's information management system.
C. Contact the local OCC attorney within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving notice for the missing child and request that the OCC attorney file a motion to notify the court that the child is missing.
D. Secure the personal belongings of the missing person until the police provide further direction:
    1) Items may include:
        a) Hairbrush, toothbrush, etc. in the event that investigators may need to undertake DNA analysis
        b) Electronic equipment such as a cell phone or computer that law enforcement may need to locate the child
        c) Any written material such as a journal, notes, or a diary
E. Follow all steps outlined in Internal Procedure Human Trafficking Response, to include, but not limited to notifying local law enforcement and NCMEC immediately if there is any suspicion that the youth is involved in human trafficking.
F. Document suspected human sex trafficking in the Division information management system.
G. Maintain regular communication with law enforcement agencies (local law enforcement, FBI, U.S. Marshals, as applicable) and NCMEC in efforts to provide a safe recovery of a missing or abducted child, including by sharing information pertaining to the child's recovery and circumstances related to the recovery.
H. Respond to law enforcement as needed who contact DCFS to provide an assessment when they locate and transport missing children to determine if it is appropriate to release the child to a specific person.
I. If the assigned missing detective determines the child needs to be entered into NAMUS, provide the items for DNA and medical and dental records as requested.

In most cases, DCFS staff will engage with the local assigned law enforcement officer or assigned detective first. However, in more severe cases (missing human trafficking victims), DCFS will keep in contact with the assigned Federal Bureau of Investigations agent or the Department of Justice/United States Marshals agent. DCFS works directly with the US Marshals office and communicates with them daily to locate children missing from foster care. DCFS also gives updates to the assigned VICE agent and CACD investigator when there are sex crime allegations. Depending on the severity of the matter (ongoing matters in criminal court) determines the amount of ongoing communication needed with law enforcement. The follow-up contact is circumstantial based on the need for follow-up communication.

In addition, the Missing or Exploited Youth Coordinator helps support local DCFS staff in locating missing children by:

A. Monitoring Missing Children Report generated by the Division's information management system and researching efforts put forth to date regarding locating the youth to include electronic case record review to ensure required notifications to local law enforcement and NCMEC have been made.
B. Communicating with or ensuring the assigned Specialist communicates with local law enforcement and NCMEC to approve the photo provided and determine if it shall be released via the media:
    1) DCFS communicates with both agencies that the child shall not be identified as a child experiencing foster care to the public
C. Running the missing child's photo in investigative software (Spotlight) to assist law enforcement agents with any social media posts uploaded of the child through facial recognition software.
D. Coaching local staff regarding due diligence efforts to locate missing youth and collaborating with local staff, local law enforcement, and other stakeholders to help locate missing youth from Central Office through use of social media platforms and other online tools (CLEAR and Spotlight) and documenting efforts in the Division information management system, as applicable.
E. Providing training and other information regarding missing youth and human trafficking to staff, youth, and stakeholders upon request to increase awareness of the vulnerability of youth experiencing foster care to trafficking.
F. Monitoring No Photo Report in the Division's information management system and working with local staff to have current pictures uploaded (and sent to NCMEC, when applicable) while providing coaching in regard to importance of maintaining up-to-date photos in the Division's information management system.
G. Assisting with maintaining regular communication with or ensuring assigned Specialist's communication with law enforcement agencies (local law enforcement, FBI, U.S. Marshals, as applicable) and NCMEC in efforts to provide a safe recovery of a missing or abducted child or youth, including by sharing information pertaining to the child's or youth's recovery and circumstances related to the recovery.

Internal Procedure 311: Human Trafficking Response

08/2025

SCREENING AND IDENTIFICATION

On February 14, 2023, Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders signed into effect the Executive Order to Prevent Human Trafficking and to Protect the Children and Youth of Arkansas which required the identification of a standardized screening tool. The Arkansas Human Trafficking Council (AHTC) identified the Rapid Indicator Tool and the Comprehensive Child Sex Trafficking Tool. The purpose of this procedure is to aid in the identification of child sex trafficking victims or high-risk victims and guide the Division response.

In most cases, staff will complete CFS-040: Human Trafficking Rapid Indicator Tool first and then the CFS-040-B: Child Sex Trafficking Comprehensive Tool if indicated. If the child has already disclosed sex trafficking, staff will move directly to the Comprehensive Screening Tool.

The tool should be completed based on information already gathered as part of the investigation, case, or record. Do not directly ask the child or family the questions. This is not a questionnaire and could place the child at risk of harm if the questions are asked directly.

All children identified as victims must receive services to address the needs identified.

311.1 Rapid Indicator Tool

The indicators listed in the CFS-040: Human Trafficking Rapid Indicator Tool help to determine whether a child may be a victim of sex trafficking or is at risk of being a victim of sex trafficking. These factors are to be considered as a means to determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe the child is a victim or at risk of being a victim, in which case a more comprehensive assessment of the child's experiences and service needs is required.

The Specialist will:

A. Complete CFS-040: Human Trafficking Rapid Indicator Tool:
    1) On all children thirteen (13) years of age and older who are involved in any open investigation, differential response, prevention case, in-home case, or permanency case
    2) On all children twelve (12) and younger if indicated based on the allegations or disclosure
    3) During each investigation or differential response, prior to closure and regardless of the allegations or findings
    4) Within three (3) business days each time a child returns from running away or otherwise being missing
    5) If, after an initial screening, a Specialist learns new information that leads them to believe that the child is a victim or at risk of trafficking
B. Document the results of CFS-040: Human Trafficking Rapid Indicator Tool, or the reason the tool was not completed, in the Division information management system:
    1) In the “contact” screen
    2) In the ‘document tracking’ screen
    3) Upload Rapid Indicator to eDoctus
    4) Place a copy of the Rapid Indicator Tool results in the child’s case file
C. Next steps:
    1) If no indicators have been marked ‘yes’:
        a) No further screening is necessary at the time
    2) If one or more indicators are marked ‘yes’:
        a) Complete CFS-040-B: Child Sex Trafficking Comprehensive Screening Tool

b) Email the CFS-040: Rapid Indicator Tool results to:
    i. Supervisor
    ii. AHTC Human Trafficking Reports at ReportHT@arkansas.gov
    iii. Provide the primary assigned Specialist with a copy if completed during the investigation or DR

D. Be aware that:
    1) If a child is involved in subsequent investigations within ninety (90) days from the previous rapid indicator tool being completed, there is no need to repeat the tool unless:
        a) The child has had episodes of being missing, or otherwise absent without consent since the rapid indicator tool was last completed
        b) New information is made available that indicates the child may be a victim or at risk
    2) If DCFS and CACD have concurrent investigations with the same children, the Division investigating allegations of higher severity will complete the rapid indicator tool
    3) If CACD is conducting an investigation on a child experiencing foster care, the CACD Investigator and DCFS primary Specialist will collaborate to determine whether a new screening is necessary

311.2 Child Sex Trafficking Comprehensive Screening Tool

This tool is to be used as a more comprehensive assessment of risk and victimization when any one or more indicators is recorded on the Human Trafficking Rapid Indicator Tool or the child has already been confirmed as a victim. The CFS-040-B: Child Sex Trafficking Comprehensive Screening Tool is designed to assist DCFS in determining if the child is a sex trafficking victim or is at risk of being a victim.

The Child Sex Trafficking Comprehensive Screening Tool is broken up into three (3) sections:

A. Child Meets the Federal Definitions of a Child Sex Trafficking Victim.
B. High-Level Indicators.
C. Medium-Level Indicators.

The federal definition of Sex Trafficking according to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 is, “The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, advertising, or obtaining of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained eighteen (18) years of age.”

High-Level Indicators are those that are commonly associated with sex trafficking, which cause serious concerns. These children should be monitored closely and need intensive case management services to address current or prevent future trafficking.

Medium-Level Indicators are those that may indicate sex trafficking. These children should be monitored closely and provided services that may address current or prevent future trafficking.

The Specialist will:

A. Complete CFS-040-B: Child Sex Trafficking Comprehensive Screening Tool:
    1) For any child for whom one (1) or more indicators were identified on the CFS-040: Human Trafficking Rapid Indicators Tool
    2) For any child who has already been confirmed as a victim of sex trafficking
    3) Within thirty (30) calendar days of completing the Rapid Indicator Tool
B. Contact the Child Safety Administrator for assistance with completing the Child Sex Trafficking Comprehensive Screening Tool as necessary.
C. Consult with the child's clinical staff as necessary to complete the tool, to include, but not limited to:
    1) Therapist
    2) Psychiatrist
    3) CAC involved in the child's care
D. Document the results of the CFS-040-B: Comprehensive Screening Tool in the Division information management system:
    1) In the 'Contacts' screen
    2) In the 'Document Tracking' screen
    3) Upload to eDoctus
E. If one (1) or more indicators are selected under the *Child Meets the Federal Definitions of a Child Sex Trafficking Victim* section, the child will be documented as a victim of sex trafficking:
    1) Immediately:
        a) Contact the immediate or on-call Supervisor via phone for additional guidance
        b) Notify the Child Safety Administrator via email
    2) Within twenty-four (24) hours:
        a) Make a report to the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-482-5964 or mandatedreporter.arkansas.gov
        b) File a report with local law enforcement:
            i. Obtain the police report number
        c) Refer the child to the local CAC for a forensic interview
        d) Email the assessment document to:
            i. ReportHT@arkansas.gov
            ii. Area Manager
            iii. Direct Supervisor
    3) Within two (2) business days:
        a) Document the results and all other actions taken, including police report number, in the Division information management system

b) Complete the 'Sex Trafficking' tab of the child's 'Client' screen

4) Within five (5) business days:
   a) Determine appropriate services for the child:
      i. Conference with the Child Safety Administrator to determine what victim services exist in the area
      ii. Make appropriate referrals
      iii. Document referrals for services in the Division information management system

F. If one (1) or more High-Level Indicators are selected:
   1) Within two (2) business days:
      a) Email the document to:
         i. ReportHT@arkansas.gov
         ii. Direct Supervisor
      b) Refer the child to the local CAC for a forensic interview
   2) Within five (5) business days:
      a) Determine appropriate services for the child:
         i. Consult with the Child Safety Administrator to determine what victim services exist in the area
         ii. Make appropriate referrals
      b) If the child is already receiving therapy services, notify the child's clinician of the results
      c) Document the results and any referrals for services in the Division information management system

G. If one (1) or more Medium-Level Indicators are selected:
   1) Within three (3) business days:
      a) Email the document to:
         i. ReportHT@arkansas.gov
         ii. Direct Supervisor
   2) Within five (5) business days:
      a) Determine appropriate services for the child:
         i. Consult with the Child Safety Administrator to determine what victim services exist in the area
         ii. Make appropriate referrals
      b) If the child is already receiving therapy services, notify the child's clinician of the results
      c) Document the results and any referrals for services in the Division information management system

H. If no indicators are identified:
   1) Document the results in the Division information management system
   2) No further screening is needed unless:
      a) New information is learned

b) The child's circumstances change
c) The child returns from being missing, abducted, or absent without consent
d) A new investigation is open for the child

311.3 Ongoing Screenings

Child sex trafficking screenings must be ongoing throughout the life of a case and may occur multiple times as more information is learned about the child and their experiences. In addition, screening is required each time a child returns from being on runaway status or missing.

If a new screening is needed, the Specialist will:

A. Review the results of previous screenings:
    1) Determine what, if any, information needs to be updated
    2) Make necessary changes to the updated screening tool
B. If there are changes to the level of indicators:
    1) Follow all guidelines as outlined in Internal Procedure Child Sex Trafficking Comprehensive Screening Tool for the appropriate level
    2) Use the information to adjust the Family Case Plan Tool if necessary
C. If, through ongoing screening, it is determined the child meets the definition of a sex trafficking victim:
    1) Follow the steps outlined in Internal Procedure Child Sex Trafficking Comprehensive Screening for "Child Meets the Federal Definitions of a Child Sex Trafficking Victim."

Internal Procedure 312: Client Drug and Alcohol Screening

04/2025

Drug and alcohol screenings are completed when Division staff observed impairment, are provided credible information regarding impairment, have safety concerns, or are otherwise court ordered to complete a screen. Screening shall not be conducted as a routine practice without documented justification.

312.1 Administering Client Urine Specimen Drug Screens

10/2014

The DCFS employee will:

A. Ask the client to put away their purse, bag, jacket, etc. and empty all their pockets.
B. Observe the client empty their pockets to ensure they are empty. The only item the client may take into the restroom stall is the collection container.
C. Escort the client to the restroom.
D. Directly observe the clients wash their hands without soap.
E. Give the client only the collection container. The client must not have access to the screen.
F. Instruct the client to fill the cup to the marked line.
G. Observe the client enter the restroom, close the door to give privacy to the client, but remain immediately outside the restroom:
    1) Direct observation of urine collection shall only occur when specifically authorized by court order:

a) If court ordered to observe, the witness must be the same gender as the client

H. If the client has difficulty giving a specimen, have the client drink eight (8) ounces of water and wait up to two (2) hours for the client to give a urine specimen. As such, do not attempt to conduct the drug screen if a minimum of three (3) hours is not left in the business day to allow sufficient time for specimen collection and documentation.
I. After the cup has been returned to the Specialist or designee, visually examine the specimen:
    1) Suspicion of adulteration or dilution will be indicated by the PH screen and temperature gauge
J. Review and explain the screening results with the client.
K. Document the results via CFS-150: Drug and Alcohol Screen Results and gather all required signatures on the CFS-150: Drug and Alcohol Screen Results.
L. If the client does not challenge the screening results:
    1) Return the specimen cup to the client after the specimen has been screened and the results documented
    2) Ask the client to dispose of the contents in the toilet or urinal, flush, and discard the container in the designated trash container
    3) Place the top copy of the CFS-150: Drug and Alcohol Screen Results in the client record
    4) Retain the middle copy for submission to court
    5) Give the client the bottom copy of the completed CFS-150: Drug and Alcohol Screen Results.
    6) Scan and email the completed CFS-150: Drug and Alcohol Screen Results to all parties to the case
    7) Document drug and alcohol screen results and any other relevant information associated with drug and alcohol screen results in the Division information management system as applicable
M. If the client challenges the screening results, refer to 312.2 Urine Specimen Drug Screen Challenges below.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Ensure all staff administering or serving as witnesses to drug screen results have successfully completed the Division approved drug and alcohol vendor training.
B. Conference with the Specialist as needed regarding need for screening and any subsequent action steps.

312.2 Client Urine Specimen Drug Screening Challenges

10/2014

If urine specimen drug screen results are positive and the client challenges the result, the DCFS employee will:

A. Inform the client that the specimen will be sent to the lab for drug testing confirmation:
    1) If staff initially conducted the drug screen at the client's home, staff may offer to

re-screen the client at the county office that same day and have another DCFS staff person serve as a witness to the results of the second screening

B. The chain of custody will be maintained throughout the entire challenge process.
C. Complete the county specific vendor challenge form.
D. Write the client specimen identification number found on the county's vendor challenge form or mailing strip on the CFS-150: Drug and Alcohol Screen Results:
    1) The client specimen identification number is the identifier used in the subject line of the email that the lab sends when emailing the Specialist with the challenge results. This number is the only way to match the challenge results to the correct client so it is extremely important to record the client specimen identification number prior to mailing the challenge screen to the lab
E. Prepare the urine specimen for laboratory screening (lab will not process urine specimens that are received without proper identification):
    1) Notify the Prevention & Support Manager or designee that the collection will be sent for lab confirmation by emailing a copy of the chain of custody, prior to the urine specimen being sent to the lab
    2) Check for leakage of the collection device prior to sending the specimen for confirmation screening
    3) Use the supplied FedEx mailer envelopes to send the challenged, positive, urine specimens to the lab:
        a) If samples taken on weekends or after FedEx facility closes during the week, refrigerate samples until they are delivered to FedEx facility for shipment
    4) To access challenge results, contact the Area Financial Coordinator or designee for instructions on how to access the lab confirmation results via the internet
    5) If challenge results are contested, documentation of the chain of custody of urine specimen shall be verified by affidavit of one person witnessing the procedure or extraction, packaging, and mailing of the samples and by one person signing for the samples at the location where the samples are subject to the testing procedure:
        a) Submission of the affidavits, along with the submission of the screening results, shall be competent evidence to establish the chain of custody of those urine specimens
        b) For a court ordered screening, a written report of the results may be prepared by the person conducting the screening, or by a person under whose supervision or direction the screen and analysis have been performed
        c) This report must be certified by an affidavit subscribed and sworn to before a notary public
        d) This report may be introduced in evidence without calling the person as a witness, unless a motion challenging the screening procedures or results has been filed within thirty (30) days before the hearing and bond is posted in an amount sufficient to cover the costs of the person's appearance to testify

If the alcohol screen results are positive and the client challenges the results, staff will:

A. Inform the client they may immediately obtain a blood test from a qualified agency or immediately take a breathalyzer test at the local police station.

312.3 Administering Other Client Drug and Alcohol Screens

01/2014

Staff will:

A. Refer to vendor information for screen (K2 strip, ALCO screen) collection procedures and interpreting results.
B. Under normal circumstances, limit the entire screening process to fifteen (15) minutes.
C. Verbally share and explain the drug screen results to the client.
D. Document the results via CFS-150: Drug and Alcohol Screen Results and gather all required signatures on the CFS-150: Drug and Alcohol Screen Results.
E. If the specimen screening results are positive and the client challenges the result:
    1) Prepare the oral fluids specimen for laboratory confirmation, if applicable, for that specific screen. Do not dispose of an oral fluids specimen that needs to be sent to the screening laboratory for confirmation testing:
        a) Send the specimen to the lab per the vendor's instructions
        b) Access lab confirmation results (see Area Financial Coordinator for more information)
        c) If challenge results are contested, documentation of the chain of custody of specimen shall be verified by affidavit of one person witnessing the procedure or extraction, packaging, and mailing of the samples and by one person signing for the samples at the location where the samples are subject to the testing procedure:
            i. Submission of the affidavits, along with the submission of the screening results, shall be competent evidence to establish the chain of custody
            ii. For a court ordered screening, a written report of the results may be prepared by the person conducting the screening, or by a person under whose supervision or direction the screen and analysis have been performed
            iii. This report must be certified by an affidavit subscribed and sworn to before a notary public
            iv. This report may be introduced in evidence without calling the person as a witness, unless a motion challenging the screening procedures or results has been filed within thirty (30) days before the hearing and bond is posted in an amount sufficient to cover the costs of the person's appearance to testify
    2) If the oral fluid specimen is not able to have a laboratory confirmation and the client still wishes to challenge the result, immediately accompany the client to a qualified agency for confirmation testing provided the qualified agency will give results in writing to DCFS

F. If the client does not challenge the results of the screening:
    1) Return oral fluids screening kit to the client after the specimen has been tested and results documented
    2) Ask the client to discard the kit in the designated trash container
    3) Observe the client dispose of the collection kit in the designated trash container

312.4 Maintenance and Re-ordering of Drug and Alcohol Screens

10/2014

The county office will:

A. Store the drug screen kits at room temperature:
    1) Do *not* leave drug screen kits in vehicles for storage purposes as this will impair the effectiveness of the drug kits
B. Always maintain an adequate supply of drug screening materials, including copies of drug screening information.
C. Closely monitor the specimen collection supplies:
    1) County office supply stock will not fall below fifteen (15) kits
D. Drug screen kits past their expiration dates will *not* be used and will be disposed of immediately (expiration date will be clearly marked on each drug screen kit).
E. Use new supplies only after current supplies are depleted.
F. If the county has several kits nearing expiration, order new drug or alcohol screen kits as well as challenge kits directly from the DCFS approved vendor and copy the Prevention and Support Unit on the order request.
G. Address questions pertaining to chain of custody challenged screening to the central office prevention and support unit.

The central office Prevention and Support Unit will:

A. Ensure funds are available for all drug and alcohol screen kit orders and challenge kit orders.
B. Email DCFS approved vendor to inform them whether to move forward with county order request (based on availability of funds) and copy county point of contact on the email.
C. Respond to the county office regarding questions related to DCFS approved drug screen and challenge kits.
D. Serve as liaison between the county office and DCFS approved drug screen vendor.

Internal Procedure 313: Caregiver Referrals for Psychological Evaluations

09/2025

DCFS recognizes that psychological evaluations may be necessary during an in-home or out-of-home case to better understand the treatment needs of some caregivers.

When determining whether a psychological evaluation is the appropriate service, Specialists should reference the Assessment Services Flow Chart. Psychological evaluations should only be considered when:

- The client is receiving counseling and medication management, but the worry is not resolved
- The client's treatment team makes the recommendation
- An intellectual or developmental disability is suspected
- The client has, or shows signs of a psychosis-based or factitious disorder (Munchausen syndrome)

Psychological evaluations offer:

- Assessments of:
    - Presenting problems
    - Emotionality, intellectual abilities, personality, and psychopathology
    - Culturally and age-appropriate psychosocial history
    - Mental status and clinical observations and impressions
- They provide:
    - A description and interpretations of tests administered and their results
    - Diagnostic impressions based on history, observation, and results of tests
- They offer treatment recommendations and findings guided by test results

When a psychological evaluation is deemed the most appropriate service, the primary Specialist will:

A. Complete the CFS-0015: Request for Service Encumbrance indicating Psychological Evaluation:
    1) Obtain Unit Supervisor and County Manager approval, as appropriate
    2) Email signed CFS-0015 to the Assistant Director of Mental Health and Treatment Services, or designee, at DCFS.Psych.Eval@dhs.arkansas.gov. Include the following supporting documentation:
        a) Completed CFS-0015: Encumbrance
        b) Current Family Assessment
        c) Current Family Case Plan
        d) Affidavit
        e) Most recent court order
        f) Most recent therapy or psychiatric records, as applicable
B. Provide any additional documentation requested by the Assistant Director of Mental Health and Treatment Services, or designee.
C. If the service is approved, submit the following to the Area Financial Coordinator:
    1) Completed CFS-0015: Encumbrance
    2) All supporting documentation
    3) Approval email from the Assistant Director of Mental Health and Treatment Services, or designee

The Assistant Director of Mental Health and Treatment Services, or designee will:

A. Conduct a thorough clinical review on all requests for psychological evaluations.

B. Request additional supporting documentation as needed.
C. Approve or deny all requests via email and provide a justification for the decision:
    1) If approved, Assistant Director of Mental Health and Treatment Services, or designee will send, via email, the following information to the Specialist and their Supervisor:
        a) Justification for approval
        b) Clinical summary for the provider
        c) Referral questions for the provider
    2) If denied, Assistant Director of Mental Health and Treatment Services, or designee will email the following information to the Specialist and their Supervisor:
        a) Justification for denial
        b) Alternate recommendations
D. Review psychological evaluation reports once submitted by the provider.
E. Offer consultation as needed to discuss evaluation results.

Internal Procedure 314: Interpreter Services

Both verbal language and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services are available statewide and require, when possible, a twenty-four (24)-hour notice. Language interpretation may be provided over the phone as well as in person.

SPOKEN INTERPRETER SERVICES

The Specialist will:

A. If the service is needed during normal business hours:
    1) Contact the Area Financial Coordinator to request interpreter services if the service is needed during normal business hours.
    2) Provide the Financial Coordinator with:
        a) Date, time, and location that the service is needed
        b) The language (including ASL) needed
        c) Whether in-person or telephone interpretation services are needed
        d) Notification if the appointment must be cancelled
    3) If in-person language interpretation is provided:
        a) Sign the service verification form provided by the interpreter after service is rendered. The signature verifies that the service was provided
        b) Return the signed verification form to the interpreter
    4) If interpretation services are provided over the phone, there will not be a verification form to sign
B. If the service is needed after hours or on weekends:
    1) Contact the appropriate vendor directly to schedule the appointment. See Internal Procedure Interpreter Services in Investigation for the contact numbers.
    2) Notify the provider if the appointment must be cancelled
    3) Sign the service verification form provided by the interpreter after service is rendered. The signature verifies that the service was provided
    4) Return the signed verification form to the interpreter.

The Area Financial Coordinator will:

A. During normal business hours, contact the vendor and schedule the appointment.

WRITTEN TRANSLATION SERVICES

The DCFS staff member needing the service will:

A. Obtain Supervisor approval for the translation request
B. If approval is obtained, send document needing translation to the DCFS Foster Care Program Manager.
C. Advise the Foster Care Program Manager or designee of the translated language that is needed.

Central office staff will:

A. Forward the document to the provider for an estimate.
B. Approve or deny the estimate.
C. If estimate approved, sign the estimate document and email back to the vendor.
D. Forward the translated document to the DCFS staff member who made the request.

Internal Procedure 315: Specialized Women's Services

08/2025

DCFS is committed to supporting recovery, strengthening families, and promoting long-term stability for children and their caregivers. Specialized Women Services (SWS) aligns with our trauma informed and family centered practice model by providing targeted support to pregnant and parenting women experiencing substance abuse disorders.

SWS is an evidenced-based program designed to meet the unique needs of pregnant and parenting women working toward recovery. The program supports reunification and permanency by addressing barriers these mothers face and equipping them with the tools necessary for long-term success. Services may include:

- Individual and group therapy
- Job skills training
- Parenting classes
- Daycare and early childhood services
- Care coordination
- Aftercare planning

These supports aim to reduce placement disruptions, promote child well-being, and increase caregiver capacity.

SWS contract providers receive a board payment for youth experiencing foster care, typically ages six (6) and under, who are placed with their mothers in an approved SWS program. This arrangement allows children to remain with their mothers in a supportive treatment environment, preserving the parent-child bond while addressing the root causes of family instability.

SWS PROGRAM LOCATIONS

For Children Ages six (6) and under:

- ARVAC Lake Point Recovery & Wellness
- Harbor House
- Western Arkansas Counseling & Guidance Center
- Arrowstar

For Children Ages twelve (12) and under:

- United Methodist Children's Home (AR Cares)

Provider	Locations
ARVAC	Statewide
Harbor House	Baxter, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Clark, Cleburne, Cleveland, Columbia, Conway, Crawford, Dallas, Faulkner, Franklin, Garland, Grant, Hempstead, Hot Spring, Howard, Jefferson, Johnson, Lafayette, Little River, Logan, Madison, Marion, Miller, Montgomery, Nevada, Newton, Ouachita, Perry, Pike, Polk, Pope, Saline, Scott, Searcy, Sebastian, Sevier, Union, Van Buren, Washington, White, Yell counties
Western Arkansas Counseling & Guidance	Crawford, Franklin, Logan, Polk, Scott, and Sebastian counties
United Methodist Children's Home (AR Cares)	Arkansas, Ashley, Chicot, Clay, Cleveland, Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Desha, Drew, Fulton, Grant, Greene, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lee, Lincoln, Lonoke, Mississippi, Monroe, Philips, Poinsett, Prairie, Pulaski, Randolph, Saline, St. Francis, and Woodruff counties
Arrowstar	Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Dallas, Desha, Drew, and Jefferson counties

The Specialist will:

A. Refer the mother for a substance abuse assessment.
B. Upon receipt of substance abuse assessment results recommending inpatient drug treatment, specifically SWS:
    1) Contact the desired program to determine:
        a) If the program has space for age-appropriate children to enter treatment with the mother
        b) Can the child enter SWS placement at the same time as the mother, or does the child have to enter the placement a number of days after the mother
        c) Are there other restrictions or needs which must be considered

d) Is a childcare voucher necessary while the child experiences placement with the mother in the SWS program

2) Email court parties (AAL, Parent Counsel, OCC, CASA) to provide notification of the substance abuse assessment results and asking if the parties are in agreement with applicable children entering treatment with the mother
3) Complete CFS-0015: Encumbrance indicating "SWS – Mother":
    a) Obtain Supervisor signature indicating approval on encumbrance form
4) If the program has space for the age-appropriate children and the court parties are in agreement with placement, also complete a separate CFS-0015: Encumbrance for each age-appropriate child:
    a) Indicate "SWS – Child" on the encumbrance
5) Send completed encumbrance forms to the Area Financial Coordinator along with the drug assessment results

C. Upon notification from the In-home Unit of SWS approval:
    1) Contact the SWS provider to make transportation and intake arrangements for the mother
    2) Contact the current resource home provider for each applicable child and provide notification of intent to move the child to the SWS placement
    3) Complete CFS-300 and CFS-300-A: Notification of Changes in Out-of-Home Placement, and route as appropriate
D. Within twenty-four (24) hours of making placement with the mother at SWS:
    1) Key placement screens for each approved child into the corresponding provider's placement:
        a) Beginning the date the child is placed
        b) Use the service type of 'Substance Abuse Treatment (Inpatient)"
    2) Key childcare screens for each child as applicable
    3) Request an assignment for a resident county Specialist to complete routine face-to-face contact with the mother and applicable children in the SWS facility
E. When children are removed from the facility (due to the mother completing treatment or the mother leaving treatment):
    1) Within 24 hours key the children out of the SWS placement:
        a) Key the appropriate exit reason
        b) Key new placement as appropriate

The Area Financial Coordinator will:

A. Send the referral to the in-home unit inbox for approval.
B. Once approval is given:
    1) Key thirty (30) units in PIE for each applicable child entering SWS treatment:
        a) Under service type select "Specialized Women's Service - Child"
        b) Choose the selection that matches the age of the child being encumbered to ensure units are paid correctly
    2) Key thirty (30) units in PIE for the mother:
        a) Under services type select "Specialized Women's Service – Mother"
    3) Send the request to the SWS provider

The in-home unit will:

A. Within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of encumbrance:
    1) Review the Encumbrance to ensure accuracy
    2) Email approval or denial (along with reasons for denial) to:
        a) Area Financial Coordinator
        b) Requesting Specialist
        c) Supervisor
B. Review monthly invoices to determine:
    1) If the units were keyed in correctly into PIE
    2) If any additional units need to be added:
        a) If additional units need to be added contact the appropriate Financial Coordinator via email requesting they add additional units to PIE

REFERRALS TO ASSESS FAMILY STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

The Division shall accept referrals for children and families who need assistance in a wide range of problems based on family need. Such referrals will not come through the Child Abuse Hotline. Families who need assistance may accept services on a voluntary basis. If the family accepts, a prevention services case will be opened. Prevention services are generally time-limited for a period of three (3) months.

The Specialist will:

A. Accept referrals from families, community agencies, or other DHS Divisions via the DHS-3300: Information and Referral.
B. Collect and assess information about the family's strengths and needs utilizing Safety and Risk Assessments:
    1) If the Safety Assessment reveals an immediate safety threat, confer with the Supervisor regarding reassignment to an investigation
    2) If the referral is not made by the family and the family refuses an assessment, confer with the Supervisor about what the next actions to take
C. Develop a prevention services Family Case Plan based on the needs and strengths identified through the Safety Assessment and Risk Assessments and planning instruments within thirty
(30) days of case opening.
D. Refer to other Divisions or agencies as appropriate via the DHS-3300.

Internal Procedure 401: Child Abuse Hotline for Maltreatment Reports

07/2025

The Crimes Against Children Division (CACD) of the Arkansas State Police is responsible for the administration of the Child Abuse Hotline. All reports of suspected child maltreatment are to be reported to the Hotline. The Hotline accepts and assigns valid reports of suspected child maltreatment and refers them to either CACD or DCFS as appropriate.

The Hotline will prioritize the report utilizing the Hotline Tool and, if accepted, refer for assessment by entering the report into the "Referral" section of the Division information management system. Once a report is entered in the Division information management system, DCFS staff with proper security will have access to referral, investigative, and case information.

DCFS staff are strictly prohibited from entering reports of child maltreatment into the Division information management system. Any unauthorized use or altering of this information is also strictly prohibited.

401.1 County Office Interaction with Child Abuse Hotline

04/2025

The County Manager or designee will:

A. Receive information on child maltreatment if a reporter contacts the county

office but refuses to call, or has been unable to contact, the Child Abuse Hotline.

B. Forward the information to the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline for a determination regarding whether the report will be accepted.
C. Check the Division information management system inbox at least once in the morning and once in the afternoon for child maltreatment report transmissions.
D. Acknowledge receipt of Priority I transmissions within two (2) business hours and receipt of Priority II transmissions within three (3) business hours.
E. Advise the Hotline promptly of after-hours on-call Specialists' names by entering information into the "Organization" screens in the Division information management system.
F. Establish procedures to ensure the security and confidentiality of reports at the local level and the child maltreatment assessment files when not in use.
G. Notify Prosecuting Attorney by letter of any failure by a mandated reporter to report suspected child maltreatment.
H. Notify Prosecuting Attorney by letter when a reporter makes a report without good cause.

401.2 Secondary Review Requests and Requests for Clearance of Other Reports

02/2020

The Investigation Social Service Supervisor or County Manager will:

A. Determine if an accepted report meets the following secondary review request criteria:
    1) Report does not contain sufficient information for the Division to contact the alleged victim
    2) The allegations are identical to a previous report that had a prior preliminary investigation within the past six (6) months and was administratively closed
B. If an accepted report meets one (1) of the secondary review request criteria above, forward the request with pertinent information to the Prevention and Reunification Unit for a secondary review.
C. If the accepted report does not meet one (1) of the secondary review request criteria, but there is otherwise reason to believe a registered report does not warrant assignment for investigation, contact a Hotline Supervisor for a review before the report is initiated and cite at least one (1) of the following reasons:
    1) The allegations would not constitute child maltreatment as defined in the Child Maltreatment Act
    2) The same incident involving identical alleged offenders and victims has already been assessed

Regarding reports that meet secondary review criteria, the DCFS Prevention and Reunification Unit will:

A. Review the report and make determinations based on the following considerations:
    1) Review of the report to ensure it meets all acceptance requirements under A.C.A. §12-18-303-310
    2) Review of all relevant information pertaining to the report, to include, but not limited to:

a) Current report to ensure:
    i. Reporter or collateral information is available
    ii. Information is sufficient for the Division to contact the alleged victim
    iii. The current allegations are not identical to a previous report that has had a prior preliminary investigation within the past six (6) months and was administratively closed
b) Previous investigations of child maltreatment pertaining to the current alleged offender
c) Previous case history in the Division information management system

3) Call to reporter (if known) to ascertain additional information on the allegation and related information to determine if report warrants assignment for investigation

B. After secondary review of the accepted child maltreatment report:
    1) Assign credibly accepted reports to the appropriate county office investigative or differential response pathway
    2) Complete steps to screen out the accepted referral under A.C.A. §12-18-303

Regarding reports that do not meet secondary review criteria but do not warrant assignment for investigation, the Hotline Supervisor and appropriate Hotline staff will:

A. Determine whether to screen out the report utilizing the Hotline Screening Tool.
B. Notify the CPS Manager and County Manager if the report is screened out.

401.3 Special Circumstances

11/2025

CHILD MALTREATMENT REPORT ALLEGATIONS TAKING PLACE IN OTHER STATES OR COUNTRIES

If the alleged maltreatment occurred in another state, but the alleged offender is a resident of Arkansas and the report of child maltreatment or suspected maltreatment in the other state or country would also be child maltreatment in Arkansas at the time the incident occurred, upon receipt of the report from the Hotline, the Specialist will:

A. Contact the other state and advise them of Arkansas's willingness to assist with the investigation.
B. Interview the alleged offender to assist the investigative agency from the other state or country:
    1) The investigative agency from the other state or county must take responsibility for the investigation
C. Notify the alleged offender that if the allegation is determined to be true, the offender's name will be placed in the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry.

CHILD MALTREATMENT REPORTS INVOLVING ALLEGATIONS TAKING PLACE IN ARKANSAS WITH ALLEGED PARTIES TO THE REPORT LIVING OUTSIDE OF ARKANSAS

The Investigator will:

A. Contact the resident (other) state and request courtesy interviews with the out-of-state subjects of the report.

Internal Procedure 402: Differential Response

07/2025

Differential response is a family engagement approach that allows DCFS to respond to reports of specific, low risk maltreatment allegations in a way that best fits the needs and circumstances of each family. Rather than applying a one (1) size fits all investigative process, Differential Response provides a non-adversarial and non-accusatory family assessment approach with pathways that emphasize safety, engagement, and support. It allows the Division to partner with families, reduce unnecessary system involvement, and connect them to services while still ensuring child safety remains the top priority.

402.1 Differential Response Eligibility Criteria

07/2025

To be eligible for assignment as a Differential Response, a report must meet all of the following criteria, unless the exceptions listed in 'G' below apply:

A. Identifying information for the family members and their current address or a means to locate them is known at the time of the report.
B. Those alleged to be responsible for the allegations are parents, birth or adoptive, legal guardians, or any person standing in loco parentis.
C. The family has no pending investigation or open services case of any kind.
D. The children alleged to be maltreated, siblings, or other household members are not currently in the care and custody of the Division or wards of the court.
E. Protective custody of the children has not been taken or required in the current investigation.
F. The reported allegations include only:
    1) Inadequate clothing
    2) Inadequate supervision
    3) Inadequate food
    4) Inadequate shelter
    5) Educational neglect
    6) Environmental neglect
    7) Lock out
    8) Medical neglect
    9) Human bites
    10) Sprains or dislocations
    11) Striking a child seven (7) years of age or older on the face
    12) Striking a child with a closed fist
    13) Throwing a child
G. The following exceptions prevent a report from being assigned to a differential response pathway:
    1) Inadequate supervision reports involving children under five (5) years of age or a child five (5) years of age or older with a physical or mental disability which limits their skills in the areas of communication, self-care, self-direction, and safety

2) Educational neglect reports involving a child that was never enrolled in an educational program
3) Environmental neglect reports involving children under three (3) years of age, and those situations in which the hotline assess an immediate danger to the child's health or physical well-being based on the severity
4) Lock out reports involving children under ten (10) years of age, and those situations in which the hotline assesses an immediate danger to the child's health or physical well-being based upon the severity
5) Medical neglect reports involving children under thirteen (13) years of age or a child with a severe medical condition that could become serious enough to cause long-term harm to the child if untreated
6) Reports of human bites, sprains, or dislocations, striking a child seven (7) years of age or older on the face, striking a child with a closed fist, and throwing a child when these allegations occurred:
    a) Less than one (1) year ago:
        i) If the caller can verify an injury through physical signs, medical information, dated photos, or other documentation

402.2 Receipt and Assignment of Differential Response

07/2025

Upon receipt of the DR referral from the Hotline, the DR Social Service Supervisor or designee will:

A. Determine if the referral meets the criteria for DR by completing a child maltreatment history check on the family to determine if there is an open case or investigation:
    1) Contact the DR Program Manager or designee to reassign the DR to the investigative pathway if it does not meet DR criteria
B. Review and assign DR reports to the appropriate DR Specialist no later than two (2) hours after receipt of reports, excluding evenings, weekends, and holidays, provided initial face-to-face contact with the children named in the report and at least one (1) caregiver is made in the home within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of initial hotline report.

The DR Program Manager or designee will:

A. Reassign the referral to the investigative pathway (hotline call not required) if the DR referral is determined to be ineligible.

402.3 Differential Response Initiation and Family Assessment

07/2025

The DR Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Assign each new report to a DR Specialist within two (2) hours of receipt from the DR Program Manager or designee.
    1) Initial face-to-face contact with the children named in the report and at least one (1) caregiver must be made in the home within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of

the initial hotline report.

B. Conference with the DR Specialist:
    1) Immediately upon identification of a safety threat
    2) Within twenty-four (24) hours (excluding weekends and holidays in which case the conference will take place the next business day) after the DR Specialist's initial face-to-face contact with the children named in the report and at least one (1) caregiver and identify a plan for the next steps to be taken
C. Document all Supervisor activities in the Division information management system within two (2) business days of completion of each activity, to include, but not limited to:
    1) Verifying if the report has ten (10) or more previous reports:
        a) Conference with the Area Manager for any DR with ten (10) or more previous reports
    2) Complete CFS-298: DR Checklist for Supervisors prior to approving DR closure
D. Review due diligence efforts if contact is not made by the seventh (7^{th}) day after case assignment.
E. Provide consultation to the DR Specialist as appropriate.

The DR Specialist will:

A. Prepare to meet the family by completing the following activities prior to making initial face-to-face contact with the family:
    1) Review the report and interview collateral contacts, including the reporter
    2) Conduct a Division of County Operations (DCO) records check of members of the household
    3) Conduct a history search in the Division information management system
    4) Contact the family by phone within twenty-four (24) hours of case assignment if a phone number is provided in the report and if a call is appropriate considering initiation timeframe requirements to:
        a) Explain Differential Response
        b) Schedule the initial in-home family contact that will include at least the children named in the report and one (1) caretaker
        c) Verify the names and dates of birth of all family members and other people living in the household
B. Consider the DR report initiated when:
    1) The health and safety of the children named in the report in the family household and at least one caregiver has been assessed within seventy-two (72) hours from the time the referral was received from the Hotline.
        a) Based on the reported needs or safety issues of the family, the DR Supervisor may require that the initial contact with the family occur sooner than seventy-two (72) hours
    2) A Safety Assessment of the children named in the report could not be made but due diligence has been exercised and documented within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of the hotline referral:
        a) Due diligence must include making an announced (or unannounced, if needed) contact to the child's home at least three (3) times at different

times of the day or on different days (provided the three (3) contacts are within the appropriate DR initiation timeframes) to assess the health and safety of the children named in the report

b) In addition, completion of as many of the following activities necessary to meet due diligence in establishing face-to-face contact with the children named in the report and at least one (1) caretaker:
    i. Contacting the reporter again if the reporter is known
    ii. Contacting the child's school, childcare facility, and all other places where the child is said to be located
    iii. Sending a certified letter to the location given by the reporter, if attempts to locate the child have failed
    iv. Contacting appropriate local Division of County Operations (DCO) staff and requesting a search of the Arkansas Integrated Eligibility System (ARIES) and other files to obtain another address
    v. Asking the local, county, and state law enforcement agencies to check their records for information that may locate the child and family
    vi. Asking kin and friends of the subjects to provide information to help locate the subjects
    vii. Contacting the local post office, utility companies, and schools to request a check of their records
    viii. Conducting a CLEAR or similar search to attempt to locate the family
    ix. Complete other actions listed on the CFS-155: Unable to Locate Checklist

c) If after completion of all the due diligence activities listed above, no contact is made with the family by the sixth (6^{th}) business day after case assignment, document information in a case contact. The DR Supervisor will assess the information and determine whether due diligence has been met, no later than the seventh day after case assignment

d) If DR Supervisor deems that due diligence has been met close the case as Unable to Locate

C. Provide the following information to the caregiver and other household members during the initial in-home contact:
    1) Explanation of Differential Response including the disclosure that the DR Specialist must assess the safety of the children as well as the need for services, and that the Division must address any safety threats or service needs as appropriate:
        a) If the family will not allow staff access to the children, the family has declined family assessment services
    2) PUB-85: Differential Response: A Family-Centered Response to Strengthen and Support Families

D. Gather information during the initial in-home contact through the activities listed below:
    1) Identify information and legal relationships of all household members
    2) Obtain the names and addresses of any non-custodial caregivers
    3) Obtain CFS-1000: Consent for Release of information signed by a family member

with the authority to give consent as needed

4) Complete a Safety Assessment for the family:
    a) If the Safety Assessment identifies a safety threat, the DR Specialist will contact the DR Supervisor to discuss the results of the Safety Assessment and corresponding actions that will take place based on those results and as informed by professional judgement

E. Request a Supervisor conference to review and discuss case information (allegation, risk or safety threats, immediate needs, and other case specific information).
F. Document all activities, including the Safety Assessment, in the Division information management system within two (2) business days after they are completed.
G. Contact with all other household members within five (5) days from the time the referral was received at the Hotline.
H. Update the Safety Assessment in the Division information management system for the family after all household members have been contacted.

402.4 Management of Family's Refusal to Participate

07/2025

If the DR Specialist has been unable to conduct a Safety Assessment or is unable to assess underlying issues or additional child maltreatment concerns that may not have been identified in the original hotline report, the DR Specialist will:

A. Inform the family that the DR Specialist may refer the case to the investigative pathway if there are safety threat concerns and the caregiver poses a risk to a vulnerable population.
B. Conference with DR supervisor immediately to discuss the need or lack thereof to contact the DR Program Manager or designee for reassignment of the case to the investigative pathway.

The DR Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Discuss and assess case information and possible referral to the investigative pathway with the DR Specialist:
    1) The primary consideration for reassigning a report to the investigation pathway is whether the caregiver poses a risk to a vulnerable population
B. If it is determined that safety threats exist or are likely to exist based on the initial interaction with the family and the caregiver poses a risk to a vulnerable population, contact the DR Program Manager or designee immediately to request that the report be reassigned to the investigative pathway.

The DR Program Manager will:

A. Reassign any DR case in which the DR Specialist is unable to conduct a Safety Assessment to the investigative pathway if the assessment is that the caregiver poses a risk to a vulnerable population.

402.5 Differential Response Services Management

07/2025

The DR Specialist will:

A. Engage the household in a comprehensive and collaborative family assessment of the family's strengths and needs (and gather other relevant, corresponding information) within fourteen (14) days of receipt of referral from the Hotline. The family assessment may include:
    1) Family's financial status
    2) Basic educational screening for the children
    3) Physical health, mental health and behavioral health screening for all family members
    4) Names and addresses of those people who provide a support system for the family
    5) Names and addresses of any service providers that have been or are currently involved in providing services to the family
B. Initiate services to meet any immediate needs of the family, including food, shelter, and clothing.
C. Place a copy of the family assessment in the family's case record.
D. Maintain a minimum of twice weekly contacts with the household, which must include contact with the children as appropriate in the household, unless the DR Supervisor and the household determine that the contacts should occur more frequently:
    1) While the initial home contact must be conducted by the DR Specialist and include face-to-face contact with at least the children named in the report and one (1) caregiver, the DR Specialist may ask the DR assistant to make some subsequent contacts with the family provided the majority of the face-to-face contacts are conducted by the DR Specialist
    2) Children do not necessarily have to be seen at each subsequent face-to-face family contact if the primary purpose of a specific contact is to discuss issues or services relating directly to the caregivers and provided DR Specialist has assessed, based on previous contacts and other information, that children's safety is ensured for the time being and will be reassessed at a subsequent face-to-face contact with the children not to exceed two (2) weeks from the date of the contact in which the children were not present
E. Develop a Family Case Plan with input from the household. The Family Case Plan will be completed within fourteen (14) days of receipt of referral to the hotline. The Family Case Plan may be modified and revised as needed.
F. Identify and implement services to address the issues that resulted in the hotline report as well as any additional child maltreatment concerns that may not have been identified in the original hotline report.
G. Assess the household's reasonable progress in resolving the issue that brought them to the attention of the Division.
H. Maintain ongoing contact with involved service providers as appropriate.
I. Create and maintain community partnerships that will benefit DR client outcomes.
J. Develop an Aftercare Plan with input from the household.
K. Submit the following documents to the DR Supervisor before formalizing case closure with the family:
    1) Case Closing Summary

2) Child and Family Service Aftercare Plan
3) Case note documentation of interviews, contacts, and activities
4) Provider treatment reports
5) Updated family assessment and Safety Assessment

L. Participate in a closure family team meeting with the DR Supervisor to discuss the closure request.
M. Close the case in the Division information management system upon receiving DR Supervisor approval for case closure.

The DR assistant will:

A. Help ensure clients are meeting the Family Case Plan goals in a DR case.
B. Assist with referrals to services identified in the Family Case Plan.
C. Provide transportation for clients as needed.
D. Assist DR Specialist in maintaining contact with the family provided the DR Social Specialist conducts the initial face-to-face contact and the majority of subsequent family contacts. Some assistant contacts may be made by phone provided documentation supports that health and safety of children will still be ensured.
E. Conference with DR Specialist on household progress.
F. Create and maintain community partnerships that will benefit DR client outcomes.
G. Document all activities in the Division information management system within two (2) business days of completion.

The DR Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the DR Specialist and DR assistant as needed regarding the family's DR case and associated services.
B. Review and approve Family Assessments, Family Case Plans, and appropriateness of service referrals.
C. Review DR case closure request including:
    1) Case closing summary
    2) Child and Family Service Aftercare Plan
    3) Case note documentation of interviews, contacts and activities
    4) Provider treatment reports
    5) Updated family assessment and Safety Assessment
D. Hold a closure family team meeting with the DR Specialist to discuss the closure request and determine if the request will be approved or denied.
E. Approve or deny case closure request as appropriate.

Internal Procedure 403: Investigation of Child Maltreatment Reports

07/2025

403.1 Assignments of Investigation Reports

07/2025

The Social Service Supervisor or designee will:

A. Assign reports to a Specialist or a unit group, as applicable, who will conduct the investigation when a report is received in the Division information management system's county in-box.

403.2 Preparation for Investigation Initiation

07/2025

The Investigator will:

A. Conduct a history search in the Division information management system prior to initiation of investigation.
B. Confer with area leadership (including Supervisor and area manager) regarding any investigation with ten (10) or more previous reports accepted by the Child Abuse Hotline:
    1) For purposes of determining ten (10) or more reports, reports that have been screened out do not count as accepted
    2) For reports received after-hours (on-call), make every attempt to contact the Supervisor and other area leadership before initiation; however, the report must still be initiated timely and the conference with area leadership must occur as soon as possible
C. Attempt to contact the reporter to gain additional information regarding the allegation prior to initiation unless the report is received after hours (inability to reach the reporter shall not prevent the Investigator from initiating the investigation).
D. Make immediate telephone notification to the Prosecuting Attorney and law enforcement on Priority I reports.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Ensure that the history search is conducted prior to investigation initiation.
B. In situations where there have been ten (10) or more reports accepted by the hotline, assist the Investigator to assess the gravity of the previous reports as they relate to the current allegation.

403.3 Consent to Allow Electronic Notification

10/2026

The Investigator will:

A. Present CFS-297: Consent to Allow Electronic Notification on the first date of contact with the Division to each:
    1) Alleged offender
    2) Legal Custodian for alleged victims
    3) PRFC
    4) Non-custodial parent
B. Explain to individuals noted in “A” above:
    1) That they are legally entitled to notification of the determination of the investigation, whether true or unsubstantiated, in accordance with Arkansas Code § 12-18-703 et seq
    2) That CFS-297, if signed, provides consent for the Division to deliver future notifications regarding the findings of the investigation via the email address provided by the individual on the CFS-297
    3) That choosing to sign the CFS-297 and providing an email address does not affect their ability to request an administrative hearing if they do not agree with the determination
C. If the individual chooses to consent to allow electronic notification of child maltreatment

investigative determinations:

1) Have them complete CFS-297: Consent to Allow Electronic Notification
2) Ensure CFS-297 is completed in entirety to include:
    a) Individual's name
    b) Referral number
    c) Individual's valid email address:
        i. Test the ability to email the address on your business phone
        ii. Request an alternate email address when necessary
    d) Correct group of individuals is marked with a checkmark
    e) Individual's signature
    f) Correct date that the form was signed by the individual
3) Provide the individual with a copy of the CFS-297 for their records

D. Email signed CFS-297: Consent to Allow Electronic Notification to dcfs.notification@dhs.arkansas.gov
E. Document CFS-297 in the Document Tracking screen in the Division information management system
F. Place a signed copy of completed CFS-297 in the investigative hard file:
    1) For unsubstantiated findings, shred the hard file after thirty (30) days
    2) For substantiated findings, scan the entire hard file into eDoctus within five (5) business days of completing the investigation

The Notifications Unit will:

A. Check email for signed CFS-297: Consent to Allow Electronic Notification prior to sending any notifications regarding a child maltreatment finding:
    1) Search the client demographics screen for an email address
B. Send notification via email if CFS-297 has been executed by the individual.
C. If no CFS-297 has been executed, then send notifications via curtained, restricted mail and if necessary, via a process server.

403.4 Investigation Initiation

07/2025

The Investigator will:

A. Initiate the investigation within seventy-two (72) hours (Priority II) except for investigations which must be started within twenty-four (24) hours (Priority I).
B. Consider the investigation initiated:
    1) By interviewing or observing, when appropriate, the alleged victim child outside the presence of the alleged offender
        a) Virtual contact does not count as initiation or for the required face-to-face contact
    2) By exercising and documenting due diligence when an interview or examination of the child could not be made. Due diligence includes, but is not limited to:
        a) Making an unannounced contact to the child's home at least three (3) times at different times of the day or on different days, provided the three (3) contacts are within the appropriate investigation initiation timeframes, in an attempt to interview the child
        b) Contacting the reporter again

c) Contacting the child's school, childcare facility, and all other places where the child is said to be located
d) Sending a certified letter to the location given by the reporter, if attempts to locate the child have failed
e) Contacting appropriate local DCO staff and requesting research of their information systems and other files to obtain another address
f) Completing other activities listed on the CFS-155: Unable to Locate Checklist as needed
g) Submit the record to the Supervisor for approval of due diligence to locate and interview the child after all these efforts have been made
h) Document initiation activities within two (2) business days in the Division information management system

The Supervisor will:

A. Conduct a supervisory conference with Investigator within seventy-two (72) hours of Investigator initiating the investigation.

403.5 At Risk Determinations Upon Initiation

The Social Service Investigator will:

A. Gather information to determine if children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities or mental illness under the care of the alleged offender appear to be at risk of maltreatment by the alleged offender. Such information includes but is not limited to:
    1) Alleged offender's employer, including the physical address
    2) Alleged offender's job duties at their employment and whether those duties result in the alleged offender:
        a) Working with children or otherwise engaging in paid or volunteer child-related activities
        b) Working or volunteering with the elderly
        c) Working or volunteering with an individual with a disability or mental illness
        d) Is a juvenile (and therefore has access to other juveniles in a school or similar setting)
B. If so, the investigative agency must immediately ascertain the name and address of the person in charge of those activities.
C. Inform the investigative Supervisor and Area Manager if the information indicates that there may be an "at risk" situation.
D. Complete all other investigative tasks as set out in the sections that follow.

The Social Service Supervisor and Area Manager (as applicable) may:

A. Consult with OCC as necessary, prior to deciding whether children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities or mental illness appear to be at risk.
B. If it is determined children, the elderly, individuals with disabilities or mental illness under the care of the alleged offender, or other juveniles are at risk of maltreatment by the alleged offender:
    1) Obtain written permission from the DCFS Director to provide at-risk notification
    2) If the DCFS Director or designee approves the at-risk determination and gives written approval to provide notifications of the at-risk determination, provide

notifications to:

a) The alleged offender's employer
b) The school superintendent, principal, or a person in an equivalent position where the alleged offender is employed
c) The person in charge of a paid or volunteer activity
d) The appropriate licensing or registering authority to the extent necessary to carry out its official responsibilities

C. The "at-risk" determination will be changed immediately if, upon further investigation, it is determined that the children under the care of the alleged offender are not at risk.

403.6 Child Maltreatment Report Investigation Interviews

07/2025

The Investigator will:

A. Prepare for interviews by reviewing the intake report and any prior child maltreatment reports. See "Gathering Information" practice guide series for more information.
B. Conduct a separate interview with the alleged victim outside the presence of the alleged offender and the alleged offender's attorney in reports involving both in-home and out-of-home offenders. Exceptions must be approved by a Supervisor:
    1) If not age appropriate for an interview, observe alleged victim outside the presence of the alleged offender and the alleged offender's attorney
C. Interview any siblings of the alleged victim and any other children under the care of the alleged offender (including during investigations with alleged out-of-home offenders) as the siblings and other children under the care of the alleged offender may have collateral information or have been within access of the alleged offender. Exceptions must be approved by a Supervisor:
    1) Interview all siblings and other children under the care of the alleged offender outside the presence of the alleged offender and the alleged offender's attorney:
        a) If not age appropriate for an interview, observe all siblings and other children under the care of the alleged offender outside the presence of the alleged offender and the offender's attorney
    2) Considering the best interest of the child, limit, as appropriate, other people allowed to be present when a child is interviewed concerning allegations of child maltreatment
D. Conduct a cursory physical examination of children in the least invasive manner possible during the interview. A cursory physical examination is the observation of a child's external, physical condition which may require that the child's clothing be removed or rearranged:
    1) If the child is under the age of five (5), conduct the exam with the assistance of the caregiver
E. Complete CFS-327-A: Physical Documentation-Body Diagram when applicable and if a medical provider has not already completed CFS-327-A *or* similar diagram specific to the current allegation.
F. Photograph visible injuries. Label and date photos.
G. Interview the custodial and non-custodial caregivers of the alleged victim child and inform them of DCFS' responsibility to assess.
H. Interview alleged offender:
    1) In addition to gathering information about the alleged maltreatment, ascertain the

alleged offender's:

a) Employer, including the physical address
b) Job duties at place of employment
c) Supervisor's name

I. Interview collateral sources, as appropriate, including but not limited to teachers, neighbors, witnesses, and the person making the report.
J. When interviewing a child at school, provide the principal or designee with a copy of CFS-213-A: School District Prohibition from Notifying Caregivers of a Child Maltreatment Investigation.
K. Enter interview notes within two (2) business days of completion of interviews.
L. If it is discovered that any interviewee is an unlicensed childcare provider (that is, caring for more than five (5) children including an individual's own pre-school children), notify the Office of Early Childhood.
M. Assist the investigative Supervisor with the coordination of interviews when primary (the county where the child is currently located) and secondary counties are involved:
    1) The primary Investigator will:
        a) Interview all applicable subjects in their county within required timeframes
        b) Complete the Safety Assessment in the Division information management system with information obtained during primary Investigator interviews and information obtained from secondary Investigator from secondary's interviews
    2) The Investigator of the secondary county will:
        a) Contact the primary county by phone no later than twenty-four (24) hours after interviews are conducted to discuss:
            i. Any identified safety threats and supporting documentation (examples include but are not limited to statements made by children, observations of children, or caregiver statements)
            ii. Determination of any additional children, elderly people, or individuals with a disability or mental illness who may be at risk
            iii. Provisions of the Immediate Safety Plan if one (1) has been implemented
            iv. Other people interviewed, their relationship to the family, and how information provided was obtained (first-hand, hearsay, Investigator observations)
            v. Verification of identity of people interviewed
            vi. Projected completion date for secondary investigation if it is not completed at time of phone conference
        b) Forward any hard copy information to the primary Investigator within seventy- two (72) hours after receiving
    3) Reinitiate the investigation in the second county within twenty-four to seventy-two (24-72) hours when an investigation is transferred from county to county and the victim or any other children believed to reside in the home where the report originated have not been seen
N. Complete and document all interviews in the Division information management system within thirty (30) calendar days of the receipt of the child maltreatment report.
O. If any parties required to be interviewed (caregivers, children, alleged victim child, or

alleged offender) cannot be located or are unable to communicate:

1) Exercise due diligence
2) Document efforts to locate or communicate with required parties and proceed with the child maltreatment investigation

On multi-county investigations the Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Take the lead in coordinating the investigation when multiple counties are involved:
    1) If a secondary assignment is required, complete (as soon as possible but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after receipt of referral) the summary section in the Division information management system assignment screens describing:
        a) Reasons for the request
        b) Special instructions
        c) Updated locations and telephone numbers of subjects to be seen
    2) Forward the request to the appropriate investigative team
    3) Verbally alert the receiving team Supervisor of the secondary investigation request to:
        a) Verify receipt of report when a secondary team Investigator will initiate the investigations
        b) Clarify any issues involving the secondary investigation request
        c) Coordinate team responsibilities with the Prosecuting Attorney, law enforcement, and hospital staff, as applicable
B. Participate in phone conferences with primary and secondary Investigators and any other staff involved in the investigation, as applicable.
C. Conference with the Investigator and any other staff involved from other counties as appropriate and document any consultations in the Division information management system.
D. Ensure that counties otherwise communicate and complete the investigation within forty-five (45) calendar days.

403.7 Discovery of New Victims or Allegations in an Ongoing Investigation

07/2025

When at any point during an ongoing investigation the Investigator discovers new victims or new allegations of child maltreatment, the Investigator will:

A. Call the Hotline to report the new allegation only under the following conditions:
    1) The existing allegation is a Priority II and the new allegation is a Priority I
    2) The new allegation involves an alleged offender outside of the home
    3) Otherwise, other new allegations should be added to the existing report
B. Update the information in “Collected During Investigation” in the “Abuse/Neglect” screen in the Division information management system.
C. Update the “Abuse/Neglect” screen with the addition of the new allegations or new victims, as applicable.
D. When there is a new victim, change the role of the child from “non-victim” to “victim” in the “Role in Referral” in each child’s “General Information” screen in the Division information management system.
E. Document the additional information and the date the update was made on the “Notes” screen in the investigation.

403.8 Medical Evaluation Required During Investigation

07/2025

The Investigator will:

A. Confer with the Supervisor concerning a complete examination and evaluation by a mental health professional if a child has one of the following:
    1) Impairment of the intellectual, emotional, or psychological development as evidenced by observable and substantial reduction in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior
    2) Suffered a substantial impairment in the ability to function as a result of a specific, non-accidental action or interaction committed by a caretaker
B. Refer for a medical examination or consultation with a physician in the following cases unless the Area Manager allows an exception:
    1) Burns, fractures or dislocations in children under three (3) years of age
    2) Burns, fractures or dislocations in children of any age if unexplained or implausibly explained
    3) Burns, bruises, or fractures in non-ambulatory children
    4) Reasonable suspicion that vaginal or oral penetration has occurred
    5) Cases involving sexually transmitted diseases in prepubescent children
    6) Cases of malnutrition and failure to thrive
    7) Cases of serious medical neglect
    8) Cases of alleged head and abdominal injuries (regardless of presence of visible injury)
    9) Reports in which the child has an observable injury, the caretaker admits responsibility for the injury and there is reason to believe that there are internal injuries or other injuries which have occurred in the past
C. Involve the caregiver of the child whenever possible, if during the investigation, a medical examination is needed to determine the existence of abuse or neglect.
D. Verify that the caregiver has exhausted all other resources before requesting DCFS funds for payment.
E. Consider the following, listed in order of preference, in all cases in which a medical examination is required:
    1) Have the child examined at a Child Advocacy Center (CAC) when available and appropriate. Consider:
        a) Distance of CAC
        b) Whether nearest CAC has medical services on site
        c) If the investigation is regarding a report of alleged sexual abuse or alleged severe maltreatment
    2) Have the child examined by the child's Primary Care Physician (PCP)
    3) Have the child examined by a pediatrician if the PCP is unavailable. The Investigator must advise the pediatrician whether the PCP, although not physically available, is available by telephone for consultation
    4) Take the child to the emergency room of the nearest hospital
    5) The physical examination of children alleged to be sexually abused must be conducted by a physician or other medical personnel, not the Investigator

403.9 Out-of-State Records Request

07/2025

A. Out of state records will be requested on all investigations and differential response reports if the family previously resided in another state at any time since the birth of the oldest child.
B. The Investigator or Supervisor will complete the out of state record request form and send it by email to the Notification Unit at Child.Investigative.Services@dhs.arkansas.gov and cc the DCFS Deputy Director.
C. Central office will contact the other state to request a verbal statement of any child maltreatment history and will provide the information provided by the other state to the requesting Investigator and Supervisor by email within three (3) business days of receipt of the request from the field.
D. Central office will request all hard copy records of prior investigations, differential response reports (if the other state has a DR program), and case history from the other state within three (3) business days of receipt of the request from the field.
E. Once the hard copy records have been received from the other state, central office will scan the documents into eDoctus and send a PDF file by email to the Investigator and Supervisor within three (3) business days of the documents being received.
F. Central office will track each request from the initial date the record request form was sent from the field until the records are received from the other state and sent back to the requesting Investigator and Supervisor.
G. Central office will document in the investigation Document Tracking screen in the Division information management system the date and time the records were requested and the date and time the records were sent to staff.
H. The Investigator will document in the Division information management system that out of state records were requested in the following screens:
    1) Differential response - the DR contact screens
    2) Investigation - the case connect screen in the narrative since this information is populated into the case if a case is opened

403.10 Other Child Maltreatment Investigation Actions

07/2025

The Investigator will:

A. Use CFS-317: Off-Site Worker's Safety Log during the child maltreatment investigation for all off-site contacts away from their primary work site:
    1) If Investigator will return to the primary work site more than one (1) hour after the initial "Planned Return Date and Time," they will contact their immediate Supervisor or designee with a revised anticipated return date and time
B. Give the family and alleged offender (if alleged offender resides outside of the home) PUB-52: Child Protective Services—A Caretaker's Guide during the first contact and explain, as appropriate, to help the family and alleged offender understand its contents.
C. Conduct a home contact to assess the safety, risk, and protective factors of the environment where the child resides and determine the names and conditions of other children in the home. The home contact may or may not be conducted during interviews with the alleged victim; however, anytime there is an open investigation involving a child

in the hospital (Garrett's Law report, child admitted to hospital for injuries or other health issues associated with child abuse or neglect), a home contact will be conducted prior to the child being discharged from the hospital.

D. Contact OCC attorney to petition the court for an ex parte order of investigation to allow access if the caretakers, or others deny access to any place where the child may be.
E. Exercise due diligence in locating the non-custodial caregiver of the victim child. Examples of due diligence include, but are not limited to, seeking information from kin or using information from the alleged victim child's birth certificate to identify and locate the non-custodial caregiver.
F. Document all efforts at reasonable diligence if unable to locate the non-custodial caregiver to ensure completion of the investigation within thirty (30) calendar days.
G. Make notifications of child maltreatment allegations to the appropriate parties.
H. Obtain X-rays, photographs, radiology procedures, drug test results, medical records, other pertinent records (school records, videos from mandated reporters).
I. If at any time it is determined that the alleged offender is not a caretaker of the alleged victim child, excluding investigations of sexual abuse:
    1) Refer the matter to the appropriate law enforcement agency via CFS-321: Referral for Investigation
    2) Close the investigation
    3) Forward a copy of the findings to the appropriate law enforcement agency for the agency's use in any criminal investigation
    4) Reopen and continue the investigation if the appropriate law enforcement agency subsequently determines that the alleged offender is a caretaker and notifies the Division of its determination
J. If the family moves to another county before the investigation is complete, notify other County Manager and request a transfer to that county inbox.
K. If the family moves to another state, notify that state's Child Protective Services Division and follow instructions from that state.
L. Ensure that all the information gathered during the investigation is contained within the investigative file whether or not the information supports the investigative determination.
M. Key all screens in the "Investigation" section of the Division information management system including screens listed under the "Interview" and "Client" sections within thirty (30) days of receipt of the hotline report.
N. Complete and print CFS-6003: Report to Prosecuting Attorney within thirty (30) days of the initial report of severe maltreatment (Priority I reports) and send to Prosecuting Attorney and law enforcement unless the Prosecuting Attorney or law enforcement has provided written notice to the Division that the Division does not need to provide notice of the investigative determination.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. If the family moves to another county before the investigation is complete, transfer investigation to the new county inbox upon receiving notification from the Investigator of the move.
B. Conduct a supervisory conference with the Investigator fourteen (14) days following receipt of report (or the next business day) to assess progress of the investigation up to that point.

C. In addition to fourteen (14)-day supervisory conference, discuss investigation with the Investigator as appropriate and needed throughout the investigation.
D. Complete CFS-299: Investigation Checklist for Supervisors throughout the course of the investigation.
E. Make entries on the "Inv. Notes" as the investigation is conducted (documentation of supervisory conferences with Investigator).

403.11 Investigation Safety Assessment and Determination

07/2025

The detailed procedures for Safety Assessments, Immediate Safety Plans, and safety determinations are set out in Internal Procedure Ensuring Child Safety Through Immediate Safety Planning.

The Investigator will:

A. Conduct the initial Safety Assessment.
B. Determine if there is an immediate safety threat.
C. Determine the appropriate safety option to assure child safety if a safety threat is identified:
    1) Develop an Immediate Safety Plan if it can be done safely
    2) Take protective custody (seventy-two (72)- hour hold) if an Immediate Safety Plan is not a viable option
D. Complete and document safety interventions within the time frames specified in Internal Procedure Ensuring Child Safety Through Immediate Safety Planning.
E. If an Immediate Safety Plan was put in place:
    1) Monitor Immediate Safety Plan as specified:
        a) Face-to-face contact within seventy-two (72) of implementing the plan
        b) Minimum of weekly face-to-face contacts for the duration of the safety plan
        c) Formally review the safety plan with the Supervisor within fourteen (14) days of its implementation
        d) Formally reassess the safety plan within thirty (30) days of the date the Immediate Safety Plan was implemented
F. Make and document the safety determination (refer to the Safety and Risk Assessments Manual for additional guidance):
    1) Document Safety Assessment in the Division information management system within two (2) days of completion of assessment
G. If the safety determination is Unsafe, take protective custody and follow the steps in Internal Procedure Protective Custody of a Child in Immediate Danger related to taking protective custody and filing an emergency petition to ensure child safety.
H. Complete the Risk Assessment tool for the household in the Division information management system prior to investigation closure and prior to any decision regarding case opening.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Investigator regarding the Safety Assessment and approval of an ISP.
B. Communicate as necessary with other DCFS staff to ensure a Casework Specialist is assigned to families for whom an ISP has been implemented that has an accompanying court order

for dependency-neglect.

C. Communicate as necessary with DCFS staff to ensure that the ISP is formally reassessed at thirty (30) days, and, if needed due to a substantial risk of harm to the child's health and safety remaining, a petition for dependency-neglect is filed.
D. Approve the Safety Planning screen and Risk Assessment as appropriate prior to approving investigation closure.

403.12 Orders of Less Than Custody

07/2025

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Complete a Safety Assessment and develop an Immediate Safety Plan with the non-offending legal caregiver and their network to address the safety threats identified with the alleged offender before leaving the child in a home where DCFS has petitioned the court for an order of less than custody.
B. Contact OCC immediately after determining the need for an order of less than custody:
    1) Prepare an affidavit if OCC needs one (1) to file the petition for an order of less than custody
C. Document the order of less than custody in the court screens in the Division information management system.

403.13 Protective Custody of Child in Immediate Danger

07/2025

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Take a child into protective custody for up to seventy-two (72) hours if:
    1) The circumstances present an immediate danger to the child's health or physical well-being as indicated by the Safety Assessment and removal is the only way to ensure safety
    2) The child is neglected as defined under Garrett's Law pursuant to A.C.A. §12-18-103(14)(B), and the Specialist determines that the child and any other children, including siblings, are at substantial risk of serious harm such that the children need to be removed from the custody or care of the caregiver
    3) Any child who is dependent as defined at A.C.A. §9-27-301 et. seq.
B. If a police officer, law enforcement, a Juvenile Division of Circuit Court judge during proceedings concerning the child or sibling of the child, a designated employee of the Division, any person in charge of a hospital or similar institution, or any physician treating a child has taken a child into protective custody pursuant to A.C.A. §12-18-1001, assume custody of the child and assess the health and safety of each child using the Safety Assessment to determine whether to continue or release custody of the child:
    1) Release custody of a child who is taken into custody pursuant to A.C.A. §12-18-1001 if the Specialist in consultation with their Supervisor determines that there is no safety threat or that the child can safely return home with an Immediate Safety Plan and protective custody is no longer required
    2) Notify the circuit court if the Division releases custody of a child whom the circuit court has taken into custody
C. When a child upon whom a seventy-two (72) hour hold has been placed is currently located

in a school, residential facility, hospital, or similar institution, the Specialist will notify the institution. The Specialist will be aware that the institution is obliged to do the following upon receiving notice, in accordance with A.C.A. §12-18-1005:

1) Retain the child until the Division takes a hold on the child
2) Not notify the caregiver until the child has been removed by the Division
3) Provide the caregiver with the name and contact information of the Division employee regarding the hold on the child

D. Notify the OCC attorney immediately that protective custody was exercised and request an ex-parte emergency order from the court.
E. If a minor child's safety is a concern, contact OCC immediately to request DCFS petition the court for an order of less than custody.
F. Determine whether to recommend to the court that reunification services should or should not be provided to reunite the child with his family (see Internal Procedure Termination of Parental Rights).
G. Determine whether the grandparents have the right to notice and right to be heard. In a child custody or dependency-neglect case, grandparents have this right if all the following conditions are present ("Grandparent does not mean a parent of a putative father of a child for the purpose of this determination):
    1) The grandchild resided with the grandparent for at least six (6) consecutive months prior to the child's first (1st) birthday or lived with the grandparent for at least one (1) continuous year regardless of age
    2) The grandparent was the primary financial caregiver during the time the child resided with the grandparent
    3) The continuous custody occurred within one (1) year of the initiation of the custody proceeding
H. Provide the OCC attorney with the name and address of any grandparent who is entitled to notice based on the above conditions.
I. Prepare an affidavit immediately and submit it to the OCC attorney. (CACD shall prepare affidavits containing facts obtained during their child maltreatment investigation.)
J. Arrange for a physician to examine the child thoroughly within twenty-four (24) hours of removal for allegations of severe maltreatment under A.C.A. §12-18-602 or if the allegation is that a child has been subjected to neglect as defined in A.C.A. §12-18-103(14)(B) (Garrett's Law) and arrange for a physician to examine the child thoroughly within seventy-two (72) hours of removal for all other children who enter the custody of the Division:
    1) The Specialist or Health Services Assistant must sign the consent for treatment prior to the child receiving medical and dental services during protective custody. The Specialist or Health Services Assistant may:
        a) Go to the medical or dental office where treatment is to be provided and sign the consent for treatment forms
        b) Have the form emailed, sign the form, and email it back to the service provider
        c) Have the forms signed electronically and emailed back to the service provider
        d) If the provider allows phone consent, they may provide consent via the telephone

    This should be developed prior to the resource parent accompanying the child for

treatment. In emergency situations, the on-call Specialist will be available to sign for medical or dental treatment.

K. Place the child in an appropriate licensed or approved placement.
L. If a provisional placement will be pursued:
    1) Notify the Area Resource Supervisor by email within twenty-four (24) hours of removal that children have been removed and a potential provisional placement has been identified:
        a) In the notification email provide the area Resource Supervisor with:
            i. Names and ages of the children who have been removed
            ii. Names of potential provisional placement
            iii. Relationship of potential provisional placement to children
            iv. Contact information for potential provisional placement
            v. Any other information collected regarding potential provisional placement (see CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Resource Parent Information and Questionnaire for more information)
    2) Interview the children, if age appropriate, to assess how the child may feel about placement with specific kin
    3) See Internal Procedure Consideration of Kin for further information on provisional placements
M. Complete and route CFS-323: Protective Custody Parental Notification.
N. Open a Permanency Services case within one (1) business day.
O. Return the child to the legal caregiver if the safety threat necessitating protective custody passes or if the judge does not grant custody to the Division. Protective custody cannot be extended.
P. Complete the CFS-336: Expiration of Protective Custody Parental Notification and provide to the caregiver.
Q. If the caregiver refuses to accept custody of the child, file an emergency petition.

403.14 Applying Assessment Tools When an UJO is the Alleged Offender

7/2025

When an allegation involving an Underage Juvenile Aggressor (UJO) is assigned by the hotline, the Division must determine how to apply the Safety and Risk Tools. The Safety and Risk Tools are household-based tools and should be applied in the household with an allegation of maltreatment. In circumstances involving an UJO, the Division is not using information about the UJO to complete the Safety Assessment or Risk Assessment unless the UJO is a caregiver for other children in the household.

The Division will apply the Safety Assessment Tool to the caregivers in the household with the allegation. This means the Safety Assessment Tool will be rated using the information about the caregivers for the UJO who is the alleged offender in the report. The Division will assess the knowledge the caregivers had of the UJO's offenses and the ability of the caregivers to protect other children currently in the household from maltreatment by the UJO. The Safety Assessment for the report with the UJO as the alleged offender should be marked safe and the Risk Assessment should be scored according to the family history. There are exceptions to this directive:

A. If the caregivers for the UJO meet criteria for child maltreatment in their current care of the UJO, the Division will make an additional report to the Child Abuse Hotline with the

caregivers as the alleged offender:

1) Then, in the newly accepted hotline report with the caregivers as the alleged offender and the UJO as the alleged victim, the appropriate safety threat would be marked and Immediate Safety Planning would be attempted to safely maintain the UJO in the care of their current caregiver

B. If the UJO is a child experiencing foster care and placed in a resource home, the Division will use the Resource Provider Safety Assessment and will follow the above directives:
    1) However, staff are still required to follow DCFS procedure and notify the Assistant Director of Prevention and Reunification of the allegations in the resource home
    2) If, after assessment, an Immediate Safety Plan is not necessary, DCFS staff will continue to follow protocol and will create a Resource Plan of Care to ensure the resource parents know how to take action to prevent further maltreatment of children in the resource home

403.15 Investigation Risk Assessment

07/2025

An Initial Risk Assessment will be completed on all new investigation and DR reports, including families with an open case. The Risk Assessment does not, on its own, correlate to whether a caregiver poses a risk to vulnerable populations.

The initial Risk Assessment is completed only on the household with an allegation of abuse or neglect. The Risk Assessment is not completed on "unable to locate" cases where the family has never been assessed or on cases where the only child in the family has died.

The tool is not intended to assess households of out-of-home caregivers such as childcare providers, resource parents, or facility staff. This means that the initial Risk Assessment is not completed on reports with third party alleged offenders, resource parents, school personnel, or residential facility care providers.

If there are risk factors or evidence that maltreatment has occurred, but no safety threats are present, then neither an Immediate Safety Plan nor removal of the child is necessary at that point in time:

A. When no safety threats are present, per A.C.A. § 12-18-1009, the caregivers retain the right to keep the child at home or to place the child outside the home.
B. However, as appropriate, the Investigator may make referrals or provide services during the investigation to address any risk factors.
C. Document all referrals made or services provided during the investigation in the Investigation Finding screen in the Division information management system.

Refer to the Safety and Risk Assessments Manual for detailed definitions and instructions on completing the initial Risk Assessment.

The Investigator will:

A. Complete the initial Risk Assessment on each child as soon as the information is available but no later than the conclusion of the investigation and before any decision to open a case.
B. Complete both the abuse and neglect indices of the initial Risk Assessment to determine the

risk score.

C. Identify whether a Policy override exists. Policy overrides increase the risk level to "very high" and include:
    1) Injury to a child younger than three (3)
    2) Sexual abuse case and the alleged offender is likely to have access to the child
    3) Serious non-accidental injury to a child that requires medical treatment
    4) Abuse or neglect by the caregiver resulted in death of a child (previous or currently)
D. Assess whether the risk level is too low and a discretionary override should be requested. This override will increase the risk level by one (1):
    1) Document the specific reason for the discretionary override
    2) Choose the next highest level of risk
    3) Obtain supervisory approval of the override
E. Make the decision whether to open a case using the guidelines set out in the Safety and Risk Assessments Manual.
F. Confer with the Supervisor about the decision to open or not open a case.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Review the completed Initial Risk Assessment.
B. Determine if an override is necessary due to a unique circumstance warranting a higher level of risk than assigned by the risk level chart:
    1) Select appropriate Policy override action in the Division information management system if needed
    2) Review and approve or disapprove discretionary overrides to the level of risk
C. Confer with the Investigator whether a case should be opened using the guidelines set out in the Safety and Risk Assessments Manual.

403.16 Using Interpreter Services During an Investigation

07/2025

Both verbal language and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services are available statewide. While they are available, in person services are limited. and require, when possible, a twenty-four (24)-hour notice. Language interpretation may be provided over the phone as well as in person.

SCHEDULING INTERPRETER SERVICES

The Investigator will:

A. To schedule an interpreter for in-person interviews call the DHS exclusive number 1-877-866-0607:
    1) Choose option 1 and the service will schedule the interview
B. To schedule telephone and on-demand interpretation, call the DCFS exclusive number 1-844-541-7181.
C. Do NOT share these telephone numbers with anyone outside the Division.
D. Interpreter Connection for in-person, telephone or on-demand services is guaranteed to be within ninety (90) seconds once a language is chosen. Marshallese interpreters are only for Zoom or phone, if available.
E. To schedule American Sign Language or Spanish sign language interpretation services through Communication Plus, call 501-224-2521. The service is available twenty-four (24)

hours a day seven (7) days a week.

F. For all interpreter services the Investigator must provide:
    1) DCFS staff first and last name
    2) DCFS staff personnel number
    3) Social security number or pseudo number of the client requiring the interpreter service
    4) Language needed
G. Document translation services are also available. Email the documents to be translated to the designated DCFS contact person, currently the Foster Care program manager.

403.17 Request for Investigative Timeframe Extension

07/2025

If the Investigator is unable to make a Social Service Supervisor approved investigative determination within forty-five (45) calendar days of receipt of the child maltreatment report due to good cause, then the Investigator will:

A. Conference with their Supervisor regarding the need for extension
B. By no later than the 40th day of the investigation, request their Supervisor to submit the completed CFS-217: Request for Investigation Timeframe Extension via the Division information management system.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Review and discuss the request and the associated investigative file with the Investigator within twenty-four (24) hours of the request.
B. If it is determined that:
    1) An extension is warranted:
        a) Immediately forward the CFS-217: Request for Investigation Timeframe Extension via the Division information management system (level 9 security required) and any supporting documentation to the Area Manager or designee
    2) An extension is not warranted:
        a) Deny the request in the Division information management system
        b) Conference with Investigator as to how to ensure a Supervisor approved investigation determination is made within forty-five (45) days of the receipt of the child maltreatment report from the hotline

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Review and discuss the request and the associated investigative file with the Investigator within twenty-four (24) hours of the request.
B. If it is determined that:
    1) An extension is warranted:
        a) Immediately forward the CFS-217: Request for Investigation Timeframe Extension via the Division information management system and any supporting documentation to the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee
    2) An extension is not warranted:
        a) Deny the request in the Division information management system

b) Conference with Supervisor as to how to ensure a Supervisor approved investigation determination is made within forty-five (45) days of the receipt of the child maltreatment report from the hotline

The Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee will:

1) Review and respond to any extension request within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of request via the Division information management system.

403.18 Child Maltreatment Investigation Closures and Determinations

10/2026

Within forty-five (45) calendar days of receipt of a report from the Child Abuse Hotline (or within sixty (60) calendar days for those investigations for which an extension was granted as outlined above) a child maltreatment investigation will be either administratively closed pursuant to A.C.A. §12-18-601 without a determination, or closed with a determination of either:

A. Unsubstantiated.
B. True.
C. True but exempted for:
    1) Neglect as defined by A.C.A. § 12-18-103(13)(B) (i.e., Garrett's Law)
    2) Religious beliefs
    3) Underaged juvenile offenders
    4) Juvenile offenders less than fourteen (14) years of age
D. Inactive.

ADMINISTRATIVE CLOSURES

To conduct an administrative closure, the Investigator will:

A. Initiate the investigation by interviewing the alleged victim outside the presence of the alleged offender.
B. Complete an assessment of the alleged victim's home environment, as appropriate.
C. Interview a collateral witness.
D. Review prior history of child maltreatment related to the family of the child and to the alleged offender.
E. After preliminary investigation steps above have occurred, submit a request for administrative closure if:
    1) There has not been an additional report of abuse or neglect that has been committed by the alleged offender who is the subject of the current report
    2) Investigator has determined, based on review of prior child maltreatment history, that the health and safety of the child can be assured without further investigation by the Division
    3) Investigator determines that abuse or neglect of the child did not occur, and at least one (1) of the following criteria are met:
        a) There are indications of malicious reporting
        b) Details of the allegations are insufficient to investigate
        c) There is no available evidence to support or refute the allegations due to the passage of time between the alleged occurrence of the maltreatment and the time the report was made

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Review the request for administrative closure to ensure:
    1) The victim child was interviewed outside the presence of the alleged offender
    2) The home environment of the victim child was assessed, as appropriate, given the maltreatment allegation
    3) Collateral witness interviews occurred
B. Determine if the request meets criteria for administrative closure and within two (2) business days of receipt:
    1) Submit for three (3)-tier closure approval if criteria are met
    2) If criteria for administrative closure are not met:
        a) Deny request for administrative closure
        b) Complete a case consultation with Investigator to discuss the reasons for denial of administrative closure request and develop a plan for completion of the investigation

The Division Deputy Director or designee will:

A. Determine if the request meets criteria for administrative closure within two (2) business days of receipt and:
    1) Approve administrative closure request if criteria have been met
    2) Deny request for administrative closure adding details of denial in the comments section

EXEMPTED NO RISK SELECTIONS

When considering whether the offender named in an investigation with the determination of true may pose a risk to vulnerable populations, the Investigator will:

A. Consider the following factors:
    1) The severity of the child maltreatment
    2) The nature and severity of an injury or other adverse impact caused by the child maltreatment
    3) The current or future access the offender has or could have to a vulnerable population
    4) Offender's previous child maltreatment history and whether there are similar fact patterns related to current offense and past child maltreatment history
    5) Subsequent reports of child maltreatment against the offender
    6) Criminal history of the offender
    7) Risk Assessment tool rating
B. Participate in a case consultation with direct Supervisor to determine if the offender may pose a risk of maltreatment to a vulnerable population.
C. Enter explanation of risk to a vulnerable population decision in the Division information management system Findings Recommendation screen.
D. If there is a decision that the offender does not pose a risk to a vulnerable population, select 'Exempt-No Risk' from the findings dropdown menu and submit for three (3)-tier approval.

When considering if the offender may pose a risk to vulnerable populations, the Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Review 'Exempt-No Risk' selections because the recommendation from the Investigator is

that the offender does not pose a risk to a vulnerable population. This will include a review of the narrative in the Division information management system Findings Recommendation screen and associated information in the investigation to ensure appropriate selection has been recommended and:

1) If approving based on review, submit 'Exempt-No Risk' for third (3rd) tier approval
2) If denying based on review:
    a) Deny request and enter comments regarding the denial in the denial comments
    b) Complete a consultation with Investigator regarding denial

When considering whether the offender may pose a risk to vulnerable populations, the Division Deputy Director or designee will:

A. Determine if 'Exempt-No Risk' is appropriate based on review of the narrative in the Division information management system Findings Recommendation screen and associated information in the investigation and:
    1) Approve request if appropriate
    2) Deny request adding details of denial in the comments section

OTHER DETERMINATIONS

For all other determinations, the Investigator will:

A. Document the investigative determination on the "Investigation Finding" screen in the Division information management system. The Division information management system will automatically populate the Overall Finding (unsubstantiated, true, true but exempted, or inactive) based on the individual findings:
    1) For true but exempted determinations involving underaged juvenile offenders with sexual abuse allegations:
        a) Select the "Alleged Juvenile Offender–Under Age Fourteen" in the Role in Referral Select box on the Abuse/Neglect Screen in Referral or Investigation in the Division information management system
        b) Select "Exempted from Finding (Underaged Juvenile Offender)" as the individual finding in the Investigation Findings screen in the Division information management system
        c) When "Exempted from Finding (Underaged Juvenile Offender)" appears in the individual finding, the overall finding for the investigation will be Exempted (Underage Juvenile Offender at Time of Incident) if there are no other allegations associated with the report. If True is selected for another allegation in the Investigation the Overall Finding will be changed to True. If the Individual Findings for any other allegations in the investigation are Unsubstantiated and the Individual Finding is "Exempted (Underage Juvenile Offender at Time of Incident)" for the sexual abuse allegation with the underage juvenile offender, the Overall Finding will be "Exempted (Underage Juvenile Offender at Time of Incident)"
B. Document additional information deemed necessary pertaining to the investigation determination on the "Investigation Closure" screen and request supervisory approval of the determination. The request for approval will automatically go to the staff's Supervisor's box for approval.
C. Ensure child maltreatment investigative determination notices, whether true or

unsubstantiated, are issued to all persons pursuant to A.C.A. §12-18-703 et seq.

D. Complete the Family First Eligibility screen in the Division information management system for true reports where the children remain in the home.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Investigator as necessary regarding the determination.
B. Review the investigative determination and other pertinent screens in the Division information management system.
C. Complete CFS-299: Investigation Closure Checklist prior to closing any investigation:
    1) Forward completed CFS-299 to the Area Manager or Program Administrator for review regarding any case with ten (10) or more previous investigations to determine if final disposition is appropriate
D. Approve the investigation closure as appropriate on the "Investigation Closure" screen.
E. For substantiated investigations, complete or approve the "Investigation Case Connect" screen as appropriate and assign and open a case if appropriate.

403.19 Internal Review of Assessment Decisions

09/2025

Child welfare is a complex field due to the multitude of individual, family, and community dynamics that not only affect how families raise their children, but how child welfare staff, who also come from varied backgrounds and experiences, assess child and family functioning. As such, DCFS has an internal review process for assessment decisions given that one (1) individual may perceive an allegation of maltreatment or risks differently from another individual despite consistent training.

A DCFS Social Service Specialist, Social Service Supervisor, or an Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) attorney may request the Division Director or designee to allow an internal review of assessment decisions if they believe:

A. A child in the custody of the Division can be returned safely to their home.
B. A child has not been taken into Division custody even though the child cannot remain safely in their home.

No adverse action will be taken against an employee for requesting an internal review of assessment decisions as outlined in this procedure. However, employees who request an internal review of assessment decisions are not absolved from discipline for other actions, as appropriate, that fall outside of a request for an internal review of assessment decisions.

Requests for an internal review of assessment decisions will be made in writing via email to the Division Director or designee. The Division Director or designee will approve the request for an internal review of assessment decisions, as appropriate, within one (1) business day. The Division Director or designee may ask the requestor for additional information regarding the need for an internal review of assessment decisions as needed.

When the Director or designee grants approval for an internal review of an assessment decision, the Division Director or designee will immediately select and notify in writing via email the following staff to review the assessment decision and determine the course of action to be taken:

A. Two (2) Area Managers who have no previous involvement with the case.

B. A County Manager who has no previous involvement with case and who does not report to either of the selected Area Managers .

The Division Director or designee will also provide the information submitted by the requestor of an internal review of an assessment decision to the selected internal review committee.

If any of the selected Area Managers and County Managers cannot serve on the assessment decision internal review committee due to a conflict of interest or any other extenuating circumstance, they will notify the Division Director of the conflict in writing via email within twenty-four (24) hours of the receipt of notification to serve on the internal review committee. If the Division Director or designee agrees that the selected staff member cannot serve on the assessment decision internal review committee, then the Division Director or designee will immediately, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours, select and notify another staff member of an equal position in writing via email.

The selected Area Managers and County Manager are responsible for coordinating with each other to schedule the internal review committee meeting. Within two (2) business days of receiving notification from the Division Director or designee to serve on the internal review committee, the selected Area Managers and County Manager will hold the assessment decision internal review. This committee will participate in the internal review in person at an agreed upon location or via conference call.

The committee will provide written notice via email of the date, time, location, and conference call information, if applicable, of the internal review to the:

A. Specialist, Supervisor, or OCC who submitted the request for an internal review of assessment decisions.
B. Specialist involved in the investigation or case, if different from the requestor.
C. Direct Supervisor of the primary Specialist involved in the investigation or case, if different from the requestor.
D. Local OCC attorney involved in the investigation or case, if different from the requestor.
E. Area Manager of the primary Specialist and their direct Supervisor (for information purposes only).
F. DCFS Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee (for information purposes only).
G. Division Director or designee (for information purposes only).

The individual who submitted the request for an internal review of assessment decisions as well as the other field staff involved (primary Social Service Specialist and direct Social Service Supervisor) will attend the internal review in person or by conference call to present their positions regarding the investigation or case and to answer any questions the internal review committee may pose. If any of these individuals are unable to participate in the internal review, they may submit any information requested by the committee in writing prior to the internal review.

After listening to all presentations and responses to any questions, and reviewing any additional written information submitted regarding the assessment decision, the internal review committee will determine, as applicable, if:

A. A child experiencing foster care may be returned to their home (with court approval).

B. The Division will take a seventy-two (72)-hour hold on a child determined by the internal review committee as not able to remain safely in their home.
C. No action will be taken.

The internal review committee will select a member of that committee to notify all appropriate individuals of their decision in writing within two (2) hours of adjournment of the internal review committee. The internal review committee will determine the timeframe in which any necessary action resulting from its decision will take place, not to exceed twenty-four (24) hours. For situations in which the committee determines that a child experiencing foster care may be returned home, this will include notifying the local OCC attorney to request a hearing to ask for court approval to return the child home.

REQUEST FOR AN INTERNAL REVIEW OF AN ASSESSMENT DECISION
07/2025

The Social Service Specialist, Social Service Supervisor, or OCC requesting an internal review of an assessment decision will:

1) Email the Division Director or designee and copy the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee requesting an internal review of an assessment decision as soon as the individual has reasonable cause to believe:
    a) A child experiencing foster care can be returned safely to their home
    b) A child has not been taken into the Division's custody even though the child cannot remain safely in their home
2) Ensure the email requesting an internal review of an assessment decision:
    a) Has a subject line, "SENSITIVE: Request for Internal Review of an Assessment Decision – Immediate Attention Required" and includes the applicable county
    b) Is marked as "high importance"
    c) Includes the following information in the body of the email:
        i. Last name of the client involved
        ii. Referral number or client ID, as applicable
        iii. Brief summary of the reason for the request

APPROVAL OR DENIAL OF INTERNAL REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT DECISION AND SELECTION OF THE INTERNAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
07/2025

The Division Director or designee will:

A. Review the email and request additional information from the requestor, if needed.
B. Within one (1) business day, approve the request and select and notify in writing via email the following staff to review the assessment decision and determine the course of action to be taken:
    1) Two (2) Area Managers who have no previous involvement with the case
    2) County Manager who has no previous involvement with case and who does not report to either of the selected Area Managers
C. Select an alternate internal review committee member, if necessary, upon receipt of notification that a previously selected member cannot participate due to a conflict of interest or other extenuating circumstance and immediately, but no later than twenty-four

(24) hours, notify the alternate selection.

D. Forward the written email request for the internal review of an assessment decision to the selected internal review committee members.

The internal review committee members will:

A. Confirm participation upon receipt of the notification from the Division Director or designee.
B. Immediately notify the Division Director or designee if unable to participate due to a conflict of interest or other extenuating circumstance.

ASSESSMENT DECISION INTERNAL REVIEW COMMITTEE DUTIES

07/2025

The internal review committee members will:

A. Review the following information prior to holding an internal review of assessment decisions:
    1) Applicable Hotline report
    2) All Division information management system contacts related to the investigation or case
    3) Written request for the internal review of assessment decisions previously submitted to the Division Director or designee
B. Determine a date, time, and location or conference call option for the internal review process (to be held within two (2) business days of receiving notification from the Division Director or designee to serve on the internal review committee) and notify via email the following individuals:
    1) Specialist, Supervisor, or OCC who submitted the request for an internal review of assessment decisions
    2) Primary Specialist involved in the investigation or case, if different from the requestor
    3) Direct Supervisor of the primary Specialist involved in the investigation or case, if different from the requestor
    4) Local OCC involved in the investigation or case, if different from the requestor
    5) Area Manager of the primary Specialist and their direct Supervisor (for information purposes only)
    6) DCFS Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee (for information purposes only)
    7) Division Director or designee (for information purposes only)
C. Conduct the internal review of an assessment decision at the reviewed upon time.
D. Determine, as applicable, if:
    1) A child experiencing foster care will be returned to their home
    2) The Division will take a seventy-two (72)-hour hold on a child determined by the internal review committee as not able to remain safely in their home
    3) No action will be taken
E. Select a member of internal review committee to notify the following individuals of their decision in writing within two (2) hours of adjournment of the internal review committee:
    1) Specialist, Supervisor, or OCC who submitted the request for an internal review of assessment decisions

2) Primary Specialist involved in the investigation or case, if different from requestor
3) Direct Supervisor of the primary Specialist involved in the investigation or case, if different from requestor
4) Local OCC involved in the investigation or case, if different from the requestor
5) Area Manager of the primary Specialist and their direct Supervisor
6) DCFS Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee
7) Division Director or designee

F. Determine the timeframe in which any necessary action resulting from the decision will take place, not to exceed twenty-four (24) hours.
G. Communicate immediately to the applicable individuals via email the tasks that will be completed because of the committee's decision to include completion of appropriate documentation in the Division information management system.

403.20 Referrals and Case Openings

07/2026

The following factors are used to guide decisions about whether a case should be opened, or whether the family should be referred to another prevention services provider. NOTE: When unresolved safety threats are still present at the end of the investigation, the report should be referred to services regardless of the risk level. The risk level is also useful to determine the frequency of contact with a family after the first thirty (30) days of an in-home service case or DR case.

The decision to open a case will be made as guided by:

A. The results of the Safety Assessment.
B. The results of the Risk Assessment.
C. Investigation determination.
D. Professional judgement.
E. Supervisory consultation.

The investigation determination will be used to determine the type of case offered or opened (prevention, in home, or permanency). The investigation determination alone is not sufficient to determine whether a case will be opened. See Internal Procedure Services Case Opening for guidance whether to open a case and if a case is necessary, additional guidance on the type of case to open.

In addition to actions listed above, in both the Safety Assessment and the Risk Assessment sections:

A. For reports of sexual abuse determined to be true and involving an alleged offender under the age of eighteen (18) at the time the act or omission occurred:
    1) The Investigator will:
        a) Refer the alleged offender and victim for mental health services by:
            i. Providing the caregiver of the alleged offender and victim with a list of mental health professionals or agencies available to evaluate and treat the alleged offender and victim, if necessary
            ii. Assisting the caregiver of the alleged offender and victim with a referral for a mental health evaluation, if necessary
B. If an in-home or permanency case will not be opened on a true report involving children in the home

under the age of three (3), make a referral to the DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities Children's Services for an early intervention screening.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Assist Investigator, as appropriate or needed, with referrals.
B. Approve the "Investigation Case Connect" screen and assign and open a case if appropriate.

Internal Procedure 404: Allegations Concerning Out-of-Home Placements

05/2022

404.1 Initial Report Response

01/2019

When an initial report of child maltreatment is made that concerns any person in a resource home, the CACD Investigator will begin an investigation within twenty-four (24) hours for Priority I allegations or within seventy-two (72) hours for Priority II allegations. The Child Abuse Hotline will notify the appropriate DCFS and CACD executive staff and the Area Manager for the services area in which the resource home named in the report is located.

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Ensure the appropriate DCFS field staff are notified of the allegation:
    1) County Managers
    2) Supervisors
    3) Primary and secondary Specialists for the children named in the allegation so that these staff can:
        a. Notify:
            i. The children's family
            ii. OCC attorney
            iii. The children's CASA, if applicable
            iv. The children's attorneys ad litem
        b. Complete the Safety Assessment
B. Notify the Resource Specialist and Resource Supervisor of the maltreatment allegation so that the Resource Specialist may place the home on unavailable status in the Division information management system.
C. Conference with Supervisor as needed.

The assessment process will vary depending on whether the named offender is an adult in the home or whether the alleged offender is another child in the home.

When the alleged offender is an adult in the home the assigned primary or secondary Specialist will:

A. Within twenty-four (24) hours, assess the safety and risk of the child named in the report and any other children in the resource home using the Resource Provider Safety Assessment.
B. If the Safety Assessment indicates there is a safety threat:
    1) Determine if the children in care can remain in the home with the implementation

of an Immediate Safety Plan for the resource home on an individual, case-by-case basis

2) This includes determining the placement structure that best meets all the needs of the children and all members of the resource home. For example:
    a) The alleged victim child in care may be removed from the home
    b) Any of the children in care who are neither an alleged offender nor an alleged victim may be removed or remain in the home based on an individual, case-by-case determination of what is in their best interest

C. If an Immediate Safety Plan for the resource home is implemented:
    1) Develop the Immediate Safety Plan for the resource home with the resource parents, the resource parents' identified support network, and children in the home, as age and developmentally appropriate, review it, and answer any questions the participants may have:
        a) There must be at least one (1) supportive adult in the resource parents' support network who is willing and able to participate in the Immediate Safety Plan
        b) See Safety and Risk Manual, Resource Provider Safety Assessment for additional guidance
        c) See Internal Procedure Ensuring Child Safety Through Immediate Safety Planning
    2) Utilizing the appropriate chain of command, obtain approval of the ISP for the resource home from the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee prior to leaving the home
    3) If the ISP is approved by the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee:
        a) Leave a copy of the ISP with the resource parents
        b) File the ISP for the resource home in the provider record:
            i. Scan a copy of the plan into eDoctus
        c) Document the ISP for the resource home and reasons behind the implementation of the plan in the Division information management system contacts
        d) Inform other parties to the case of the ISP for the resource home immediately, but no later than the next business day via email or text. These include but are not limited to:
            i. Biological caregivers
            ii. Attorney ad Litem
            iii. CASA
            iv. Parent Counsel
            v. OCC
        e) Schedule a Team Decision Making meeting
        f) Contact the resource home at least weekly to meet with the children and resource parents while the Immediate Safety Plan for the resource home is in place:
            i. During the home contact meet individually with resource parents and children in care, if age appropriate, to assess the Immediate Safety Plan for the resource home, the continued well-being of the children, and to determine any adjustments that may need to be

made

When the alleged offender is a child in the resource home the assigned primary or secondary Social Service Specialist will:

A. Apply the Safety Assessment tool to the caregivers in the resource household with the allegation:
    1) Determine if the alleged child offender presents a safety threat to any child in the home
    2) Assess the resource caregivers' knowledge of the alleged child offender's behavior
    3) Assess the caregivers' capacity to develop a plan to assure the safety of other children in the resource home
B. If necessary, develop a child specific safety plan with the resource caregivers to protect the other children in the resource home.
C. Determining the placement structure that best meets all the needs of the children and all members of the resource home. For example:
    1) The alleged victim child in care may be removed from the home
    2) The alleged offender child may be removed from the home
    3) Any of the children in care who are neither an alleged offender nor an alleged victim may be removed or remain in the home based on an individual, case-by-case determination of what is in their best interest

In either situation above, if the children must be removed (which includes removal because the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee does not approve the Immediate Safety Plan by phone, adults will not or cannot participate in an Immediate Safety Plan, or a child-specific safety plan cannot be developed to protect children in the home from a child who is offending):

A. Move the children to another approved placement.
B. Refer to Internal Procedure Changes to Out-of-Home Placement regarding notifications of the placement move.

Following the initial response the assigned primary or secondary Social Service Specialist will:

A. Provide a briefing of the Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment within twenty-four (24) hours of conducting the assessments by emailing the completed CFS-329: Resource Child Maltreatment Disclosure Case Briefing Summary to the DCFS Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee, the Assistant Director of Prevention and Reunification, and the Child Protective Services (CPS) Manager.
B. Notify the following immediately, but no later than five (5) business days when a child is named as a victim or as an alleged offender:
    1) Legal caregiver of a child experiencing foster care
    2) Current resource parent of a child experiencing foster care
    3) Attorney ad Litem
    4) Court Appointed Special Advocate
    5) Counsel in a dependency-neglect case or FINS case
    6) In addition, notify:
        a) AAL and CASA volunteer for any child in the same resource home if the child maltreatment occurred in the resource home
        b) AAL and CASA volunteer for any child experiencing foster care when an

alleged juvenile offender or underage juvenile offender is placed in the same placement as the AAL and CASA volunteer's client

c) Responsible Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT)
d) Mandated Reporter who made the initial notification of suspected child maltreatment and the report was accepted for investigation

7) Use the CFS-329-B to document the notifications and email the completed form to the DCFS Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee, the Assistant Director of Prevention and Reunification, and the Child Protective Services Manager

C. If no safety threat is identified but there are concerns related to non-compliance with minimum licensing standards develop a corrective action plan to allow the children experiencing foster care to remain safely in the resource home while the provider makes needed changes to meet licensing requirements.
D. If after the initial Safety Assessment, no safety threat, risk factor, or concerns exist, neither an Immediate Safety Plan nor a corrective action plan is required.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist as needed
B. Notify the Area Manager of the initial response outcomes.

The Resource Specialist will:

A. At the direction of the Area Manager or designee, classify the home under investigation as "unavailable" in the Division information management system immediately but no later than the next business day, so that no additional children may be placed in that home until the resolution of the investigation.
B. Assist with the monitoring of the Immediate Safety Plan or child-specific safety plan
C. Develop a corrective action plan for the resource home if it is determined that there is non-compliance with minimum licensing standard.

The Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee will:

A. Notify the DCFS Director when a child is left in a resource home in which a member of the resource household has been named as an alleged offender and an Immediate Safety Plan has been implemented to allow the child to stay in the home to ensure the child's best interest.
B. Notify the DCFS Director when a child-specific safety plan is developed and a child named as the alleged offender remains in the home with other children.
C. Review the CFS-329: Foster Child Maltreatment Disclosure Case Briefing Summary.
D. Conference with field staff as necessary.
E. Share the CFS-329: Foster Child Maltreatment Disclosure Case Briefing Summary with the Assistant Director of Placement Supports and Community Outreach and the Foster Care Manager as appropriate.

404.2 Response to Unsubstantiated Finding

01/2019

If the child maltreatment allegation is unsubstantiated, the Resource Specialist will:

A. Collaborate with the Investigator and the children's Caseworker to write a request to the

Resource Family Review Committee regarding how to proceed with the resource home.

B. Submit a request to the Resource Family Review Committee within one (1) week of the determination:
    1) The request will include the Resource Specialist's recommendation regarding:
        a) Ending the Immediate Safety Plan for the resource home, if applicable
        b) The placement arrangements for the children (returning any children who may have been removed from the resource home because of the allegation)
        c) Whether the resource home will be left on unavailable status or be returned to available status
        d) Whether any other actions are required, including corrective action for non-compliance with a minimum licensing standard
C. Participate in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting upon request:
    1) Phone participation in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting is acceptable
D. Update the status of the resource home in the Division information management system as needed and update contacts as necessary.

The Resource Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Resource Specialist as needed.
B. Participate in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting upon request:
    1) Phone participation in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting is acceptable
C. Update the Area Manager as needed.

The Investigator Specialist will:

A. Collaborate with the Resource Specialist and the children's Casework Specialist to write a request to the Resource Family Review Committee regarding how to proceed with the resource home.
B. Participate in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting upon request:
    1) Phone participation in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting is acceptable.

The Casework Specialist for the children will:

A. Collaborate with the Resource Specialist and the Investigator to write a request to the Resource Family Review Committee regarding how to proceed with the resource home.
B. Participate in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting upon request:
    1) Phone participation in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting is acceptable
C. Update the children's Family Case Plan tool and Family Case Plan following the implementation of the Resource Family Review Committee's decision.

The Social Service Supervisors will:

A. Conference with the Investigator Specialist and Casework Specialist as needed.
B. Participate in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting upon request:
    1) Phone participation in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting is acceptable

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Participate in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting upon request:
    1) Phone participation in the Resource Family Review Committee meeting is acceptable

The Resource Family Review Committee will:

A. Review the request from the Resource Specialist and determine the appropriate actions that may include, but are not limited to:
    1) Ending the Immediate Safety Plan for the resource home, if applicable
    2) Revising the placement arrangements for the children (for example, returning any children who may have been removed from the resource home because of the allegation)
    3) Determining whether the resource home will be left on unavailable status or be returned to available status
    4) Determining whether any other actions are required
B. Notify the Resource Specialist who submitted the request of the committee's decision in writing within one (1) business day.
C. Document the recommendation in the Provider Screen in the Division information management system.

404.3 Response to True Finding Pending Due Process

01/2019

If the child maltreatment allegation is determined to be true, the Social Service Casework Specialist will:

A. Reassess the Immediate Safety Plan for the resource home, if applicable, in collaboration with the Resource Specialist and assigned Investigator.
B. Remove any or all children from the home, determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Investigation and Resource Supervisors, if necessary to ensure their safety and well-being:
    1) If the children must be removed, refer to Internal Procedure Changes to Out-of-Home Placement regarding notifications of the placement move
C. Hold a family team meeting within three (3) business days of the finding to determine if the Immediate Safety Plan for the resource home, if applicable, needs to be revised or if changes to the children's placement are needed until due process for the resource parents has been met.
D. Update contacts in the Division information management system as necessary.
E. Update the Resource Specialist and Resource Supervisor as necessary.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist regarding the determination.
B. Participate in the family team meeting to determine if the Immediate Safety Plan for the resource home, if applicable, needs to be revised or if changes to the children's placement are needed until due process for the resource parents has been met.

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting upon request.
B. Update the availability of the resource home and applicable contacts in the Division information management system.

The investigator will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting upon request.

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting in person or via phone to determine if the corrective action plan for the resource home, if applicable, needs to be revised or if changes to the children's placement are needed until due process for the resource parents has been met.
B. Notify the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee if the children will remain in a resource home with a true finding while due process is pending.

The Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee will:

A. Notify the DCFS Director if the children will remain in a resource home with a true finding while due process is pending.

404.4 Response to Overturned Finding When the Home is Still Open

01/2019

The Casework Specialist will:

A. Arrange and hold a family team meeting within three (3) business days of the administrative hearing to determine on a case-by-case basis if it is in the best interest of the children to remain in or return to that resource home, as applicable:
    1) If the results of the family team meeting determine that it is appropriate to allow the children involved in the allegation to remain in or return to the home, reassess the Immediate Safety Plan, if applicable, for the resource home and adjust accordingly
    2) If the family team meeting determines that any children still in the resource home must be removed, remove the children from the home:
        a) If the children must be removed, refer to Internal Procedure Changes to Out-of- Home Placement regarding notifications of the placement move
B. Conference with the Supervisor, Resource Specialist, and Resource Supervisor regarding the recommendation as to whether the resource home will be left on unavailable status or returned to available status and if any other actions are required.
C. Update contacts in the Division information management system as necessary.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting regarding the children's placement to determine, as applicable, if it is in the children's best interest to remain in or return to the resource home.
B. Conference with the Casework Specialist, Resource Specialist , and Resource Supervisor regarding the recommendation as to whether the resource home will be left on unavailable status or returned to available status and if any other actions are required.
C. Update the Area Manager as necessary.

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting (in person or via phone) regarding the placement of

the children.

B. Submit the recommendation developed during the family team meeting regarding the placement of the children to the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee for final approval.
C. Conference with the Supervisor and Resource Supervisor regarding the recommendation as to whether the resource home will be left on unavailable status or returned to available status and if any other actions are required.

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting regarding the children's placement to determine, as applicable, if it is in the children's best interest to remain in or return to the resource home.
B. Take lead on the reevaluation of the resource home if it is still open.
C. Conference with the Specialist, Supervisor, and Resource Supervisor regarding the recommendation as to whether the resource home will be left on unavailable status or returned to available status and if any other actions are required.
D. Submit the recommendation, if applicable, to place the resource home back on available status to the Resource Family Review Committee.
E. Based on the response from the Resource Family Review Committee, update the status of the resource home in the Division information management system, if applicable, or close the resource home in the Division information management system, if applicable.
F. Complete CFS-475-F: True Reports of Child Maltreatment Against Resource Family Members and file it in the provider record.
G. Complete CFS-475-G: Checklist for Resource Home Closure and other required steps to close a resource home, if applicable.
H. Update contacts in the Division information management system as necessary.

The Resource Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist, Supervisor, and Resource Specialist regarding the recommendation as to whether the resource home will be left on unavailable status or returned to available status and if any other actions are required.

The Assistant Director of Field Operations will:

A. Notify the DCFS Director or designee of the decision regarding placement of the children and availability status of the resource home.

The Resource Family Review Committee will:

A. Review the recommendation from the Resource Specialist as to whether the resource home will be left on unavailable status or returned to available status and if any other actions are required.
B. Notify the Resource Specialist who submitted the request of the committee's decision in writing within one (1) business day.

404.5 Response to Overturned Finding When the Home has Been Closed

01/2019

If the resource home has been closed and requests DCFS to re-open the home, the Resource Specialist will:

A. Arrange and hold a family team meeting within three (3) business days of the administrative hearing to determine on a case-by-case basis if the local staff believe it is appropriate to pursue re- opening the resource home:
    1) If local staff believe it is appropriate to pursue re-opening the resource home, collaborate with other local staff, as appropriate, to write a request to the Resource Family Review Committee to consider re-opening the resource home and submit the request to the Resource Family Review Committee
    2) If local staff believe it is not appropriate to pursue re-opening the resource home, inform the family of the decision

The Resource Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting to determine on a case-by-case basis if the local staff believe it is appropriate to pursue re-opening the resource home.
B. Update the Area Manager as necessary.

The Investigator will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting in person or via phone to determine on a case-by-case basis if the local staff believe it is appropriate to pursue re-opening the resource home.

The Casework Specialist will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting in person or via phone to determine on a case-by-case basis if the local staff believe it is appropriate to pursue re-opening the resource home.

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting in person or via phone to determine on a case-by-case basis if the local staff believe it is appropriate to pursue re-opening the resource home.

The Resource Family Review Committee will:

A. Review the request from the Resource Specialist and determine if it is appropriate to re-open the home and, if so, under what conditions (for example, once additional training has been completed, with certain restrictions on characteristics of children that can be placed in the home).
B. Notify the Resource Specialist who submitted the request of the committee's decision in writing within one (1) business day.

404.6 Response to True Finding Upheld on Administrative Appeal

01/2019

If the true finding is upheld by the administrative hearing, the resource home may remain open for any of the children currently placed in the home if it can be shown that it is in the best interest of the children to remain in the home. This will be done on an individual basis for each child.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Arrange and hold a family team meeting within three (3) business days of the administrative hearing to determine on a case-by-case basis if it is in the best interest of the children to remain in that resource home, if applicable:
    1) If the results of the family team meeting determine that it is appropriate to allow the children involved in the allegation to remain in the home, reassess the Immediate Safety Plan for the resource home and adjust accordingly if necessary
    2) If the family team meeting determines that any children still in the resource home must be removed, remove the children from the home:
        a) If the children must be removed, refer to Internal Procedure Changes to Out-of-Home Placement regarding notifications of the placement move
        b) Staff are highly encouraged to update the child's Family Case Plan tool and Family Case Plan during this family team meeting or once the children move into a new placement, if applicable
B. Conference with the Supervisor, Resource Specialist, and Resource Supervisor regarding at what point the resource home will be closed.
C. Provide the Resource Specialist with any needed or requested information for an alternative compliance, Policy waiver, or corrective action request, if applicable.
D. Update contacts in the Division information management system as needed.
E. If at any point the Policy waiver or alternative compliance request is denied, conference with the Supervisor and:
    1) Remove all children in care from the resource home
    2) Refer to Internal Procedure Changes to Out-of-Home Placement regarding notifications of the placement move

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting to determine on a case-by-case basis if it is in the best interest of the children to remain in that resource home, if applicable.
B. Conference with the Specialist, the Resource Specialist, and the Resource Supervisor regarding at what point the resource home will be closed.
C. Update the Area Manager as needed.

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Participate in the family team meeting in person or via phone to determine on a case-by-case basis if it is in the best interest of the children to remain in that resource home, if applicable.
B. Submit the recommendation from the family team meeting to the Assistant Director of

Field Operations or designee for final approval.

C. Review any received Policy waiver or alternative compliance requests and supporting materials for resource homes for which a true finding has been upheld, and the children will remain in that home due to it being in their best interest.
D. Grant or deny approval for Policy waiver or alternative compliance requests as appropriate.
E. If approved, forward the request to the DCFS Director or designee for approval.

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Conference with the Specialist, Supervisor, and Resource Supervisor regarding at what point the resource home will be closed.
B. Complete the necessary documents for requesting that the resource home be granted an alternative compliance or Policy waiver if needed to allow the resource home to remain open for the children involved in the report because it is in their best interest to remain in that home (See Internal Procedure Alternative Compliance and Waiver Protocol for more information).
C. Complete CFS-475-F: True Report of Child Maltreatment Against Resource Family Members and file it in the provider record.
D. Forward all applicable case information for the alternative compliance, policy waiver request, including investigative outcomes, Family Case Plan tool, Immediate Safety Plan, and any corrective action plan for the resource home, to the Resource Supervisor for review.
E. Inform the Specialist and Supervisor of the outcome of the alternative compliance or Policy waiver request:
    1) Close any resource home that is denied a Policy waiver or alternative compliance approval at any point during the request review and document in the Division information management system that the home is closed:
        a) Provide the reason for closure in the comment box in the Provider Services Tab
    2) Update contacts regarding the results of the alternative compliance or Policy waiver request and as otherwise necessary in the Division information management system
F. Complete CFS-475-G: Checklist for Resource Home Closure, as applicable, and file the form in the provider record:
    1) Complete all other required steps to close a resource home

The Resource Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist, Supervisor, and Resource Specialist regarding at what point the resource home will be closed.
B. Review the alternative compliance or Policy waiver requests and supporting documentation, if applicable.
C. Forward the alternative compliance or Policy waiver requests and supporting documentation, if applicable, to the Area Manager.

The Assistant Director of Field Operations will:

A. Notify the DCFS Director or designee of the decision regarding placement of the children

and availability status of the resource home.

The Division Deputy Director or designee will:

A. Review received Policy waiver or alternative compliance requests and supporting materials.
B. Grant or deny approval for Policy waiver or alternative compliance requests as appropriate.
C. If approved, forward any alternative compliance requests to the Placement and Residential Licensing Unit (PRLU) Manager and staff.

Internal Procedure 405: Medical Neglect of an Infant with Disabilities

09/2011

Health care facilities will report suspected medical neglect of an infant with disabilities to the hotline.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Make telephone inquiry to the health care facility immediately upon receipt of an allegation of suspected medical neglect of an infant with disabilities to determine if:
    (1) The infant has a life-threatening condition
    (2) The caregivers have refused to consent to treatment
    (3) The treating physician recommended treatment
    (4) The facility's infant care review committee has analyzed the child's health and family circumstances
A. Contact the Child Protective Services Field Assistance Unit immediately to arrange an assessment by the contracted physician.
B. Contact OCC if a caregiver will not sign a release to allow DCFS to examine medical records or obtain an independent medical examination of the infant.

Internal Procedure 406: Failure to Thrive and Malnourishment

07/2025

Failure to Thrive (FTT) is a medical diagnosis made by a physician when a child is not meeting expected growth milestones, typically defined as being below the third (3^{rd}) percentile on the growth chart. FTT can result from both organic (medical) and inorganic (environmental or caregiver related) causes:

- Organic FTT is most commonly linked to an underlying medical condition that interferes with a child's ability to absorb or utilize nutrients.
- Inorganic FTT occurs when there is no medical condition present, but the child is not receiving adequate nutrition due to factors such as improperly prepared formula, limited food intake, or lack of caregiver attention to the child's nutritional needs.

In alignment with DCFS's commitment to child safety, health, and well-being, staff must be equipped to recognize and respond to signs of malnourishment and failure to thrive. The CPS Manager and In-home Manager with the Prevention and Reunification Unit (PRU) at central office may provide coaching and consultation when FTT concerns arise or upon request from the Area Manager.

Upon receiving a failure to thrive, malnourishment, or inadequate food that could relate to failure to thrive or malnourishment from the hotline, the Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Email the CPS Program Manager, or designee requesting to be assigned a coach from the Prevention and Reunification Unit (PRU) to provide coaching and consultation.
B. Assign a primary Specialist to complete the investigation.
C. Ensure the Specialist:
    1) Consults routinely with the assigned coach regarding the FTT diagnosis
    2) Carries out action steps as assigned by the coach within the timeframe provided by the coach
    3) Documents conversations, action steps, and outcomes in the Division information management system within twenty-four (24) hours of each occurring

The Investigator will:

A. Email the assigned PRU coach prior to making the investigative determination:
    1) Schedule a meeting with the coach
B. Conference with the PRU coach prior to investigation closure:
    1) Discuss determination findings
    2) Discuss if case opening is needed
    3) Complete all recommendations for follow up prior to closing the investigation
C. If the investigation is found TRUE:
    1) Notify primary assigned Specialist for the newly opened case that the assigned PRU coach will continue to provide support regarding the prevention or in-home case

The Casework Social Service Specialist will:

A. Conference with the PRU coach:
    1) After the first home contact
    2) At the time the Family Case Plan is being developed

The CPS Program Manager, or designee will:

A. Assign one (1) staff to be the primary point of contact for coaching and guidance throughout the duration of the investigation and subsequent case.
B. Serve as the point of contact if questions arise from assigned Prevention and Reunification Unit (PRU) staff.
C. Ensure PRU coach:

1) Conferences with the primary Specialist and Supervisor after the report has been initiated
2) Follows up with field staff to ensure:
    a) Medical records are:
        i. Requested
        ii. Provided to PRU coach for review
        iii. Reviewed by the Specialist
    b) The child is seen by a medical professional
    c) That all follow up doctor's appointments are attended
    d) All necessary referrals for services have been completed
3) Continues to provide support to the primary Specialist and Supervisor for thirty (30) days to help get the initial services set up

The PRU Coach will:

A. Conference with the primary Specialist and Supervisor after the report has been initiated.
B. Follow up with field staff to ensure:
    1) Medical records are:
        a) Requested
        b) Provided to PRU coach for review
        c) Reviewed by the Specialist
    2) The child is seen by a medical professional
    3) That all follow up doctor's appointments are attended
    4) All necessary referrals for services have been completed
C. Continue to provide support to the primary Specialist and Supervisor for thirty (30) days:
    1) Ensure initial services are set up timely
    2) Ensure the Family Case Plan addresses needs of the child experiencing FTT

Internal Procedure 407: Substance Exposed Infant Referral and Assessment

04/2025

As guided by the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA), Pub. L. No. 114-198, along with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1988 (CAPTA), Pub. L. No. 93-247, as amended, the Division is specifically tasked with collaborating across systems to address the needs of substance-exposed infants to prevent future child maltreatment of this vulnerable population.

DCFS, in coordination with other state agencies and community partners, strives to address the needs of substance exposed infants primarily through two (2) approaches:

A. Addressing the needs of substance exposed infants who are defined as neglected pursuant to A.C.A. 12-18-103(14)(B)(i)(a)-(b) (Garrett's Law referrals) and the needs of their families via an investigative response.
B. Implementing a referral process for healthcare providers involved in the delivery and care of infants to report, for the purpose of an assessment not related to a child maltreatment

investigation, infants who have not been neglected as defined in A.C.A. 12-18-103(14)(B)(i)(a)-(b), but who are born with and affected by:

1) A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
2) Maternal substance abuse resulting in prenatal drug exposure to an illegal or legal substance
3) Withdrawal symptoms from prenatal drug exposure to illegal or legal substances

C. "Affected by" means any of the following:
   1) An infant exhibits conditions associated with the mother's use of alcohol during pregnancy or a healthcare provider has an articulated concern that the infant suffers from a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder
   2) An adverse effect in physical appearance or functioning that are diagnosed or otherwise observed and result from the mother's use of legal or illegal substances during pregnancy
   3) An infant exhibits withdrawal symptoms in physical appearance or functioning as a result of the mother's use of legal or illegal substances during pregnancy
D. "Infant" means any child thirty (30) days old or less.

Prenatal substance exposure referrals will be accepted by the Child Abuse Hotline and assigned to DCFS for a Referral and Assessment (R and A) in the Division information management system. Prenatal substance exposure referrals will be assigned to the appropriate county-level Differential Response (DR) staff (though prenatal substance exposure referrals are separate and apart from differential response allegations). DR staff will engage the caregiver and their network (if appropriate) to develop a Plan of Safe Care. The procedures below are specific to approach B.

407.1 Receipt and Assignment of Prenatal Substance Exposure Referrals

01/2020

The Differential Response Social Service Supervisor or designee will:

A. Check the Division information management system inbox at least one (1) time in the morning and one (1) time in the afternoon each business day.
B. Assign each new referral to a DR Specialist within four (4) hours of receipt excluding evenings, weekends, and holidays.

407.2 Prenatal Substance Exposure Assessment and Plan of Safe Care

01/2020

The Differential Response Social Service Supervisor or designee will:

A. Conference with the DR Specialist within one (1) business day after the DR Specialist's initial face-to-face contact with the infant and at least one (1) caregiver and discuss development of CFS-101: Plan of Safe Care.
B. Document all Supervisor activities in the Division information management system within one (1) business day of completion of each activity.
C. Regarding families with whom the DR Specialist cannot make face-to-face contact, assess information and determine whether DR Specialist has met due diligence no later than the

seventh (7th) day after assignment.

D. Provide consultation to the DR Specialist as appropriate.

The Differential Response Social Service Specialist will:

A. Prepare to meet the family by completing the following activities prior to making initial face-to-face contact with the family:
    1) Interview other people, including the individuals who called the report into the hotline, with information listed on the referral
    2) Conduct a Division of County Operations (DCO) records check of members of the household
    3) Conduct a history search in the Division information management system prior to contacting the family unless the report is received after hours or during the weekend or a holiday
    4) Contact the family by phone within twenty-four (24) hours of assignment, if a phone number is provided in the report or if appropriate considering initiation timeframe requirements to:
        a) Explain prenatal substance exposure assessments and Plan of Safe Care
        b) Schedule the initial family contact that will include at least the infant and one (1) caretaker

B. Consider the prenatal substance exposure referral initiated when at least one (1) of the following has occurred:
    1) The health and safety of the infant has been assessed within seventy-two (72) hours from the time the referral was received, or the DR Specialist has met with at least one (1) caregiver within seventy-two (72) hours from the time the referral was received at the Hotline. (Based on the reported needs or safety issues of the family, DR Supervisor may require that the initial contact with the family occur sooner than seventy-two (72) hours
    2) Neither a health and Safety Assessment of the infant nor face-to-face contact with at least one (1) caregiver could be made but due diligence has been exercised and documented within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of the Hotline referral. Due diligence must include:
        a) Making an announced (or unannounced, if needed) contact to the family at least three (3) times at different times of the day or on different days (provided the three (3) contacts are within the appropriate initiation timeframes) to:
            i. Assess the health and safety of the infant
            ii. Develop a Plan of Safe Care with the caregiver
        b) If a contact is not made via the efforts described in 'a)' above, completing as many of the following activities as necessary to establish face-to-face contact with the infant or at least one (1) caretaker (note: efforts below may be done concurrently with activities described in item 'a)' above):
            i. Contacting the reporter again if the reporter is known
            ii. Contacting appropriate local DCO staff and requesting research of their record systems and other files to obtain another address

iii. Contacting the local post office and utility companies to request a check of their records
iv. Conducting CLEAR search to attempt to locate the family

c) If after completion of all the due diligence activities listed above, no contact is made with the infant or a caregiver by the sixth (6th) business day after assignment, document information on a case contact *(DR Supervisor will assess the information and determine whether due diligence has been met, no later than the seventh (7th) day after case assignment)*
d) If DR Supervisor has deemed that due diligence has been met, close referral

C. Explain to the caregiver prenatal substance exposure referrals including the development of the CFS-101: Plan of Safe Care, and that the Division must address any safety threats or needs as appropriate, to include a report to the Child Abuse Hotline if child maltreatment is identified or there is reasonable cause to suspect maltreatment.
D. If the infant and caregiver are not seen together at the initiation, then make face-to-face contact with the individual not seen at initiation within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the referral as well as any other adult household members within the same five (5) calendar day timeframe.
E. Develop CFS-101: Plan of Safe Care with the family within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the referral and ask the family if they are interested in continuing services with DCFS through a Prevention case:
    1) If the family accepts continued services through a Prevention case, see Internal Procedure Prevention Services and related procedures using the CFS-101: Plan of Safe Care to inform the development of the Family Case Plan of the Prevention case that will be opened:
    2) If the family declines continued services through a Prevention case:
        a) Make any referrals noted on the CFS-101: Plan of Safe Care
        b) Within the close button on the 'Request for DCFS Assessment' screen, document completion of the assessment and the Plan of Safe Care
F. Request a supervisor conference to review case information (allegation, risk and safety concerns, immediate needs, and other case specific information).
G. Document all activities in the Division information management system within one (1) business day after they are completed.

Internal Procedure 408: Family in Need of Services

01/2026

A.C.A. §9-27-303 defines "Family in Need of Services" (FINS) as any family whose juvenile evidences behavior which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

A. Being habitually and without justification absent from school while subject to compulsory school attendance.
B. Being habitually disobedient to the reasonable and lawful commands of their caregiver.
C. Having absented themself from their home without sufficient cause, permission, or justification.

When a FINS case comes before the court and the court finds that the family is in need of services, the circuit court can order the Division to provide services to rehabilitate the children and their families. If the court orders the Division to provide services, the services will be limited to services available from DCFS' community-based providers, community-based contractors, and DHS services for which the family can apply (such as SNAP, TEA, or Medicaid) if they are determined to be eligible for the services based on their application.

When DHS (including DCFS) is the provider for family services, the court will make written findings outlining how each service ordered is intended to prevent removal. Provision of the services by the Division may then go towards determining reasonable efforts to prevent removal if, through use of the Safety and Risk Assessments tools, DCFS were to determine removal is necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

While involved with a family during a FINS hearing, the court may identify child maltreatment and become worried about the safety of a child in their home. When this occurs, the court may order the Division to assess the family home to determine if the home is safe and report back to the court, or the court may place the children on a seventy-two (72) hour hold and order the children to enter foster care to ensure the safety of the children.

At least five (5) business days before ordering DCFS to provide or pay for services the court will fax a written notice of intent to order services to the Secretary of DHS and to OCC. This order will include the type of services the court intends to order. The court may order the services without specifying the type of services. For instance, the court may order the Division to provide parenting classes for the family, but not which parenting center the classes will be completed at. If the court were ordering a child into custody of the Division, the court may order a child receive level three (3) treatment and placement services, but a specific placement provider to then provide those services should not be ordered.

Whenever services, to include foster care services, are ordered through a FINS case, the Division will provide service updates to the court at each subsequent FINS hearing in the form of a court report developed through the Division information management system. If a Safety Assessment has been ordered or children have been ordered to experience foster care, the Division will complete a Safety Assessment of the home and provide the FINS court with notification the following business day if the Division determines that no safety threats exist.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Determine based on information received from the court if a hotline report is necessary and if so, whether a hotline report has already been made:
    1) If child maltreatment is suspected and has not already been reported, contact the Child Maltreatment Hotline and complete a report

B. Conference with Supervisor, and OCC as necessary, to determine the appropriate timeframe to initiate contact with the family based on the five (5)-day notification and court orders received:
    1) Contact the family within the timeframe agreed upon
    2) Assess the household where the children reside using the Safety and Risk Assessment tools:
        a) Determine the appropriate case that should be opened to provide services based on:
            i. The outcome of the Safety and Risk Assessments
            ii. The orders of the court
            iii. Professional judgement and supervisory consultation
C. Open the agreed upon case type and begin provision of services for the family.
D. Maintain communication with the court regarding the family through:
    1) Completing a court report in the Division information management system and providing the report to the FINS officer a minimum of five (5) business days prior to scheduled hearings when DCFS has an open case and FINS court remains involved
    2) Notify the court of the decision to release any court ordered seventy-two (72)-hour holds within twenty-four (24) hours of releasing the hold
    3) Including the FINS officer as part of the family's network for purposes of Family Case Planning
    4) Providing a written summary of the family's Safety and Risk Assessments and reasons for recommending closure for cases the Division determines would no longer benefit from DCFS interventions

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with Specialist (and OCC as necessary) to determine the best course of action based on the circumstances of the FINS referral.
B. Assign the FINS case to the appropriate Specialist.
C. Ensure communication is maintained between DCFS and the FINS court.
D. Ensure an accurate Safety and Risk Assessments are completed and assist the Specialist in opening the proper case type.
E. Ensure written notification is provided to FINS court when the Division determines case closure is appropriate.

Internal Procedure 409: Early Intervention Referrals and Services

04/2025

409.1 DDS Early Intervention Services Referrals

04/2025

When children under the age of three (3) are involved in a substantiated case of child maltreatment, but the Risk Assessment recommendation is that a case is not opened, the Investigator will:

A. Provide an overview of the benefits of early intervention services to the caregiver.
B. Make a referral to DDS for each child in the home (victims and non-victims)

under age three (3) via the DDS First Connections Referrals page through the Arkansas Department of Human Services website.

C. Inform the caregiver that their children will be referred to DDS Children's Services to assess the children's need and eligibility for early intervention services.

When children under the age of three (3) are involved in a substantiated case of child maltreatment and an in-home or permanency case is opened, the primary Caseworker will:

A. Provide an overview of the benefits of early intervention services to the caregiver.
B. Make a referral to DDS for each child in the home (victims and non-victims) under age three (3) via the DDS First Connections Referrals page through the Arkansas Department of Human Services website.
C. Inform the caregiver that their children will be referred to DDS Children's Services to assess the children's need and eligibility for early intervention services.
D. Prior to the early intervention services intake meeting, provide the local DDS Services Coordinator with:
    1) Court-order, if applicable
    2) Copy of social security card or number
    3) Copy of Medicaid card or number, if applicable
    4) Any other pertinent information related to the request for the early intervention screening
    5) Copy of EPSDT, if available (caregiver must obtain)
    6) Copy of all evaluations, if applicable
E. Coordinate remaining paperwork and services, as applicable, with the local DDS Service Coordinator. This includes but is not limited to:
    1) Coordinating the completion of DMS-800: Authorization for Children's Medical Services if the early intervention intake meeting determines the child is eligible for DDS Children's Medical Services
    2) Providing a copy of the Division completed assessment tool for any child involved in open case and the associated Family Case Plan once they are completed
    3) Notifying, as applicable, PACE, Health Service Assistant, and resource parents that early intervention screening referral has already been made to DDS Children's Services per CAPTA requirements prior to PACE evaluation
F. Invite the DDS Services Coordinator and early intervention service providers to family team meetings if a child is receiving early intervention services.
G. Keep the local DDS Service Coordinator informed of any changes to the Family Case Plan that may affect early intervention services and coordination.
H. Document contacts related to the DDS early intervention services referral in the contacts screen in Division information management system.
I. Update the child's Family Case Plan as appropriate.
J. Conference with Supervisor as needed regarding the referral to DDS early intervention services.

Investigative and Caseworker Social Service Supervisors will:

A. Conference with the Investigator and Caseworker as needed regarding the child's DDS

early intervention referral and any subsequent services.

B. Notify, as necessary, the County Manager of any issues related to the child's DDS early intervention referral or services.

409.2 DDS Early Intervention Individualized Family Service Planning

04/2025

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Regardless of the type of case (in-home or permanency), include early intervention services and Individualized Family Service Planning (IFSP) meetings in the Family Case Plan
as appropriate and ensure the biological caregiver participates in IFSP and related services as appropriate.

B. If the biological caregiver is unable or unwilling to participate in IFSP (court orders that the child's caregiver shall have no involvement in child's educational planning, caregivers cannot be located, goal is not reunification):
    1) Ensure that an appropriate adult serving in place of the biological caregiver attends the IFSP meetings to act as a decision-maker regarding the child's early intervention services. The person serving in place of the biological caregiver is generally the person who is currently caring for the child (temporary guardian, resource parent, etc.):
        a) Ensure that there is not a no contact order from the court pertaining to the person serving in the place of the caregiver and that the surrogate caregiver is otherwise appropriate
        b) If the person selected to serve in the place of the biological caregiver would like to attend a DDS Surrogate Parent Training, contact the DDS Service Coordinator to request the DDS Service Coordinator to arrange the training
        c) If the individual caring for the child and serving in place of the caregiver cannot attend or otherwise participate in the IFSP meetings, DDS will appoint a DDS certified surrogate caregiver

C. Continue to update child's Family Case Plan accordingly with information from IFSP.

D. Conference with Supervisor as needed regarding the child's IFSP.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist as needed regarding the child's IFSP.

B. Notify, as necessary, their Supervisor of any issues related to the child's IFSP.

409.3 FASD Referrals and Services

04/2025

Note: This procedure is applicable to those children already involved in an open DCFS case and who DCFS staff or providers suspect may be affected by FASD. This procedure is not applicable to infants born with and affected by FASD or prenatal drug exposure and reported to the Child Abuse Hotline by a healthcare provider.

If child is symptomatic of FASD, the Social Service Specialist or Health Service Assistant will:

A. Gather information regarding the child's in utero and birth history to determine if the biological mother consumed alcohol (at what points during the pregnancy, amount consumed, frequency consumed, etc.) or any illegal substances while pregnant with child.
B. Complete and submit CFS-099: FASD Screening Referral to the appropriate Resource Supervisor or designee.
C. Collaborate with the Resource Unit to ensure the child and placement provider receive any necessary referrals and access any needed services.
D. Conference with Supervisor as needed regarding FASD referrals and services.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist as needed regarding FASD referrals and services.
B. Notify their Supervisor of any issues related to the FASD referrals and services.

The Resource Social Service Supervisor or designee will:

A. Review the CFS-099: FASD Screening Referral.
B. Assign the referral to a local Resource Specialist .
C. Provide the completed CFS-099: FASD Screening Referral to the assigned Resource Specialist for review.

The assigned Resource Social Service Specialist will:

A. Review the CFS-099: FASD Screening Referral.
B. Work with the child's Specialist and Health Service Assistant to coordinate appropriate referrals and screenings for the child and placement provider.

Internal Procedure 410: Sex Offender with Custody or Unsupervised Visitation

01/2020

When investigating a report that a child is living with or participating in unsupervised contacts with a registered sex offender, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Determine if a court has granted custody or unsupervised visitation to the registered sex offender.
B. When a court has granted custody rights or unsupervised contact to a registered sex offender, the Specialist must obtain a copy of the court order or divorce decree and must designate the case as "UN-SUBSTANTIATED", if no other allegations have been made regarding the offender and the children and the report is simply based on the sole fact that the offender is a registered sex offender.

C. Document the investigative determination and the individual findings for each child on the "Investigation Findings" screen in the Division information management system. Individual findings for each victim are also documented on the "Investigation Finding" screen. The Division information management system will automatically populate the Overall Finding

(true, unsubstantiated, exempted from finding due to religious exemption or exempted from finding under-aged juvenile offender) based on the individual findings.

Internal Procedure 411: Community Notification of Sex Offenders

01/2020

Upon notification, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Notify resource parents or families with whom DCFS has active cases that an offender has moved into their neighborhood.
B. Document in the case record that notification has been provided either by giving the resource parent or family with whom DCFS has an active case a copy of the flyer provided by law enforcement, or by verbally providing the information contained in the flyer that an offender has moved into their neighborhood.
C. Make a report to the Child Abuse Hotline of substantial possibility of severe maltreatment if it is alleged that the offender is living in the home with children or otherwise being allowed unsupervised access. In such instances, confirmation must be obtained from law enforcement that this person is indeed a registered sexual offender against children before the report will be considered valid. Lack of supervision reports will not be handled any differently due to the presence of an offender in the neighborhood.
D. File a twenty (20)-day petition to bring the matter to the attention of the court if it is confirmed that the offender is living in a home with children or otherwise has unsupervised access to them, unless the caregiver agrees to steps outlined by DCFS to protect the children, regardless of whether a disclosure of sexual abuse is obtained. Some examples of steps outlined to protect the children would be to remove the children from the home, request that the offender leave the home or cease allowing the sexual offender access to the children.
E. Notify the offender's probation or parole officer that the offender is living in a home with children or has unsupervised access to them.
F. Document in court-ordered and Interstate Compact home studies, the presence of a sex offender in the neighborhood, along with a statement that the family is aware of the offender's presence and is fully informed regarding any possible risks to children in the community.

SERVICES CASE OPENING

Internal Procedure 500: General Services Case Opening and Reevaluation

07/2025

DCFS will open cases to ensure safety and promote the best interest of the child. Services will be provided through the delivery of prevention, in-home, or permanency cases as deemed appropriate by an assessment of the family. The purpose of services shall be to provide the child with a safe and stable living environment, strengthen the family, and promote the reunification of the child with the caregiver, when applicable.

The decision to open a case as well as the type of case opened will be made as guided by:

A. The results of the Safety Assessment tool.
B. The results of the Risk Assessment tool.
C. Investigation determination.
D. Professional judgement.
E. Supervisory consultation.

No single factor independently determines whether a case should be opened. Staff should consider all available assessment information when making case opening recommendations.

The investigation determination will be used to determine the type of case offered or opened (Prevention, In-home, or Permanency), as applicable. The investigation determination alone is not sufficient to determine whether a case will be opened. (See also Internal Procedure Referrals and Case Opening in an Investigation)



The Division will ensure a determination of title IV-E/Medicaid eligibility is obtained for each child placed in an out-of-home setting or subsidized adoption. When a child is removed from their home, a judicial determination as to whether reasonable efforts were made or were not required to prevent removal must be made no later than sixty (60) days from the date the child is removed from the home. Eligibility for title IV-E foster care maintenance payments will be assessed based on applicable State and Federal laws and within Division Policy guidelines.

500.1 In-Home and Prevention Case Opening

04/2025

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Gather data from the family and network about the needs of the family and enter the information in the family assessment tools and in the Division information management system.
B. Enter all necessary demographic data into the Division information management system for each household member.
C. Complete the Family First Eligibility Screen (if this was not done by the Investigator):
    1) Develop a Family First Prevention plan for any children identified as candidates for foster care
D. Ensure that any current Immediate Safety Plan nearing the thirty (30)-day re-assessment date is noted and that a re-assessment of the safety of the child occurs within thirty (30) days of the implementation of the current Immediate Safety Plan.

500.2 Permanency Case Opening

04/2025

The Social Service Specialist conducting the removal will:

A. Prior to leaving the residence and caregiver's presence:
    1) Obtain information regarding all known kin:
        a) Use this information to contact kin and determine which are most suitable to be evaluated as placement options
        b) Complete CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Resource Parent Information and Questionnaire and route to the Resource Unit for follow up regarding the most appropriate kin as established by conversations of suitability
    2) Obtain information regarding household finances to include, but not limited to, places of employment, sources of income, assets, and debts for all household members:
        a) Enter this information in the Client Income and Debt screens for each client in the Division information management system immediately following the keying of the child's removal and placement
    3) Complete CFS-362: Medi Alert to Resource Provider paying special attention to gathering a list of current diagnosis, medications, chronic illnesses, allergies, and medical needs for each child
    4) Gather medications, clothing, school necessities, car seats, formula, WIC folders, social security cards, birth certificates, personal hygiene items, and personal items for each child, as applicable
    5) Schedule the first (1st) family time to occur via Facetime or telephone and within twenty-four (24) hours of the removal
B. Locate a placement for the children:
    1) Complete a diligent search for kin and prioritize same day placement with kin
    2) Key the child's placement within two (2) business days

3) Key childcare screens for each child, as applicable, within two (2) business days of making initial placement

C. Explain to the child the need to take their picture and then:
   1) Photograph the child using a state-issued phone in a comfortable, non-intimidating setting
   2) Upload the picture in the Division information management system
   3) Provide the child with the image if they request one (1)
   4) Delete the child's picture from the state-issued phone
   5) If the child continues experiencing foster care, retake the photograph on at least an annual basis within ten (10) business days prior to the date the child began experiencing foster care
   6) Each time a new photograph is taken, upload it in the Division information management system. The photograph may be:
      a) Shared with law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to help facilitate the recovery of missing children, or for other official law enforcement purposes that are in the best interest of the child
      b) Used for Family Team Meetings, Team Decision Making meetings, or court procedures if children are not present
      c) Included in placement applications
      d) Used in the child's Life Book
D. Issue an initial clothing order, as needed, using the DCFS P-card Requisition.
E. Follow all procedures regarding Immediate Safety Planning, scheduling and conducting TDM meetings, and completion and submission of affidavits of removal.

The primary assigned Caseworker Social Service Specialist will:

A. Review all information in the contact automatically populated from the investigation "Case Connect" screen into the Contact screen for the newly opened case.
B. Begin gathering information to complete the family assessments and Family Case Plan with family and network participation.
C. Within twenty-four (24) hours of removal, meet with the family and their network to develop a Family Time Plan for routine face-to-face contact between the caregivers, children, and network as well as a routine plan for face-to-face contact between any children placed in separate resource homes.

500.3 Health Service Assistant – Obtaining Birth Certificates

07/2026

Health Service Assistants (HSA) are responsible for ordering birth certificates for children in DCFS custody, primarily when a child first enters foster care. HSAs may order only one (1) original birth certificate per child. If an additional birth certificate is required, written justification must be provided, but this cannot be solely due to DCFS misplacing the document.

HSAs must not provide original birth certificates to anyone outside of DCFS unless a valid

reason is documented. If an HSA provides an original birth certificate for use, the HSA is responsible for tracking and ensuring its timely return.

The Health Service Assistants will:

A. For Arkansas born children:
    1) Order the original in-state birth certificate within ten (10) days of a child's removal from their family home
    2) Order only one (1) original certificate per child
B. For out-of-state or out-of-country birth certificates:
    1) Order original out-of-state or out-of-country birth certificates within ten (10) days of a child's removal from the family home, as applicable
    2) Order only one (1) original certificate per child
    3) If necessary, obtain a copy of the Emergency Order for the child
    4) Obtain the application for the appropriate jurisdiction:
        a) State Vital Records: Locate the correct form by visiting the CDC website and follow the provided links to access state-specific applications. Once the application is completed and all other documents are obtained:
            i. Order the birth certificate online through vitalchek- https://www.vitalchek.com/v/
    5) Out-of-Country Births: Complete ISS-USA Referral Form using the associated directions. Both documents can be located on CHRIS Net under the 'Forms' tab
    6) Print and complete the application from the state or country using all available birth information
C. In special circumstances:
    1) If a name change is needed:
        a) Gather the required information, including:
            i. Child's current legal name
            ii. Date and place of birth
            iii. Parents names, as applicable
            iv. Child's new legal name
            v. Indicate on the birth certificate application that this is a name change request
    2) If the issuing state accepts credit card payments:
        a) Stop here and use P-card for payment
        b) Follow all P-card use requirements
    3) If payment by check is required:
        a) Submit all required documents to the Health Service Lead to request a paper warrant (check). The request packet must include:
            i. CFS-019: Birth Certificate Memo
            ii. CFS-013: Birth Certificate Invoice
            iii. CFS-014: Birth Certificate Coding Sheet
            iv. CFS-016: Birth Certificate Request
            v. Completed Birth Certificate Application (state or country specific)

vi. Current court order or adjudication order for the child
vii. Copy of HSAs badge

D. Tracking and Compliance:
    1) Within twenty-four hours of receipt of a certificate upload a copy of the birth certificate into the electronic case file for each child using eDoctus
    2) Maintain a file of all original birth certificates allowing use of original birth certificates for legitimate reasons including, but not limited to:
        a) When reunification occurs, birth certificates may be provided to the legal caregiver for the children
        b) When a youth experiencing foster care requests the original birth certificate to obtain a driver's license or other documentation
    3) Document in the Division information management system:
        a) Requests for Birth Certificates within forty-eight (48) hours of submitting the request
        b) Requests from other DCFS staff to utilize the original certificate
        c) Receipt of original birth certificates that have been ordered
        d) Receipt of original birth certificates that have been obtained from the family
    4) Follow up on pending requests every thirty (30) days until the document is received:
        a) Document follow up in the Division information management system
        b) Communicate delays and issues with obtaining certificates to HSA Supervisor

The Health Service Lead will:

A. Within five (5) business days of receipt of request, review and sign approved requests for birth certificates, to include:
    1) Ensure only one (1) request is made per child unless the pack documents extenuating circumstances
    2) Ensure requests contain all necessary documents to include, as necessary:
        a) Copy of the complete birth certificate application
        b) CFS-019: Birth Certificate Memo
        c) CFS-013: Birth Certificate Invoice
        d) CFS-014: Birth Certificate Coding Sheet
        e) CFS-016: Birth Certificate Request
        f) Copy of Employee Badge
        g) Copy of Court Order
B. Indicate on the paperwork that the Health Service Lead will receive the original certificate when it is returned.
C. Forward complete packet for approved requests to the Fiscal Support Specialist at Central Office for processing and payment.
D. Scan all applications and paperwork into eDoctus within five (5) business days of processing each application.
E. Track each document on One Drive:
    1) Include:

a) Warrant #
b) Child's name
c) Date Sent
d) Date Received
e) Date Uploaded in eDoctus

2) Share a copy of the tracking document with the Fiscal Support Unit

F. Receive all original birth certificates in the mail:
1) Distribute original birth certificates to the appropriate Health Service Assistant within five (5) business days of receipt of the original birth certificate

The Fiscal Support Specialist will:

A. Complete the process for the paper warrant.
B. When the paper warrant is issued, within five (5) business days:
1) Obtain the paper warrant
2) Ensure the Health Service Lead is listed as the recipient of the original birth certificate
3) Submit the application and payment to the applicable state

Internal Procedure 501: Notification to Kin A Child Is In Division Custody

04/2025

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Provide notice to all adult kin identified by the caregiver of the child and all parents of a sibling of a child where the caregiver has legal custody of the sibling, and any other adult relatives suggested by the caregivers of the child:
1) The CFS-323-A: Notification to Kin that a Child has Entered DCFS Custody is the preferred method to provide this notice

B. Provide notifications as soon as reasonably possible after custody of the child is transferred to the Division but no later than two (2) business days for any kin identified at that point in time.
C. Continue to seek out additional kin throughout Division involvement with a family by continuing to speak with the caregivers and children, as age appropriate, and using information gathering tools such as Genograms, Circles of Safety and Support, and the Support Network Grid.
D. Send notices to additional people of interest who are identified at any point in time during the child's experience in foster care until permanency is achieved:
1) Use professional judgement regarding sending notices to any adult kin who has:
a) A pending charge or past conviction or plea of guilty or nolo contendere for family or domestic violence
b) A true determination of child maltreatment in the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry or any other state's child maltreatment registry
c) If it is determined that the kin may have a meaningful relationship with the child and the charge, conviction, or true finding is such that

the kin is not considered to pose a threat to the child, the notice may be sent

2) Document track the CFS -323-A: Notification to Kin that a Child has Entered DCFS Custody in the Division information management system

E. Contact by phone any individual to whom CFS-323-A: Notification to Kin that a Child has Entered DCFS Custody was sent within one (1) business day of sending the notification to more fully explain the options that the specific individual may have in terms of providing a temporary home for or otherwise staying in contact with the child who was taken into Division custody.

F. Document the date and time of all phone contact attempts (whether successful or unsuccessful in speaking with the individual) and the result of each attempt in the Division information management system Contact screen:

1) If, after three (3) attempts to reach an individual at different dates and times, the Specialist is unable to reach them, the Specialist may stop trying to contact the individual

G. Enter relevant information about kin's interest as required in the Division information management system.

H. Include the following information in all court reports:

1) Outline of the efforts made by the Division to identify and notify all adult kin, including all caregivers of a sibling of the juvenile where the caregiver has legal custody of the sibling, that the child is in DCFS custody

2) A list of all adult kin and the response of each to the notice, including:

a) The adult kin's interest in participating in the care and placement of the child

b) Whether the adult kin is interested in becoming a resource parent for the child

c) Whether the adult kin is interested in participating in or assisting with family time in any way

Internal Procedure 502: Requesting DNA Testing and Child Support

11/2025

The Division strives to be thoughtful and consistent in how it handles child support and paternity cases. The Division information management system defaults to "No" on the Relationship screen when asked about referring a PRFC for Child Support. Staff should review details about the caregiver and use the factors in this procedure to decide whether a referral for child support is appropriate before changing it to "yes". This assessment should be completed to determine the impact of child support payments. Each week, the Office of Child Support Enforcement will send DCFS a list of all referrals that were made. Someone from the Central Office team will reach out to staff to learn more about the assessment and how the decision was made to move forward.

Where paternity of a child is yet to be legally established, the Division will establish paternity through use of contracted service providers by submitting an encumbrance.

DCFS will make referrals to the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) for enforcement

of a child support collection case in the following circumstances:

A. A child enters foster care with a current court order for child support against the non-custodial caregiver.
B. An assessment of circumstances in the individual case warrants pursuit of child support.

Child Support Enforcement cases close upon a child exiting division custody and for that reason, no referrals will be made to OCSE for the purpose of obtaining income for a future caregiver of a child.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. When a new case is assigned, check the relationship screen in the Division information management system to ensure all putative caregivers are entered as clients in the case:
    1) Ensure Relationship screens are completed for all caregivers and all children
B. Speak to the caregivers in reference to paternity. This information may be obtained in Team Decision Making (TDM) Meetings, family home contacts, or family team meetings (FTM):
    1) Use sensitivity in these conversations. While you must gather the information, there may be situations, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, or other reasons a mother may not feel safe in disclosing information about a putative
    father
    2) Utilize SOP tools to maximize information gathering while keeping the conversation informal and friendly
    3) Check Arkansas Court Connect to ensure there is not already a custody case in which custody was established
C. Ensure legal paternity is established:
    1) Continue providing reunification services to putative fathers as is in the best interests of the children involved *while* pursuing DNA results
    2) When a putative father is identified and DNA testing is necessary to establish paternity:
        a) Within forty-eight (48) hours of establishing the need for DNA testing complete CFS-015: Request for Service Encumbrance indicating DNA testing as the necessary service
        b) Obtain Supervisor approval on CFS-015
        c) Submit approved CFS-015 to the Area Financial Coordinator:
            i. If there are multiple putative fathers, request testing on the most likely father first (1st) and then move through the list as negative paternity results are received
        d) Within two (2) business days of receipt of appointment information:
            i. Provide notifications of testing dates, locations, and times via email to:

1. Putative caregiver
2. Putative caregiver's attorney, if appointed
3. Resource parents for applicable children
4. Attorneys ad litem for applicable children
5. CASA, if appointed

ii. Arrange transportation for caregivers and children experiencing foster care, as necessary to ensure all parties are present for DNA testing to occur

e) Two (2) business days prior to scheduled testing send a reminder of DNA testing appointment via email to:

i. Putative caregiver
ii. Resource parents for applicable children
iii. Persons responsible for transportation arrangements for any party

3) Within two (2) business days of receipt of DNA testing results provide results via email to:

a) The putative caregiver
b) The putative caregiver's attorney, if appointed
c) Attorneys ad litem for applicable children
d) The OCC attorney
e) CASA, if appointed

D. Within forty-eight (48) hours of identification of a legal caregiver (by nature of a permanency case opening or identification of a legal caregiver through DNA testing or other means), complete an assessment of the impact of child support payments with each household:

1) Determine if payment of child support to the Division would create a barrier or other hardship for the family upon reunification
2) Discuss the assessment with the Supervisor to determine if circumstances in the individual household warrant pursuit of child support:

a) Caregivers in the household must have gainful full-time employment or other source of consistent lucrative income to support the household needs
b) Caregivers cannot currently be incarcerated or expected to become incarcerated for a substantial amount of time
c) The caregiver cannot be the recipient of SSI or SSA
d) The household cannot be the recipient of Medicaid, TEA, SNAP, HUD, or other government financial support
e) The completed monthly household budget must indicate the household is able to support all recurring and conditional household needs and pay child support without causing financial hardship for the household or causing other barriers to reunification

E. If circumstances in the individual case warrant the pursuit of child support:

1) Complete a manual referral to the Office of Child Support Enforcement in the

Division information management system:

a) Ensure the caregiver is a client or enter the caregiver as a client
b) Ensure the Relationship screens are completed for the client and applicable children experiencing foster care
c) On the 'Relationship' screen select 'yes' on the 'Refer to Child Support Enforcement' box and then click 'Change'

d) If the child entered care with a standing order for collection of child support:

i. Email a copy of the order for child support to the local OCSE office

e) Respond to requests for information from OCSE within forty-eight (48) hours

2) Provide notification via email to local OCSE within forty-eight (48) hours when:
   a) A child enters trial-home placement with a caregiver who has been court ordered to pay child support for the same child
   b) Custody of a child is granted to a caregiver who has been court ordered to pay child support for the same child
   c) Termination of parental rights has occurred as to the caregiver who has been court ordered to pay child support for the same child *and* an adoption has finalized for the same child

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Social Service Specialist to determine if payment of child support would be a financial hardship for a caregiver.
B. Ensure that no referral for collection of child support is completed for any caregiver when:
   1) Payment of child support would be a financial hardship for the caregiver or on the household
   2) The caregiver is unemployed
   3) The caregiver is incarcerated
   4) The caregiver's household is receiving routine government financial assistance such as Medicaid, SNAP, TEA, or HUD
   5) The household budget indicates that payment of child support would pose a barrier to reunification

The Area Financial Coordinator will:

A. Check the CFS-015: Encumbrance for completeness and obtain additional information as necessary.
B. Forward complete requests to the central office financial support team for processing.
C. When approval is granted, provide notification of approval and information regarding the testing site to the referring Specialist within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of approval.

502.1 Request for DNA Testing

01/2026

To request approval to conduct DNA testing staff will complete a DHS-1914.

All areas will use the following codes:
GL Account: 5100001000
Cost Center: 417564
Internal Order: HRAX0024

Each 1914 MUST contain the following or the request will not be processed:

A. Complete the date the request is being submitted.
B. Add the P.O. number for the vendor being used for DNA testing.
C. Add the required by date if there is a specific date that has been court ordered.
D. The name and email address of a contact person. This is the person the finance unit can contact with questions.
E. GL Account, Cost Center, and Internal Order must be completed with the codes listed above.
F. Item/Description/Comments should contain:
    1) Name and email for the person who should receive DNA results once testing is completed
    2) For the adult client who should be tested:
        a) Complete a separate 1914 for each adult (multiple children can be included on the same 1914 if multiple children are alleged to have the same parent)
        b) Indicate the client is an adult and list the client's:
            i. Name
            ii. DOB
            iii. Client ID
            iv. Client's current address
            v. Case number
        c) Indicate the cost for testing the adult client in the total column of the last line containing adult demographic information (using the charts below for the appropriate provider)
    3) For each child who is to be tested indicate that it is a child client:
        a) Then list the client's:
            i. Name
            ii. DOB
            iii. Client ID
            iv. Child's current address
        b) Indicate the cost for testing the child client in the total column of the last line containing the child's demographic information (using the charts below for the appropriate provider)
            i. Generally each additional child will cost $95.00
    4) If the parent is incarcerated:
        a) Obtain a court order for DNA testing if the client is in prison
        b) If the parent is incarcerated in a county or local jail, and no court order current exists for DNA testing:

i. Contact the provider prior to making the referral and ask if a court order is necessary
ii. Follow the provider's instructions regarding obtaining an order, if necessary

c) The provider to complete DNA testing must be NWA DNA Testing or Xpert Diagnostics
d) Contact the provider by telephone, provide an address for the incarcerated parent, and obtain the cost for milage to travel to the facility and complete DNA testing
e) Create a line item for travel cost on the 1914 and enter the cost of travel in the total column

5) If the parent or child resides in another state:
   a) The provider must be Xpert Diagnostics
   b) Contact Xpert Diagnostics and request a quote for completion of the DNA testing
   c) Insert the amount provided in the quote in a line item labeled, "Upcharge fee for oostate DNA collection in (list location)"
6) In "Total Amount" box, add all expenses and place the total in the box
7) Add all requested information for the vendor to include:
   a) Vendor name
   b) Vendor address where testing will be completed
   c) Vendor ID number
   d) Vendor telephone number
   e) Vendor tax id number is not necessary and should be blank
8) Add the reason for requesting DNA testing:
   a) Include the requestor's:
      i. Name
      ii. Email address
      iii. Cell phone number

G. Email the following through the chain of command to obtain the Area Manager's approval:
   1) Completed 1914
   2) Copy of any court order for DNA testing, as applicable
   3) Include the Area Financial Coordinator in the emails to obtain approvals
H. Upon notification of approval to obtain DNA testing:
   1) Notify the following of DNA testing schedule and locations:
      a) Putative parent
      b) Resource parents for each child requiring DNA testing
      c) AAL and CASA, as applicable, for each child requiring DNA testing
      d) Parent counsel for each putative parent, as applicable
   2) Work with the resource parent for each child to ensure the child is present for testing as scheduled (transportation arrangements are made)
   3) Document notifications provided in the division information management system
I. Upon receipt of DNA test results, within two (2) business days:
   1) Email a copy of test results to OCC

2) Email a notification to the parties that results have been received and indicate if the putative parent is or is not deemed to be the biological parent of the child

Fee schedule for all sites other than Healthcare Express (see below):

DNA Collection $400 for one child and one parent
Additional children if tested at the same time, add $100
Travel Expenses per quote depending on location
Additional needs require contacting the provider to obtain a price quote

Xpert Diagnostics
Serves all areas statewide for incarcerated parents
For general DNA testing serves areas 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10
Vendor Number 100237870
425 Broadway, Suite B, NLR, AR 72114
1905 E. Beebe Capps Expressway, Searcy, AR 72143
Melissa Hines, melissah@xpertdiagnostics.com, 501-376-9776

NWA DNA Testing
Serves Area 1
Vendor Number 100109267
4252 Frontage Rd, Fayetteville, AR 72703
Paige Moreland, paige@nwadna.com, 479-619-5576

Healthcare Express
Serves Area 4 (Area 4 uses Xpert Diagnostics for incarcerated parents)
Vendor Number 100092272
3515 Richmond Road, Texarkana, Tx 75503
903-791-9355
Fee Schedule: $350 for one child and one parent
$95 for each additional person

Jefferson Comprehensive Counseling Association Inc.
Serves Area 7 by court ordered referral only (cannot process without a court order)
Vendor Number 100201040
PO Box 21203, White Hall, AR 71612-1203
Fee Schedule: $350 for one child, mother, and father
$200 each additional child
$250 each additional father

Internal Procedure 503: Cases for Infants of Juveniles in DYS Custody

08/2013

If an appropriate caregiver is willing to take custody of the child, DCFS will not take custody but will file a petition for dependency due to the caregiver being incarcerated. The petition will ask for emergency custody to be given to the caregiver once the baby is born.

Placement with the approved caregiver will be the requested placement and not placement with the Division.

If there is no appropriate caregiver or if the identified caregiver is not willing to take custody of the child but expresses that they would like to become a resource parent for the child, DCFS will petition the court for custody of the infant and open the caregiver's home as a provisional resource home if the approved caregiver is kin. If the approved caregiver is kin and wants to become a resource parent for the infant, the infant will be placed in an approved resource home until the caregiver becomes an approved licensed resource home.

Internal Procedure 504: Cases for Infants if Abortion Results in Live Birth

04/2018

To ensure the well-being of an infant, when, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Place an immediate hold on the infant, regardless of the medical status of the infant.
B. Notify OCC immediately that a hold has been exercised to initiate a dependency petition.
C. Communicate with the current medical provider to determine the medical condition of the infant and to coordinate necessary medical services.
D. Refer the child's case to the Adoption Supervisor.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Ensure the child's case is referred to the Adoption Supervisor timely.
B. Coordinate with Adoption Supervisor to ensure services for the child while transitioning to an appropriate pre-adoptive placement.

The Adoption Social Service Specialist will:

A. Carry out the same actions as those listed for the Adoption Specialist in Internal Procedure Adoption.

The Adoption Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Assign an Adoption Specialist within twenty-four (24) hours.

Internal Procedure 505: Cases Involving Incarcerated Caregivers

04/2018

To ensure adequate communication with and provision of services to incarcerated caregivers, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Attempt to locate incarcerated caregivers at all stages of service provision, including during investigations. Efforts to locate will include, at a minimum:
    1) Conducting a CLEAR search
    2) Searching local jail, Arkansas Department of Corrections, etc. for inmate information at: www.vinelink.com
    3) Contacting the reporter and any listed collaterals from the current and former investigations and cases to ask for information about the location of

the caregiver

B. Document reasonable efforts to identify and locate incarcerated caregivers at all stages of service provision, including during investigations, in the Division information management system contact screens, court reports, and affidavits.
C. Contact the identified ADC facility or local detention facility (city or county jail) and determine:
    1) The appropriateness of family time and venue for caregiver-child family time for children experiencing foster care by assessing the following:
        a) Whether the caregiver is under any restriction by the facility that would affect family time
        b) Whether the facility has any limitations to family time such as lack of space or lack of staff to meet facility protocols
        c) Whether the facility is an appropriate venue for family time based on the child's age, trauma history, and current developmental status
        d) Whether the distance to the facility is prohibitive for routine family time based on the child's educational and developmental status
        e) Whether the facility is open to allowing volunteer kin to transport to family time
        f) Whether the family time can be accommodated in another manner such as Skype, Video Family time, letter writing, email or Facetime
    2) How to adequately assess and coordinate services for the incarcerated caregiver by:
        a) Determining if the detention facility staff will assist in the completion of the caregiver's portion of the Family Case Plan tool and in identifying necessary services for the caregiver:
            i. The Specialist will complete the Family Case Plan tool by phone with the caregiver if detention staff is unable to assist
        b) Coordinating with ADC or the local detention facility to ensure that services identified are provided to the inmate (whether provided directly by the detention facility staff, contract providers, or by DCFS staff providing the services to the inmate in the facility or by sending educational materials to the facility for the inmate)
        c) Sending family team meeting notices via CFS-590: Invitation to Family Team Meeting to the identified detentions contacts:
            i. Notify the contact that the incarcerated caregiver is invited to participate in the Family Team Meeting by telephone if the caregiver requests to do so at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the scheduled time for the Family Team Meeting to begin. It will be the incarcerated caregiver's responsibility to schedule with ADC or the local detention facility to have phone privileges as necessary
        d) Adding the incarcerated caregiver to the Division approved assessment and the Family Case Plan while including all services provided by the detention facility
        e) Requesting written progress reports and certificates of completion for services from the detention facility:

i. Attach all documents obtained to the written court report for upcoming hearings and place a copy of all correspondence with the detention facility in the physical case record

f) Coordinating discharge planning, including determining who will be the assigned parole or probation officer, when appropriate

g) Providing a copy of local assistance organizations and services available for the tentative county of residence to the incarcerated caregiver thirty (30) days prior to the caregiver's discharge from the detention facility

D. Coordinate joint decision making as to the appropriateness of family time with assigned Attorneys Ad Litem, CASAs, and Parent Counsel.

E. Provide the incarcerated caregiver with a copy of all Family Case Plans, court reports, and court orders via standard mail to the ADC or local detention facility contact person.

F. Coordinate services with resident county:

1) Refer the case for resident county services in the Division information management system assignment screen

2) Email resident county Specialist and copy resident County Manager with a summary of service needs and requests
3) Invite resident county Specialist to Family Team Meetings via CFS-590
4) Maintain minimum monthly contact with resident county Specialist to coordinate on-going services, monthly face-to-face contact with the incarcerated caregiver, and caregiver - child family time

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Monitor to ensure diligent efforts to locate incarcerated caregivers.
B. Attend Family Team Meetings to assist in determining the appropriateness of services and family time.
C. Ensure case assignment to and coordination of services with resident county.

Internal Procedure 506: Cases Involving Active-duty Service Members

04/2025

To ensure coordination of services for active-duty service members, both on and off base, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Review the initial case connect contact to determine if Little Rock Air Force Base (LRAFB) was notified of the active-duty service member's involvement in the DCFS case:
    1) If the Specialist determines that notifications to LRAFB were not made, the Specialist will contact the FAP during duty hours at 501-987-7377 and provide notification
B. Ensure the client screen for the active-duty service member contains an accurate social security number and that the "active-duty service member" check box is checked.
C. Enter the Family Advocacy Program (FAP) as a collateral in the open case and document all contacts with the FAP in the case contact screen.
D. Contact FAP at 501-987-7377 and coordinate the following:
    1) Contact with active-duty service member and family if residence is on base
    2) Determine what, if any, services are available for the service member through the FAP
    3) Termination of services and case closure
E. Assist in providing case management updates for ongoing services directly provided by DCFS:
    1) Upon request, furnish FAP with written progress reports and assessments to include any agreements, stipulations, or court orders for ongoing services
F. When removal of a child becomes necessary:
    1) Consider that when the suspected offender is the active-duty service member, the member's military commander has the authority to order the alleged offender out of the home
    2) Contact the Security Forces Law Enforcement desk at 501-987-3221 if there is a concern for the safety of staff members or victims
G. In situations where a military order is deemed appropriate for an active-duty

service

member to have no contact with the alleged victim, provide FAP with suggested instructions regarding authorized contact between the alleged victims and the suspected active-duty service member. Such instructions may include guidance about phone, letter, electronic, or unsupervised or supervised face-to-face contact.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Ensure referrals for active-duty service members are provided to the FAP timely.
B. Ensure open and accurate communication continues between DCFS and the FAP for the duration of DCFS involvement with the family.

SERVICES TO REUNIFY FAMILIES

Internal Procedure 700: Out-of-Home Placement Criteria

01/2020

Several Arkansas laws address placement criteria. Major placement criteria from these statutes include:

A. The selected placement is in the best interest of the child.
B. The placement is the least restrictive placement possible, with preference going to fit and willing kin.
C. The placement is matched to the child's physical and therapeutic needs.
D. DCFS must document efforts to locate kin throughout the case.
E. The placement is in close proximity to the child's caregivers and to the child's school.
F. Siblings must be placed together if it is in the best interest of each of the children in the family.
G. DCFS will place infants with minor mothers if it is in the best interests of both.

700.1 Initial Foster Care Placement Determination

07/2026

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Contact the OCC Attorney immediately if there is any indication that the child is a member of an Indian tribe.
B. Consider placement with appropriate kin:
    1) A child is in the custody of the Division; therefore, the child must remain in an approved resource home or licensed shelter or facility until a kinship home is opened as a provisional resource home
    2) When potential kinship placements are identified, notify the area Resource Supervisor by email within twenty-four (24) hours of removal that children have been removed and a potential provisional placement has been identified:
        a) In the notification email provide the area resource Supervisor with:
            i. Names and ages of the children who have been removed
            ii. Names of potential provisional families
            iii. Relationship of potential provisional placement to children
            iv. Contact information for potential provisional placement
            v. Any other information collected regarding the potential provisional placement (see CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Resource Parent Information and Questionnaire for more information)
    3) Assist with completion of Prospective Provisional Resource Parent Information and Questionnaire as appropriate to the specific case or local county procedures
    4) Refer to Internal Procedure Consideration of Kin for Children Experiencing Foster Care for more information
C. Consider appropriate kin who are interested in obtaining legal custody of the juvenile if identified kin are not interested in becoming a provisional resource home:

1) If potential kin are identified as potential temporary custody kinship placements, refer to Internal Procedure Consideration of Kin for more information

D. If identified kin are not interested in becoming provisional resource parents or obtaining legal custody of the child, talk with them about otherwise maintaining contact with the child such as family times or transporting).
E. If there are no viable placements with appropriate kin at the time placement is needed, select an available resource home or other out-of-home placement that will serve the child's best interest.
F. Continue to discuss with and support appropriate kin's interest in maintaining connections with the child or becoming a DCFS resource home throughout the life of the case if such actions are in the child's best interests.
G. Placement decisions shall continue to be reassessed throughout the life of the case as new relatives, fictive kin, or other placement options become available.

700.2 Out-of-Home Placement of UJO, Juvenile Offender, or Sexual Offender

09/2011

A. If the child being placed has been identified as an underaged juvenile offender, or a juvenile offender with an exempted finding, or a sexual offender, the child must not be placed in a home with other children, unless the child's therapist and the Division determine that the child is no longer a danger to other children. Proper documentation of this will be contained in the child's hard copy file and documented in the recommended placement screen.
B. Any child being placed who is an adolescent or child sexual offender and has been assessed and designated as a risk Level III (3) or Level IV (4), and is required to register as a sex offender under the Offender Registration Act *must not:*
    1) Be placed in any out-of-home placement that is within two thousand (2,000) feet of the victim's residence
    2) Be allowed to have any direct or indirect contact with the intention to harass the victim
    3) Be placed in any out-of-home placement that is within two thousand (2,000) feet of any public or private elementary or secondary school, public park, youth center, or child care facility
C. Document in the Division information management system that a child who is a Level III or IV Registered Sex Offender must not be placed in any out-of-home placement that is within 2,000 feet of the victim's home or any public or private elementary or secondary school, public park, youth center or child care facility.
D. Provide local law enforcement or other appropriate law enforcement agency, with all applicable and appropriate information that is required by law within five (5) business days after the person establishes residency.
E. Document that law enforcement has been notified of this placement and all subsequent placements.
F. If recommended placement is a facility, the facility must be notified about any under- aged juvenile offender, juvenile offender, or sexual offender status and documented in

placement recommendation screen.

700.3 Placement of Infants Born to Incarcerated Mothers

08/2025

DCFS will accept referrals from the Arkansas Department of Correction (ADC) social worker seeking to find appropriate placements for infants born to incarcerated mothers. If the infant has a legal father, DCFS will not take any action unless the legal father refuses to assume responsibility for the child. The ADC social worker will refer the case to DCFS if the mother is unable to identify anyone who meets specific ADC guidelines for the assumption of care for the infant.

After referral by the ADC social worker, the DCFS Social Service Specialist will:

A. Meet with the mother and discuss possible placements for the child. Placement options include:
    1) Placement with kin (relative or fictive)
    2) Custody placed with DCFS in a traditional resource home
B. If the mother wants to place the infant with kin, the Specialist will discuss whether the mother wants:
    1) Custody placed with DCFS and kin opened as a provisional resource home:
        a) Inform the mother of applicable Minimum Licensing Requirements and DCFS Policy if a kinship placement or a traditional placement is being considered. Any placement with kin, wherein DCFS is the custodian, must meet the same child welfare licensing requirements as a regular resource home prior to the child being placed in the home as defined at A.C.A. § 9-28-402
        b) Inform the mother that a home study must be completed on any family or non-family member who is being considered to take full custody of the infant
        c) When applicable, begin the process for opening any identified kin as a provisional resource home
    2) Custody placed with kin:
        a) When applicable, conduct a home study on the requested placements where consideration for custody is with a kin, but not with DCFS
        b) If the home study is unfavorable, work with the mother to identify other possible placements, or petition for custody of the child upon birth
        c) If the home study is favorable, when the child is born, petition the court for custody to be given to kin
C. Petition the court for custody to be given to the Division for placement when the child is born. The court will assess each case individually and will have a range of options for disposition:
    1) Place the child in the identified kin
    2) Place permanent custody with kin and close the case with no Division involvement
    3) Grant guardianship to kin and close the case with no Division involvement
    4) Grant custody to the Division and recommend immediate termination of parental

rights

D. If applicable, follow Internal Procedures Service Case Opening for case opening, placement, and provision of services to the child.
E. Contact the ADC social worker to arrange family time between the child placed in an out-of-home setting and the incarcerated mother, unless such family time is prohibited by the court, physician, or Division.

700.4 Placements Made by a Sheriff or Police Chief in Emergency Situations

09/2011

In an emergency, a sheriff or police chief may place children in Division resource homes but only when the following criteria have been met:

A. The sheriff or chief of police contacts the area or county designated on-call Specialist and does not get a return phone call within thirty (30) minutes.
B. Subsequent to not receiving a phone call in the above situation, the sheriff or chief of police contacts the DCFS Emergency Contact Line and does not get a return phone call within fifteen (15) minutes.
C. The resource parent is personally well-known to the sheriff or the chief of police and the sheriff or chief of police has:
    1) Determined that the resource parent's home is safe and provides adequate accommodations for the child
    2) Performed a criminal record and child maltreatment check on the resource parent
D. The sheriff or chief of police will on the next business day, notify DCFS of the time and date that the child was placed in the resource parent's home.

700.5 Out-Of-Home Placement Outside the Origin County

06/2025

The Social Service Specialist Supervisor from the origin county will:

A. Notify by telephone or email, the Supervisor in the resident county office prior to moving the children.
B. Within twenty-four (24) hours following the above notification:
    1) Assign the resident county as secondary on the Assign/Transfer screen in the Division information management system:
        a) Include a summary of services needed for the client in the Assign/Transfer screen
        b) Ensure all contact information is correct in the Division information management system regarding client demographics

The Social Service Specialist in the origin county will:

A. Continue providing casework services to the custodial and non-custodial caregivers as determined by the Family Case Plan.
B. Maintain a case file with hard copy items such as legal and medical documents.
C. Provide a copy of the file to the resident county Specialist.

D. Key data such as Family Case Plan changes into the Division information management system as appropriate.
E. Request Medicaid determinations and re-evaluations by the DCFS Eligibility Unit and submit needed documentation.
F. Develop the initial Family Case Plan and subsequent changes.
G. Arrange family team meetings as needed and maintain a current Family Case Plan.
H. Ensure that the resident county Specialist is invited to family team meetings and that all applicable case information is gathered from resident county Specialist for necessary adjustment of the family assessment and service planning.
I. Place information about family time responsibilities (which county will transport, which county will supervise family team) in the applicable section of the Family Case Plan.
J. Arrange, coordinate, and ensure transportation is provided for family time sessions:
    1) Consideration should be given to use of kinship volunteers when appropriate
    2) Additional consideration should be given to transporting caregivers rather than children to decrease travel hardships for children
K. Ensure provision of services to facilitate reunification or other permanency arrangements as appropriate.
L. Notify the resident county Specialist immediately of any changes in plans for care of the child.
M. Obtain a progress report from facility staff every month following a child's placement in a facility and forward a copy to the resident county Specialist:
    1) The court may order progress reports from the service provider whenever a child is placed out of home and in a setting other than a Division resource home
    2) The order will set forth the schedule for the progress reports and will identify the service provider responsible for submitting the progress report
    3) The service provider will be provided with a copy of the written court order by certified mail, restricted delivery or by process server
    4) Failure to follow the order of the court will subject the service provider to contempt sanctions of the court. The progress report will include, but is not limited to:
        a) Reason for admission
        b) Projected length of stay
        c) Identified goals and objectives to be addressed during placement
        d) Progress of the child in meeting goals and objectives
        e) Barriers to progress
        f) Significant behavioral disruptions and response of provider
        g) Recommendations upon the child's release.

The Social Service Specialist in the resident county will:

A. Participate in family team meetings and Family Case Plan development.
B. Assist the resource home or facility with implementing Family Case Plan goals by monitoring progress for each goal.
C. Notify origin county Specialist by email if financial needs are identified.
D. Take lead on completing necessary paperwork for purchases and coordinate with primary Specialist to ensure completion of purchasing requests.

E. Complete purchases upon receipt of approved requisitions.
F. Keep the origin county Specialist informed of all progress, challenges, and child experiences through documentation in the Division information management system and during monthly or more frequently as needed contact with the origin county Specialist:
    1) Issues needing immediate attention will be communicated via phone and then documented in an email to the origin county Specialist and their Supervisor
G. Notify the origin county Specialist immediately of any change in the plans for care of the child.
H. Notify the origin county by telephone within twenty-four (24) hours, and make all other necessary notifications (for example, to resource parents) if an emergency change in placement is necessary.
I. Make regular resource home or facility contacts to the children as per the Family Case Plan.
J. Assist the origin county in arranging for family time sessions as outlined by the origin county Specialist in the Family Case Plan or as otherwise coordinated by origin county Specialist.
K. Complete any necessary incident reports (disruption) and provide a copy to the origin county Specialist.

Internal Procedure 701: Consideration of Kin

01/2020

DCFS believes that safe and appropriate kin are the best placement for children who must be removed from their homes to assure safety. Kin as used in this manual includes non-custodial caregivers, relatives, and fictive kin. Placement with kin can help minimize trauma, improve well-being, and increase permanency for children experiencing foster care.

In all placements by DCFS, preferential consideration will be given to an adult relative over a non-related caregiver if:

A. The relative caregiver meets all relevant child protection standards.
B. It is in the best interest of the child to be placed with the relative caregiver.

Non-custodial caregivers are presumed to be the most appropriate placement for their child unless evidence to the contrary is provided. When a non-custodial caregiver is not an immediate placement option, DCFS will seek other kin to preserve the bond between the child and family.

701.1 Trial Home Placement with Non-Custodial Caregivers

01/2020

When a child enters Division custody, the Division will immediately evaluate the appropriateness of non-custodial caregivers for trial home placement.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Ask the child, child's caregivers from whom custody was removed, and any available kin to provide information on non-custodial caregivers to include, as available:

1) The names, addresses, last known address, last known place of employment, and phone numbers of the non-custodial caregivers
2) The names, addresses, phone numbers, and other identifying information of any kin or collateral who could assist in location of the non-custodial parents
3) Information pertaining to stability of the non-custodial caregivers such as:
    a) History of and any current substance misuse issues
    b) History of and any current domestic violence issues
    c) History of any current or past mental or behavioral health issues
    d) Current or previous restraining orders or protection orders with child or immediate family members

B. Collaborate with the Resource Specialist to assess appropriateness of the non-custodial parent:
    1) For initial, immediate placement the following must be conducted and considered:
        a) Verification that the individual is the non-custodial parent
        b) An expedited Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check (via CFS-316: Request for Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check)
        c) An expedited State Police Criminal Record check (via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check)
        d) A Vehicle Safety Program Check (driving points)
        e) A CLEAR search
        f) A Court Connect search for applicable counties
        g) A visual inspection of the home guided by the CFS-450-A: Non-Custodial Parent Information and Questionnaire and also to include:
            i. Follow up on immediate concerns identified by child or collaterals during the removal
            ii. Review of information gathered during the visual inspection of the home
            iii. Assessment of how other children and adults in the home may affect the child being considered for placement
            iv. Assessment of how the child being considered for placement may impact the household members
    2) The following must also be submitted within two (2) weeks of placement (results do not have to be received to place with the non-custodial caregiver if there are no other health or safety concerns):
        a) FBI (non-state) Criminal Record Check if the non-custodial caregiver has lived or worked (if different) in another state in the last five (5) years
        b) Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry check from any state in which non-custodial caregiver has lived or worked (if different) for the past five (5) years

C. If placement with the non-custodial parent appears viable:
    1) Interview the child, if age appropriate, to assess how the child may feel about placement with the non-custodial parent
    2) Make individualized placements on a case-by-case basis in the best interest of the child

D. If placement is viable:
    1) Contact the OCC Attorney immediately if child is being moved from one Out-of-Home Placement to another and provide notice of the placement change to all other parties to the case as required by law
    2) Provide the non-custodial parent with PUB-15: A Relative's Guide to the Arkansas Child Welfare System
    3) Place the child in the non-custodial parent's home and:
        a) Ensure the non-custodial parent acknowledges they will not allow the alleged offender access to the child that is not supervised by the Division until the investigation is complete
        b) Will not allow any contact with the alleged offender that is not approved or authorized by the Division or the court after the investigation is completed (if found true)
        c) Document the placement in the Division information management system
        d) Assist the non-custodial parent in applying for benefits if appropriate, such as benefits under the Temporary Employment Assistance (TEA) Program or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
E. Keep the Resource Specialist informed of any changes to the child's need for a placement with the non-custodial parent and any other relevant information.
F. Hold family team meetings, as needed and update the Family Case Plan tool and Family Case Plan based on the information from the meeting.

The Resource Social Service Specialist will:

A. Process all necessary background checks:
    1) Conducting an expedited Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check (via CFS-316: Request for Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check)
    2) Conducting an expedited State Police Criminal Record check (via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check)
    3) Submitting a Vehicle Safety Program (DMV) Check (driving record points will be computed in DCFS Central Office, and the results, including qualification or disqualification, will be forwarded to the Resource Specialist for inclusion in the non-custodial parent's file)
    4) Submitting a Non-state Criminal Record Check if the non-custodial parent has lived or worked (if different) in another state in the last five (5) years
    5) Submitting requests for Child Maltreatment Central Registry check from any state in which non-custodial parent has lived or worked (if different) for the past five (5) years
B. Conduct a visual inspection of the non-custodial parent's home as guided by the CFS-450-A: Non-Custodial Parent Information and Questionnaire.
C. Keep the child's Specialist informed of progress or any challenges associated with processing of the background checks.

The Social Service Specialist and Social Service Resource Supervisors will:

A. Conference with and support the Specialist and Resource Specialist as necessary.

B. Review and approve placement with non-custodial caregiver.

701.2 Provisional Resource Home Placement

01/2020

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Ask the child's caregivers from whom custody was removed to provide information on appropriate kin to include, as available (if not already provided at time of removal):
    1) The names, addresses, and phone numbers of any kin who may serve as appropriate placement resources for the child
    2) The names, addresses, phone numbers, and other identifying information of any putative fathers of the child
B. Assist with completion of CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Resource Parent Information and Questionnaire as appropriate to the specific case .
C. Keep the Resource Specialist informed of any changes to the child's need for a provisional placement and any other relevant information.
D. If the provisional resource home placement appears viable:
    1) Interview the child, if age appropriate, to assess how the child may feel about placement with this kin
    2) Make individualized placements on a case-by-case basis in the best interest of the child
E. Collaborate with the Resource Specialist to evaluate:
    1) How the other children and adults in the home will affect the successful development of a child experiencing foster care
    2) How the child experiencing foster care will impact the other members of the home
F. If, after the Resource Specialist has completed all necessary steps to open the family as a provisional home, it is determined that placement with the family is in the best interest of the child:
    1) Arrange at least one (1) pre-placement contact for the child if it is not the child's initial placement
    2) Contact the OCC Attorney immediately if child is being moved from one out-of-home placement to another and provide notice of the placement change to all other parties to the case as required by law
    3) Provide the prospective provisional resource family with PUB-15: A Relative's Guide to the Arkansas Child Welfare System
    4) Place the child in the provisional home and:
        a) When a child is placed in a provisional resource home for a seventy-two (72) hour hold:
            i. Ensure the provisional resource parents acknowledge they will not allow the alleged offender access to the child that is not supervised by the Division until the investigation is complete
            ii. Will not allow any contact with the alleged offender that is not approved or authorized by the Division or the court
        b) Ensure that the provisional resource parents understand that they must

work with their Resource Specialist to complete any corrective actions necessary to bring the home into compliance with Minimum Licensing Standards and DCFS Policy within six (6) months

c) Document placement selection in the Family Case Plan
d) Assist the provisional resource parents in applying for benefits if appropriate:
    i. Until the provisional resource home is opened as a regular resource home, kin may apply for and receive benefits for which the provisional resource parents may be entitled due to the placement of the child in the home, such as benefits under the Temporary Employment Assistance (TEA) Program or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
e) Assess the situation with the Resource Specialist and Supervisors if the family does not come into compliance within six (6) months of the placement of the child in the home and recommend to OCC on how the case should proceed (for instance, remain in foster care or have a completed approved home study and recommend custody to the kinship provider)
f) Collaborate with the Resource Specialist to ensure that kin are completing the process for resource home approval. If the kinship home is not fully licensed as a resource home within six (6) months of the placement of the child in the home:
    i. The Division shall remove the child from the kin's home and close the kinship provisional resource home and place child in an approved or licensed placement or
    ii. The court shall remove custody from the Division and grant custody of the child to the identified kin

G. Complete the Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report and submit to the Supervisor for review and approval.
H. If approved by the Supervisor, submit the Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report to the OCC attorney, CASA, and all other required parties within fourteen (14) days prior to any Permanency Planning Hearing scheduled for the case.
I. Hold family team meetings, as needed, and update the Family Case Plan tool.
J. Invite the Adoption Specialist to the family team meeting when appropriate.
K. Conduct a family team meeting to discuss closure when appropriate.

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Assist with completion of CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Resource Parent Information and Questionnaire as appropriate to the specific case.
B. Process all necessary background checks by:
    1) Conducting an expedited Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check (via CFS-316: Request for Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check)
    2) Conducting an expedited State Police Criminal Record check (via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check)
    3) Conducting a Vehicle Safety Program (DMV) Check (driving record points will be computed in DCFS Central Office, and the results, including qualification or

disqualification, will be forwarded to the Resource Specialist for inclusion in the applicant file)

4) Submitting the FBI Criminal Record Check (FBI results do not have to be received to open the provisional resource home, but results must be received and clear within six (6) months to approve as a regular DCFS resource home)

C. Complete a visual inspection of the home (via CFS-446: In Home Consultation Contact Report).

D. Based on the results of the background checks listed above and the visual inspection of the home, begin the process for requesting any necessary Alternative Compliances or DCFS Policy waivers, if applicable.

E. Explain to the kin other processes related to becoming a provisional and, ultimately, a regular DCFS resource home.

F. Keep the child's Specialist informed of progress or any challenges to opening the kin as a provisional resource home.

G. Collaborate with the child's Specialist to evaluate:

1) How the other children and adults in the home will affect the successful development of a child experiencing foster care

2) How the child experiencing foster care will impact the other members of the home

I. If the kin and their home is appropriate to open as a provisional resource home, complete CFS-452: Provisional Resource Home Verification and CFS- 474: Provisional Resource Home Checklist with the family and file in the provider record.

J. Enter kin into the Division information management system as a provider opening two (2) placement services: Provisional (pick Relative or Fictive Kin depending on the circumstance) Placement Service, and Foster Family Home Service. The Provisional Placement Service must be quickly approved (once the necessary requirements are received), while the Foster Family Home Service has Applicant Status awaiting compliance (all required checks, certifications and training) for approval. In the Division information management system, kin will have only one (1) Provider Number showing two (2) services provided by the family.

K. Request any necessary Policy waivers or alternative compliances to waive non-safety standards for the kin prior to referring to training.

L. Refer to Internal Procedure Section 800: Development of Resource Homes, to continue with the process of opening the provisional resource home as a regular DCFS resource home.

M. Support the kin throughout the process of becoming a provisional and regular DCFS resource home.

N. Assess the situation with the Specialist and Supervisors if kin do not come into compliance within six (6) months of the placement of the child in the home.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with and support the Specialist on the case as necessary.

The Resource Supervisor will:

A. Upon receipt of a notification email from a Specialist who has removed children and identified a prospective provisional placement be responsible for ensuring completion of

CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Resource Parent Information and Questionnaire within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of notification.

B. Conference with and support the Resource Specialist as necessary regarding opening the provisional resource home.

701.3 Kinship Custody

01/2020

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Ask the caregivers from whom custody was removed to provide information on appropriate kin to include, as available (if not already provided):
    1) The names, addresses, and phone numbers of any kin who may be placement resources for the child
    2) The names, addresses, phone numbers and other identifying information on any putative fathers of the child
B. Interview the child, if age appropriate, to assess how the child may feel about placement with specific kin.
C. Complete the home study, to include Central Registry Checks, State Police Criminal Background Checks, and Vehicle Safety (DMV) Program Checks on all applicable household members, on kin and submit to the Supervisor for review and approval.
D. Based on the results of the background checks, request any necessary DCFS Policy waivers.
E. If supervisory approval is attained, submit the home study to the court with the recommendation to place the child with kin so that the kin may obtain legal temporary custody.
F. Open an in-home services case on the child if the court grants temporary custody to the kin.
G. Complete or update the family assessment using the Family Case Plan tool within thirty (30) days of opening the in-home services case and submit to the Supervisor for review and approval.
H. Schedule a family team meeting within thirty (30) days of opening the in-home services case:
    1) Invite the child's caregivers, kin, the child (if age appropriate) and community providers as appropriate
    2) During the family team meeting these individuals will determine the permanency goal for the child: reunification, adoption, guardianship, permanent custody with kin, or APPLA
I. Develop or update the Family Case Plan within thirty (30) days of opening the in-home services case and submit to the Supervisor for review and approval.
J. Complete the Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report and submit to the Supervisor for review and approval.
K. After receiving approval from the Supervisor for the Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report, submit to the OCC attorney within fourteen (14) days prior to any Permanency Planning Hearing scheduled for the case.
L. Submit the Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report to OCC, CASA and all parties no

later than fourteen (14) days before the scheduled Permanency Planning Hearing.

M. Hold family team meetings, as needed, and update the family assessment using the Family Case Plan tool.
N. Invite the Adoption Specialist to the family team meeting when appropriate.
O. Conduct a family team meeting to discuss closure and develop an Aftercare Plan when appropriate.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Review and approve the home study.
B. Review and approve the Family Case Plan tool within thirty (30) days of the Specialist opening the in-home services case.
C. Review and approve the Family Case Plan within thirty (30) days of the Specialist opening the in-home services case.
D. Review and approve the Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report prior to the Specialist's submission of this report to the OCC attorney.
E. Conference with and support the Specialist on the case as necessary.

The Adoption Social Service Specialist will:

A. Attend family team meetings when invited.
B. Keep their Adoption Supervisor informed of the child's permanency goal and progress toward that goal.

Internal Procedure 702: Maintaining Family Ties

01/2020

702.1 Caregiver-Child Contact

04/2018

The primary Social Service Specialist will:

A. Contact the caregivers and arrange for their first family time with the children to occur within two (2) business days from the date of removal:
    1) The first family time may be completed using facetime, zoom, or other virtual platform
B. Within five (5) business days of placement, assess and determine what, if any, evidence must be provided to the court to establish that supervised family time is necessary.
C. Regardless of the type of family time (supervised or unsupervised) needed for a particular family, establish the frequency and length of caregiver-child family time, to include with non-custodial and putative caregivers as appropriate, to develop a family time plan to recommend to the court.
D. Obtain approval from the Supervisor for any deviations from required frequency of family times:
    1) If approved, request appropriate family time waiver in the Division information management system

E. Arrange for family time with caregivers as outlined in the Family Case Plan to include assisting with transportation, supervision of family time, and other logistics, as needed:
    1) This coordination may include asking assistants, resource parents, interns, approved kin volunteers, and non-relative volunteers to assist with transportation to family time and asking assistants, resource parents, interns, and non-relative volunteers to assist with the supervision of family time as appropriate
    2) The Specialist will ensure any assistants, resource parents, interns, and non-relative volunteers supervising caregiver-child family time:
        a) Know the history and other applicable dynamics of the case
        b) Understand what they are to observe and assist with while providing said supervision
F. Prepare children for family time with their caregivers.
G. Ask assistants, interns, approved kin volunteers, and non-relative volunteers, as applicable, for information they obtained while assisting with caregiver-child family time and review assistants contact entries in the Division information management system, as applicable.
H. Update the Family Case Plan tool as necessary based on the interaction and outcomes of caregiver-child family time.
I. Conference with Supervisor as necessary regarding caregiver-child family time.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Review and approve the plan for family time and other contact with caregivers.
B. Assist with caregiver-child family time logistics if needed.
C. Conference regularly with the Specialist and other staff who may supervise family time to assess the quality of the family time and to determine if any changes to the plan for family time or other contact are needed.

The Social Service Assistant will:

A. Assist with transportation to, and supervision of, caregiver-child family time as assigned.
B. Share information gathered during transportation to and supervision of caregiver-child family time with Specialist and document information in the Division information management system Contact screens.

702.2 Sibling Contact

04/2018

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Include in the Family Case Plan the reasons for the separation of siblings, if applicable, as well as the steps that will be taken to reunify the siblings in a single placement, if appropriate:
    1) Arrange for an assessment by a mental health professional within five (5) days to determine if placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one (1) or more of the siblings as needed
B. Within five (5) business days of placement, assess and determine the frequency and length of sibling family time to develop a family time plan to recommend to the court.

C. Obtain approval from the Supervisor for any deviations from required frequency of family time:
    1) If approved, request appropriate contact waiver in the Division information management system
D. Arrange for family time with siblings as outlined in the Family Case Plan as well as participation in sibling celebrations and attendance of sibling extracurricular events, to include assisting with transportation and other logistics, as needed:
    1) This coordination may include asking assistants, interns, resource parents, approved kin volunteers, or non-relative volunteers to assist with transportation to family time and asking assistants, interns, resource parents, and non-relative volunteers to assist with supervision of family time, as appropriate
    2) Encourage resource parents to assist with siblings participating in one (1) another's various celebrations and extracurricular activities
E. Prepare children for family time with their siblings.
F. Ensure supervision of family time if needed.
G. Document sibling family time and participation in sibling celebrations and extracurricular activities in the Division information management system Contact screens.
H. Ask assistants for information they obtained while assisting with sibling family time and other contacts and review assistants' contact entries in the Division information management system, as applicable.
I. Update the Family Case Plan tool as necessary based on the interaction and outcomes of sibling family time and other contacts.
J. Conference with Supervisor as necessary regarding sibling family time and other contacts.
K. Document efforts to reunify siblings placed separately in the Division information management system Contact screen.
L. Document sibling family time that occur after TPR in the Division information management system Contact screen.
M. Prepare the packet for the Court Review to include:
    1) The Family Case Plan participants and family time plan sections of the Family Case Plan
    2) The Family Contact Log for the preceding ninety (90) days listing only the sibling family time or caregiver contacts that include all siblings (exclude family time involving only caregivers and one (1) child)
    3) Printed contact screens for the past ninety (90) days regarding sibling family time, other sibling contact, and efforts to reunify siblings
    4) Court Report
N. Submit the Court Report Packet to the Supervisor for review.
O. Submit the Court Report Packet to the local OCC attorney.

The Social Service Specialist Supervisor will:

A. Review and approve the plan for family time and other contact with siblings.
B. Assist with sibling contact logistics if needed.
C. Conference regularly with the Specialist and other staff, interns, or volunteers, as

applicable, involved with siblings' family time to assess the quality of the family time and to determine if any changes to the plan for family time and other sibling contacts are needed.

D. Review the Court Report Packet and request any necessary changes.

The Social Service Assistant will:

A. Assist with transportation to and supervision of sibling family time as assigned.
B. Share information gathered while transporting caregivers or children to and supervision of sibling family time with Specialist and document information in the Division information management system Contact screen.

702.3 Contact with Kin

04/2018

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Assess and determine the frequency and length of contact with other kin to recommend to the court.
B. Arrange for family time with other kin as outlined in the Family Case Plan to include assisting with transportation and other logistics, as needed:
    1) This coordination may include asking assistants, interns, resource parents, approved kin volunteers, and other volunteers to assist with transportation to family time to and asking assistants, interns, resource parents, and other volunteers to assist with supervision of family time, as appropriate
C. Prepare children for family time with other kin.
D. Ensure supervision of family time as needed.
E. Update the Family Case Plan as necessary based on the interaction and outcomes of contact with other kin.
F. Conference with Supervisor as necessary regarding contact with kin.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Review and approve the plan for contact with other kin.
B. Assist with logistics of contact with other kin if needed.
C. Conference regularly with the Specialist and other staff who may supervise family time with other kin to assess the quality of the family time and to determine if any changes to the plan for family time or other contacts are needed.

The Social Service Assistant will:

A. Assist with logistics of contact with kin as assigned.
B. Share information gathered from interaction with children and kin with Specialist and document information in the Division information management system Contact screen.

Internal Procedure 703: Health Services

08/2013

Children experiencing foster care often have complex biological, psychological, or social needs in addition to significant trauma histories. These needs and experiences present risk factors that may predispose them to have emotional and behavioral challenges. DCFS stands "in loco parentis" (in place of a parent) while children are in Division custody. This means it is DCFS' responsibility to determine what the child's medical and psychological needs are and make decisions regarding treatment of those needs.

DCFS will discuss medical and psychological needs of a child with biological caregivers, age-appropriate children, the child's alternate caregivers, and the child's treatment team to establish:

A. The child's PCP or primary source of care.
B. Child's medical and psychological history, including but not limited to, any on-going medical or psychological treatment the child is receiving:
    1) Frequency, time, and location of treatment
    2) Name of treatment providers
    3) Any medications including over-the-counter (OTC) the child takes:
        a) Conditions for which medications are prescribed
        b) Any known side effects of prescribed medications experienced by the child
    4) Any medication or other allergies

Due to the risk factors noted above, psychotropic medications are often a part of a child's comprehensive treatment plan. "Psychotropic" refers to medications capable of affecting the mood, emotions, sleep, and behaviors and frequently denote drugs used in the treatment of mental illness. However, some over the counter (OTC) drugs such as Benadryl and Melatonin can also be considered psychotropic drugs. The Division has established procedures to address medication monitoring of children experiencing foster care with an emphasis on appropriate use of psychotropic medications.

DCFS will work with biological caregivers to make decisions for children regarding routine medical care whenever possible. When a child needs minor relief from temporary symptoms (common cold, runny nose, headache, etc.), resource parents and DCFS staff will attend to the child's needs in the most efficient manner possible, will consult with biological caregivers prior to administration of medications when biological caregivers are present, and will record actions taken (provided Tylenol, cold medicine) on the child's medication log. When biological caregivers are not present, DCFS staff will update the caregivers regarding symptomology and treatment actions during the next conversation with the caregivers.

DCFS will not make decisions regarding medical treatments that would permanently alter bodily functions (amputation of a limb, removal of an organ, organ donation, for example) of a child without a court order unless such determinations occur during a life-threatening emergency when the treatment is necessary according to medical personnel. DCFS staff will obtain the permission

of the Director and obtain a court order for decisions to withdraw or withhold life-sustaining treatment of any child in Division custody.

703.1 Consent for Treatment

The Specialist or Health Service Assistant will:

A. Sign or otherwise provide consent for any necessary medical or dental treatment (excluding consent for in-patient admission for mental health services) prior to the child receiving treatment.
B. In the following cases consent may be given in person, over the phone:
    1) Emergency situation: An "emergency situation" is one in which the proposed surgical or medical treatment or procedures are immediately or imminently necessary and any delay occasioned by an attempt to obtain consent would reasonably be expected to jeopardize the life, health, or safety of the person affected or would reasonably be expected to result in disfigurement or impaired faculties
    2) Nonemergency surgical procedures
    3) Nonemergency invasive procedures
    4) "End of life" non-emergency procedures which include:
        a) Do-not-resuscitate orders, with DCFS Director approval and a court order
        b) Withdrawal of life support, with DCFS Director approval and a court order
        c) Organ donation, with DCFS Director approval
    5) Nonemergency medical procedures relating to a criminal investigation or judicial proceeding that involve gathering forensic evidence

Resource Parents may sign consent as follows:

A. Provide consent for treatment (excluding consent for in-patient admission for mental health services) in the following situations:
    1) Emergency situation: An "emergency situation" is one in which the proposed surgical or medical treatment or procedures are immediately or imminently necessary and any delay occasioned by an attempt to obtain consent would reasonably be expected to jeopardize the life, health, or safety of the person affected or would reasonably be expected to result in disfigurement or impaired faculties
    2) Routine medical treatment
    3) Ongoing medical treatment
    4) Nonsurgical procedures by a primary or specialty care provider

703.2 Initial Health Screening

The Social Service Specialist or Health Services Assistant will:

A. Ensure that each child who enters the custody of the Division shall receive an initial health screening, not more than twenty-four (24) hours after removal from home, if the reason for removal is an allegation of severe child maltreatment under A.C.A. § 12-18-602, or there is evidence of acute illness or injury.

B. Ensure that all other children who enter the custody of the Division receive an initial health screening no more than seventy-two (72) hours after removal from home.
C. Gather information necessary to complete the CFS-362: Medi-Alert to Resource Care Provider from information obtained from the child's caregivers.
D. Use information obtained from the CFS-362: Medi-Alert to Resource Care Provider to complete the CFS-6007: Placement Plan-Placement Provider Information Report, by keying the "Gen. Info" screen in the "Client section" of the Division information management system and all "Shots" screens in the "Medical" section of the Division information management system.
E. Complete the CFS-6012: Client Medical and Psychological Information Report by keying all screens found in the "Medical" section of the Division information management system from information obtained from the child's caregivers and the CFS-362: Medi-Alert to Resource Care Provider.
F. Ask the medical provider to complete the CFS-366: Health Screening:
    1) Share information obtained from caregivers or network members related to the child's health and any previously identified on-going health or mental health needs with the medical provider
    2) Schedule appointments as indicated by the initial screening

703.3 Comprehensive Health Assessment and Outpatient Services

09/2008

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH ASSESSMENT

The Social Service Specialist or Health Service Assistant will:

A. Arrange to have the Comprehensive Health Assessment completed within sixty (60) calendar days of removal from home.
B. Complete the CFS-6012: Client, Medical and Psychological Information Report within seven (7) calendar days after completion of the Comprehensive Health Assessment.
C. Schedule needed medical appointments for the child as indicated in the CFS-6012: Client, Medical and Psychological Information Report after this form is received from University of Arkansas Medical Sciences.

ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL (ACH) OUTPATIENT SERVICES

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Sign the initial Arkansas Children Hospital (ACH) consent for outpatient services, the ACH consent for in-patient services, and any other informed consents as required by the ACH Informed Consent policy, for example, surgical procedures, anesthesia:
    1) The ACH Routine Outpatient Consent form may serve as a valid consent for all routine outpatient care. Resource parents are authorized to sign additional routine consent forms for outpatient care
    2) Verbal or phone consent may be provided when the Specialist is unable to accompany the resource parent for the initial outpatient contact or for outpatient

surgery or when informed consent is required before a medical or surgical treatment may be performed

3) No consent is necessary for treatment of a child when a medical emergency concerning the child exists

HEALTH PLAN AND CONSENT FOR TREATMENT
07/2009

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Complete the CFS-368: Child's Health Services Plan within fourteen (14) calendar days after completion of the Comprehensive Health Assessment.
B. Inform caregivers of any medical treatment and involve them as appropriate.
C. Update the CFS-368: Child's Health Services Plan at least every six (6) months.
D. Provide copies of updates of the CFS-368: Child's Health Services Plan to the child's caregivers and the out-of-home placement provider.

703.4 Gathering & Maintaining Health Records

The Social Service Specialist or Health Services Assistant will:

A. Gather each child's health care history from health care providers who have evaluated or treated the child, the child's family, previous caretakers, and from school reports.
B. Provide the child's health care history to the physician conducting the Comprehensive Health Assessment.
C. Request medical records on the child and document requests on the CFS-353: Requested Medical Records Log.
D. Record the date of each medical contact, the condition or problem addressed, the diagnosis and treatment (or periodic screening and the results of the screening), and the health care provider's name and telephone number in the "Medical Contacts" screen in the Division information management system.
E. Place all information gathered as to the child's health history, and all records of health screening, assessment and treatment during placement, in the child's case record. This includes:
    1) CFS-352: Medical, Dental, Vision, Hearing and Psychological Episodic
    2) CFS- 353: Requested Medical Records Log
    3) CFS-362: Medi-Alert to Resource Care Provider
    4) CFS-366: Health Screening
    5) CFS-368: Child's Health Services Plan
    6) CFS-6007: Placement Plan-Placement Provider Information
    7) CFS-6012: Client Medical and Psychological Information

703.5 Medical Passport

The Social Service Specialist or Health Services Assistant will:

A. Develop and maintain the Medical Passport. The Medical Passport will consist of the CFS-

352: Medical, Dental, Vision, Hearing and Psychological Episodic, CFS-353: Requested Medical Records Log, CFS-362: Medi-Alert to Resource Care Provider, CFS-366: Health Screening, CFS-368: Child's Health Services Plan, CFS-6007: Placement Plan-Placement Provider Information and CFS-6012: Client Medical and Psychological Information.

B. Provide the CFS-365: Receipt for Medical Passport to the out-of-home placement provider for completion to verify receipt of the medical passport.
C. Provide a copy of the Medical Passport to:
    1) The out-of-home placement provider and to the child's new caretaker if the child is moved
    2) The child (if the child is in the Transitional Youth Services Program)
    3) The child when they reach the age of majority
    4) The caregivers, if the child returns home

703.6 Resource Parent Involvement in Health Care

07/2009

The resource parents will:

A. Accompany the child to all medical appointments.
B. Inform the Division of any scheduled medical contacts or medical problems for the child.
C. Assist in medication management as set out in Internal Procedure Monitoring Medication for Youth and Appropriate Use of Psychotropic Medication and will follow the guidelines set out in PUB. 30 – Resource Parent Handbook that address medication administration, monitoring, and documentation.

The Social Service Specialist or Health Services Assistant will:

A. Provide necessary support services to enable resource parents to accompany the child to any medical appointment.

703.7 Periodic Health Reassessment

02/2010

Following the initial screening and comprehensive health assessment, the Division shall ensure that periodic medical, dental, mental health, vision, and hearing evaluations are conducted by qualified providers, according to the periodicity schedules approved by the Division of Medical Services.

The Social Service Specialist or Health Services Assistant will:

A. Refer all children receiving permanency services for the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program (EPSDT) via the EMS-694 "EPSDT" form to the child's primary care physician (PCP), or other EPSDT providers after the initial screening and the Comprehensive Health Assessment. *If it is the first time the child has seen a health care provider while in the out-of-home placement, a primary care provider must be selected.*
B. Make an appointment with the PCP, or other EPSDT providers for the EPSDT screening.

C. File a copy of the examination report upon receipt from provider.
D. Schedule all subsequent screenings according to established periodicity schedules. (The most recent periodicity schedules can be found in the Arkansas Medicaid Provider Manuals.)
E. Ensure all essential treatment is provided and documented in the Division information management system in a timely manner.
F. Ask the Medical Provider to complete the CFS-352: Medical, Dental, Vision, Hearing and Psychological Episodic at each subsequent examination.

Internal Procedure 704: Medication Monitoring and Psychotropic Medications

06/2026

The Division is committed to safeguarding the well-being of children experiencing foster care by ensuring appropriate use and monitoring of medications. This procedure establishes requirements for identifying, authorizing, monitoring, and reviewing psychotropic medications to promote safe, effective, and clinically appropriate treatment.

Psychotropic Medications are medications capable of affecting the mind, emotions, or behavior and are used in the treatment of mental conditions. Psychotropic medications are often an important part of a child's comprehensive treatment plan, but without oversight they may also pose risks. Any medication used to affect mood, behavior, sleep, or emotional regulation shall be treated as a psychotropic medication under this procedure.

Psychotropic medications may be identified by either their medication name or common brand name. Staff are not expected to memorize all medications; however, they must be able to recognize common medications and understand when further review is needed.

Common examples by category include:

A. Antipsychotics (behavior/mood regulation):
    1) Risperidone (Risperdal)
    2) Aripiprazole (Abilify)
    3) Quetiapine (Seroquel)
    4) Olanzapine (Zyprexa)
B. Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (attention/impulsivity):
    1) Methylphenidate (Ritalin, Concerta)
    2) Amphetamine salts (Adderall)
    3) Lisdexamfetamine (Vyvanse)
    4) Atomoxetine (Strattera)
C. Antidepressants (mood/anxiety):
    1) Fluoxetine (Prozac)
    2) Sertraline (Zoloft)
    3) Escitalopram (Lexapro)

4) Citalopram (Celexa)

D. Mood stabilizers:
   1) Lithium
   2) Divalproex/Valproic (Depakote)
   3) Lamotrigine (Lamictal)

E. Anti-Anxiety/Sedating:
   1) Clonidine
   2) Guanfacine
   3) Hydroxyzine
   4) Benzodiazepines (Lorazepam, Alprazolam)

Common misuses of psychotropic medications:

A. Too many: multiple drugs, including multiple psychotropic drugs, prescribed at the same time (polypharmacy).
B. Too much: prescriptions that exceed the recommended dosage.
C. Too young: psychotropic medications for very young children require heightened review and clinical justification.
D. Over utilized to manage behavior: used when other non-pharmacological treatments might better address the issues.

Prescribing providers, along with placement providers, are responsible for initiation, monitoring, and discontinuation of psychotropic medications.

704.1 At the Time of Removal

At the time of removal the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Identify all current medications, including psychotropic medications:
   1) Obtain all medications available in prescriber bottles containing original labels indicating the pharmacy, date prescription filled, and reasons for taking medications
   2) Discuss with the caregivers:
      a) Their opinion of currently prescribed medications
      b) Benefits and side effects they have observed for the medication
      c) The need to partner in decision making regarding medication management while the child is experiencing foster care
      d) The option to attend medical and medication management appointments with the child experiencing foster care
   3) Consents for management of psychotropic medications as implied and necessary

704.2 At the Initial Health Assessment

At the initial health assessment the Social Service Specialist or Health Service Assistant will:

A. Provide prescriber bottles of medications and impressions of the caregivers regarding current medications to the attending physician to determine:
   1) If the child should continue the medication

2) The diagnosis or underlying condition requiring the medication to continue, as appropriate
3) The proper dosage and frequency of the medication to be continued
4) The symptoms of the diagnosis or underlying condition
5) The potential side effects of the medications
6) The indicators that the medication is not effectively managing the diagnosis or underlying condition

B. Medication changes should occur through the child's established prescribing provider whenever possible:
   1) If medication changes are ordered during the initial physical exam by a provider unfamiliar with the child:
      a) Staff shall ensure follow-up with the primary prescribing provider within five (5) business days
      b) The rationale for the change must be obtained and documented

C. Placement Providers must receive clear instructions on monitoring for side effects:
   1) Discuss recommended medications with age-appropriate children and caregivers and obtain informed consent from caregivers and children prior to a child beginning a new medication when possible:
      a) In the event of a medication emergency, begin medications as prescribed and then obtain informed consent as soon as possible thereafter

D. Discuss with all caregivers and treatment team members the reasons for medications, the potential side effects of medications, the placement provider's observations of the impacts of medications, and the current medication schedule:
   1) At the time of initial intake
   2) At the time of each new placement episode
   3) During each contact with caregivers (to include caregivers in the household of origin and resource parents)
   4) During each family team meeting
   5) During each medical and medication evaluation with the prescriber

E. Log all continuing and newly prescribed medications in the child's medical passport on CFS-372: Medication Log

704.3 Ongoing Monitoring and Medication Management

A. Placement Providers play a critical role in daily medication management and shall:
   1) Administer medications as prescribed
   2) Monitor and document observed side effects and behavioral changes
   3) Immediately report concerns to DCFS and the prescribing provider
   4) Participate in discussions regarding medication effectiveness and concerns

B. Each time a new placement occurs, or a new medication is prescribed provide all caregivers clear instructions on:
   1) Updating and maintaining CFS-372: Medication Log
   2) Medication administration
   3) Monitoring for side effects
   4) When to contact providers

C. Ensure on-going monitoring of medications for children experiencing foster care:
    1) Review medication usage at every contact in the child's placement by:
        a) Asking the child, caregiver, and provider about side effects and effectiveness of medications
        b) Checking that follow up medical appointments occurred as scheduled
        c) Reviewing the child's medication log during resource home contacts and discussing the medication log and it's uses with resource parents to ensure routine use of the log
        d) Document all medication management observations and information in the Division information management system within forty-eight (48) hours of completing the contact
    2) Maintain ongoing communication with prescribing providers, ensuring that treatment plans are trauma informed and integrated with behavioral supports

D. Request a review of the child's medications from the Assistant Director of Mental Health within three (3) business days:
    1) When:
        a) A child is prescribed three (3) or more psychotropic medications concurrently, or two (2) medications from the same class are prescribed
        b) Off label usage of medications is occurring
        c) Psychotropics are prescribed for children under ten (10) years of age
    2) Compile and send an email to Direct Social Service Supervisor, County Manager, and Area Manager detailing:
        a) Each medication the child is being prescribed
        b) Dosage and frequency of each medication
        c) The name of the prescriber for each medication
        d) What side effects and behavioral change the child is experiencing
        e) Caregiver's views about the medication and the impact of the medication on the child
        f) Specialist's view about the medication and the impact of the medication on the child
        g) Information regarding discussions of medications with the treatment team during family team meetings
        h) Details of what the team's worries are concerning the medications, if any

E. Ensure all recommendations from the Assistant Director of Mental Health are addressed:
    1) Document all recommendations and necessary follow-up steps from the Assistant Director of Mental Health in the Division information management system
    2) Complete all follow up and document each action taken in the Division information management system within forty-eight (48) hours of completion, to include any subsequent actions necessary as follow up to the current action

F. Staff should request a medication review through the child's PASSE care coordinator or behavioral health provider when concerns arise regarding:
    1) Multiple psychotropic medications
    2) Lack of improvement
    3) Significant side effects

4) Questions regarding appropriateness of treatment

The Assistant Director of Mental Health will:

A. Meet with appropriate medication experts to review concurrent use by a child of three (3) or more classes of psychotropic medication as needed.
B. Meet with appropriate medication experts to review general medication management requests and provide recommendations for follow-up via email within ten (10) business days of receiving a request.

704.4 Addressing Concerns with Prescribed Psychotropic Medications

DCFS staff and caregivers may raise concerns regarding the initiation, continuation, or adjustment of psychotropic medications when there are questions about safety, necessity, or appropriateness. Raising concerns in good faith does not constitute medical neglect.

When concerns arise, DCFS staff will:

A. Request clarification from the prescribing provider, including:
    1) The clinical rationale for the medication
    2) Target symptoms and expected outcomes
    3) Potential side effects and risks
    4) Alternative or non-pharmacological interventions considered
B. Ensure the concern is documented, including:
    1) The nature of the concern
    2) The provider's response
    3) Any agreed upon next steps
C. Notify their supervisor promptly when:
    1) Concerns remain unresolved
    2) The medication resents potential safety risks
    3) Multiple psychotropic medications are involved
    4) There is disagreement regarding the necessity of the medication

704.5 Escalation and Support

DCFS prioritizes informed, collaborative decision making and expects respectful communication between staff and medical providers. However, when concerns cannot be resolved at the provider level, DCFS staff should escalate the concern through supervisory channels and may request:

A. Consultation with the Assistant Director of Mental Health.
B. A secondary review through PASSE or another qualified medical professional.
C. A case consultation to review the child's treatment plan.

704.6 Medication Discontinuation and Disposal

A. Upon discontinuation or change, medications must be secured to prevent misuse or diversion.
B. Medications shall not be shared, flushed, or improperly discarded
C. Approved disposal methods include:

1) Pharmacy take-back programs
2) Law enforcement disposal events
3) Approved medication deactivation systems

D. Disposal must be documented in the Division information management system

Internal Procedure 706: Educational Services

04/2012

706.1 Educational Services

08/2008

If the child stays in the same school after entry into foster care, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Complete the CFS-362: Medi-Alert immediately when a child is removed and placed out of the home of the caregiver into foster care or adoptive home or moved to another resource care provider:
   1) Section IX of the Medi-Alert addresses the child's Academic Status and must be completed upon the child entering care or changing a placement
   2) Complete Section IX in consultation with the child's caregiver upon initial placement
   3) Update Section IX of the CFS-362: Medi-Alert as information becomes available if the caregiver does not provide needed information at the time of placement

B. Use CFS-384 LEA: Notification to Local Education Agency of Changes in Child Placement, Changes in Schools or Experiences of Traumatic Events to notify the school counselor when a child enters foster care, DCFS exercises a seventy-two (72)-hour hold on a child, a court places a child in DCFS custody, when a child has experienced a traumatic event, or DCFS believes a child has experienced a traumatic event, or when DCFS gains knowledge through an investigation or ongoing in-home services case that a child has experienced a traumatic event:
   1) Submit the CFS-384: LEA Notification to Local Education Agency of Changes in Child Placement, Changes in Schools or Experiences of Traumatic Events to the school counselor by the next business day

C. Provide the counselor authorization of who can pick the child up from school.

D. Present the school counselor with the child's court order if the Specialist has it. If the Specialist does not have it when accompanying the child to school, present it to the school once it is received.

E. Provide guidance to the school counselor on the role of the child's biological caregivers in the case (for example, supervised family time, unable to locate caregiver, working towards reunification or TPR, caregiver cannot have access to any resource parent information) and the role of the caregiver in the education process (caregivers will be attending school conferences as part of reunification services, TPR and caregivers will not be attending conferences).

F. Share all known information with the school that may impact the health and safety of the child experiencing foster care and all other children in the school. The school counselor may share any reported information with the child's principal and teachers if appropriate.

G. Obtain the child's school records from the school counselor for documentation in the child's case record:

1) The child's school records will be used to help address the child's educational needs in the Family Case Plan
2) Provide the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Project for Adolescent and Child Evaluation (UAMS PACE) Program copies of any school records available to assist in the Comprehensive Health Assessment

H. Ensure that the school counselor or designee completes the CFS-397: Educational Assessment within twenty (20) days of child entering care. The completed form will be added to the Comprehensive Health Assessment for review. If the child enters care when school is not in session, the CFS-397: Educational Assessment should be sent to the child's school within ten (10) days of the opening of the next school session.
I. Ensure that resource parents are given the names of the child's teacher and counselor:
    1) Ensure that resource parents are involved in the child's education process
    2) The resource parents must attend all scheduled parent/teacher conferences and school open houses
    3) The resource parent will encourage children experiencing foster care in their home to participate in school extracurricular activity and provide transportation to those activities
J. Complete and update, as needed, the Medical Passport information related to the child's educational needs.

If the child is enrolled in a new school after entry into foster care, then the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Complete each step outlined in the above section.
B. In one (1) business day, notify the child's old school of the child's transfer to a new school and request copies of the child's school records. Involve the child's current school in the transfer process if this is a planned move for the child.
C. Notify the school counselor or designee of the new school via the CFS-384: Notification to Local Education Agency of Changes in Child Placement, Changes in Schools or Experiences of Traumatic Events and enroll the child in the new school within two (2) business days after the move.
D. Provide the school with copies of any documents that would assist in the child's educational program and have an impact on the child's health and safety.
E. Provide UAMS PACE Program with any school records that are available.
F. When conducting a request for change of placement family team meeting discuss the impact of the child transferring to a new school if there is a change in placement.
G. Notify the caregivers that a change in schools was necessary if their parental rights have not been terminated.

The Specialist will provide the school with the name, address, work phone number, and cell phone number of the County Manager. If the child is suspended from school, the school will contact the resident County Manager who will notify the resource parents.

706.2 Special Education Needs Service Delivery Process

A. The Specialist will enroll the child in school and provide the school with copies of any documents that would assist in the child's educational program. Provide UAMS PACE Program with any school records that are available.

B. The DCFS health assistant will refer the child experiencing foster care to UAMS PACE Program for a Comprehensive Health Assessment (CHA) within three (3) business days of the child entering care.
C. The Specialist will notify the Health Service Assistant of all placement changes. The Health Service Assistant will forward all notifications to UAMS PACE Program.
D. UAMS PACE Program will obtain a copy of the child's school records via a DHS-81: Consent for Release of Information and DHS-4000: Authorization to Disclose Health Information, if the records have not been received from the Specialist:
    1) The child's caregiver and Specialist must sign the DHS-81 and DHS-4000
    2) The Specialist will also send the court order to UAMS PACE Program indicating that the child is in Division custody
E. UAMS PACE Program will forward the results of the Comprehensive Health Assessment (CHA) to identified DCFS staff. UAMS PACE Program will key recommendations from the CHA into the Division information management system for DCFS staff access.
F. The Specialist or Health Service Assistant will present recommendations for referrals for special education consideration to the school principal and or Local Education Agency (LEA) Special Education Supervisor or designee.
G. The Specialist will provide the school with the name and address of the child's biological caregivers, if available, so the school can send notice of the conference to the caregiver. If not appropriate, DCFS will request the school to appoint a surrogate parent for the child.
H. If DCFS is unable to locate the child's caregiver, the caregivers are not involved in the case, or the parents' rights have been terminated, the Specialist will request that the child's resource parent be appointed as the child's surrogate parent. The LEA Special Education Supervisor can assist in coordinating the surrogate parent training for the resource parent.
I. A conference will be scheduled with the appropriate school personnel, the biological caregivers, and resource parents (surrogate parent), to discuss the child's needs.
J. The Specialist will attend the referral conference.
K. The resource parent will be actively involved in the child's educational process and must attend all scheduled conferences and meetings, upon notification by the school and or DCFS, for children placed in their home.

Internal Procedure 707: DDS Waiver Process

02/2026

The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) is committed to supporting children and families by ensuring access to community-based services that promote stability, inclusion, and dignity. This procedure outlines how referrals to the Community and Employment Support (CES) Waiver are managed for children experiencing foster care.

This process ensures that children with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) are supported in the least restrictive environment possible, with services tailored to their unique needs and strengths.

The CES Waiver provides community services for individuals with IDD, supporting daily living skills, independence, and employment. The waiver emphasizes helping children thrive in their own

communities and preventing unnecessary institutionalization (nursing homes, Intermediate Care Facilities) The waiver also promotes inclusion through care coordination and individualized services.

Children experiencing foster care are prioritized for waiver access, even when there is a waitlist.

The child's primary Social Service Specialist will:

A. Evaluate all children experiencing foster care to determine if a referral for DDS Waiver services should be completed.
B. Complete a waiver referral and submit to the Specialized Servies Unit in central office:
    1) Within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of the child's completed PACE evaluation when the PACE report recommends DDS Waiver services for the child
    2) For any child experiencing foster care who is diagnosed with (must have a diagnosis or enough evidence to support a possible diagnosis):
        a) Intellectual disability (IQ and Adaptive Behavior Scale are below 70 and indicate an inability to care for oneself)
        b) Autism (IQ scores may vary and Adaptive Behavior Scale must be below 75)
        c) Cerebral Palsy
        d) Any diagnosis or condition that is expected to continue indefinitely, to include, but not limited to:
            i. Seizure disorder
            ii. Down Syndrome
            iii. Spina Bifida
            iv. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
            v. Any condition other than mental illness closely related to intellectual disability because it results in impairment
    3) Compile a referral email to the Specialized Services Unit to include:
        a) Child's Name
        b) Division information management system ID number
        c) Date of birth
        d) County of residence
        e) Name of staff making the referral
        f) Current placement information
        g) Diagnosis
        h) Primary assigned Specialist
        i) Primary assigned Supervisor
        j) Attach all medical records currently in the child's case file to include, but not limited to (records are not necessary to make the referral to the Specialized Placement Unit, SPU will obtain missing documents):
            i. Adaptive behavior testing
            ii. Birth certificate
            iii. Custody order and HIPAA order
            iv. Developmental testing
            v. IEP evaluation programming conference decision form
            vi. IQ testing
            iiv. Medicaid card

iii. Neurology report
ix. PACE
x. Psychological intake and discharge
xi. Social history
xii. Speech (for autism)
xiii. Social Security card or documentation showing card was ordered

C. When waiver applications are necessary, also complete and submit an application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for the child through coordination with the Eligibility Unit if the child is not already receiving SSI.
D. Provide all follow-up information requested from the assigned Specialist in the Specialized Services Unit (DDS Specialist).
E. Upon notification of outcome:
    1) Provide notification of the outcome to:
        a) Caregivers
        b) Resource Parents
        c) AAL
        d) OCC
        e) CASA, as applicable
    2) If approved:
        a) Follow all guidance from DDS Specialist regarding next steps
F. Document all efforts (to include the referral to the SPU), as applicable:
    1) In the Division information management system contact screen
    2) In document tracking

The assigned DDS Specialist will:

A. Be primarily responsible for obtaining the documentation necessary to support a DDS referral for any child experiencing foster care that is in need of DDS services.
B. Receive the initial referral by email or phone.
C. Enter youth information into the DDS Waiver Referral Tracker to include youth's:
    1) Name
    2) Division information management system ID number
    3) Date of birth
    4) County of residence
    5) Date the referral was received
    6) Name of staff making the referral
    7) Current placement information
    8) Diagnosis
    9) Primary assigned Specialist
    10) Primary assigned Supervisor
D. Check existing records in eDoctus and retrieve any existing records applicable to the DDS Waiver application.
E. Request missing and additional documentation as necessary to complete the waiver application:
    1) Contact external and internal parties as necessary, to include, but not limited to:
        a) Providers

b) Schools
c) The social service Specialists

2) Documentation required to apply for DDS Waiver services includes, as applicable:
   a) Adaptive behavior testing
   b) Area of Needs (DDS ACS)
   c) Birth certificate
   d) Custody order and HIPAA order
   e) Developmental testing
   f) Evaluation of medical needs-page 1-2 (DHS 703)
   g) Evaluation of medical needs-page 3 signed by doctor (DHS 703)
   h) Existing data review
   i) IEP evaluation programming conference decision form
   j) IQ testing
   k) Medicaid card
   l) Neurology report
   m) PACE
   n) Psychological intake and discharge
   o) Social history (DDS ACS 103)
   p) Speech (for autism)
   q) Social Security card or documentation showing ss card ordered

F. Review all gathered information.
G. Document in the Division information management system case notes and document tracking:
   1) Requests made to external parties
   2) Information received
   3) Requests made of the primary Specialist and local county office staff
   4) Communication with the DDS unit
H. Scan all obtained medical, developmental, and educational records into eDoctus.
I. Determine if the applicant meets the initial requirements for completion of a waiver application (applicants must have a qualifying disability or condition that requires long-term care):
   1) If the applicant does not meet pre-qualification criteria:
      a) Email the requestor and local team detailing the reasons the applicant does not meet criteria to complete an application for DDS Waiver services
      b) Document in the Division information management system the reasons for ineligibility
      c) Update the Tracker Log with:
         i. The closure date
         ii. Reason the applicant is not qualified
   2) If the applicant meets pre-qualification criteria:
      a) Compile the application packet (to include information listed in D2 above)
      b) Upload the application packet to the DDS Intake Unit using the DDS Intake Portal (https://ardhs.my.site.com/DDSReferral/s/referral-intake)
      c) Email the application packet to the DDS Intake Unit Supervisor
   3) Upon receipt of approval or denial letter from the DDS Intake Unit:
      a) If approved: email the applicant and child's Specialist, including:

i. Approval letter
ii. DHS-704
iii. Eligibility start and end dates (typed in the body of the email)
iv. Details of next steps required by the Specialist

b) If denied: email denial letter and denial DHS-704 to both the applicant and the child's Specialist

J. Update the waiver tracker and Division information management system with:
1) The date of the denial; or
2) The eligibility dates from the DHS-704

K. Upon notification of placement on the waiting list, or of an open waiver slot:
1) Email the requestor and primary Specialist:
a) The approval letter
b) DHS-704
c) Information regarding an open waiver slot or placement on the waiting list
2) Consult with the primary Specialist to identify the applicant's needs
3) Complete DCO-0004: Healthcare Packet (combined application for SNAP, Healthcare, and other benefits):
a) Scan and email the completed DCO-0004: Healthcare Packet to the Waiver Administration Unit (WAU)
b) Update the waiver tracker log with the date the packet was emailed to the WAU
c) Once the Healthcare Packet is sent to WAU, upload all client documentation to eDoctus

Internal Procedure 708: Safety of Children Placed in a Child Care Institution

09/2025

To ensure the safety of all children placed in a child care institution (CCI), including a group home, residential treatment center, qualified residential treatment program, shelter, or other congregate care setting, the Division will require any adult working in a child care institution to conduct criminal records checks, including fingerprint-based checks of national crime information databases and child maltreatment registry checks. All adults, including adults who do not work directly with children, are subject to background check requirements when working in a CCI. Details for each type of criminal records checks and child maltreatment registry checks are outlined below. These background check requirements will be outlined in each provider's contract deliverables or memorandum of understanding with the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), as applicable.

708.1 Child Maltreatment Registry

09/2025

All direct and indirect child care institution (CCI) staff as well as volunteers for the CCI shall be checked with the child maltreatment registry in their state of residence and any state of residence in which the person has lived for the past five (5) years for reports of child maltreatment. In addition, any CCI staff or volunteers having direct and unsupervised access to children will also be required to be checked with the child maltreatment registry in their state of employment, if

different from their state of residence, if the applicant has worked outside of Arkansas within the past five (5) years.

All applicable child maltreatment registry results must be received and approved prior to an applicant beginning employment.

The CCI administration will:

A. Require all employee applicants and volunteer applicants to complete the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check form designated by the Office of Early Childcare (OEC) and submit to the designated OEC personnel or email address for processing.
B. Document eligible or ineligible results and dates of results for each employee into the Provider Invoice Entry (PIE) system once available:
    1) This documentation in PIE will ensure that if any employee ever becomes ineligible due to a lapsed background check or other issue, the Division information management system will automatically suspend IV-E payments to that CCI until that employee's eligibility is reinstated with updated checks.
C. Ensure that the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check is completed every two (2) years for all employees and volunteers.

The Division will:

A. For Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry requests, the Office of Early Childcare (OEC) will email the requests to the Division Central Registry Unit for processing:
    1) DCFS Central Registry Unit will email the results of the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry check to OEC:
        a) OEC will notify the designated CCI personnel whether the individual is eligible or ineligible to begin employment or volunteer services, as applicable, based on the results of the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry check per A.C.A. 9-28-409
B. For child maltreatment registry checks from other states, the DCFS Support Specialist or designee will complete all out of state child maltreatment registry checks, as applicable based on information from the designated Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry form, per each state's applicable child maltreatment registry check procedures and communicate results back to OEC:
    1) If DCFS does not receive results from another state's child maltreatment registry within two (2) weeks of submitting the request, DCFS will contact the designated personnel or unit of the other state to request an update by phone or email, as appropriate:
        a) The exception to the above procedure is if DCFS receives notification from the other state that the state does not maintain a child maltreatment registry. In this case, DCFS will document that the other state does not maintain a child maltreatment central registry and inform OEC that OEC may notify the appropriate CCI personnel that the employee may begin employment if all criminal background checks have been received and are cleared as per A.C.A. 9-28-409:
            i. The requirement in section 471(a)(20)(C)(i) of the Act to request a check for child abuse and neglect registry information in another

State in which the prospective caregiver or other adult has resided in the preceding five (5) years is inapplicable if that other State does not maintain a child abuse and neglect registry

2) If after the initial follow-up DCFS still has not received results from another state's child maltreatment central registry within one (1) week, DCFS will make a second (2nd) follow-up contact the designated personnel or unit of the other state to request an update by phone or email, as appropriate
3) If after the second follow-up DCFS still has not received results from another state's child maltreatment central registry within one (1) week:
    a) DCFS will inform OEC that OEC may inform the appropriate CCI personnel regarding whether the individual is eligible or ineligible to begin employment or volunteer services, as applicable, per A.C.A. 9-28-409, while also notifying the appropriate CCI personnel that DCFS was unable to secure results (to date) from the other state's child abuse registry
    b) DCFS Support Specialist or designee will alert the DCFS Planning Specialist or designee regarding the lack of response from the other state
    c) DCFS Planning Specialist or designee will contact its Children's Bureau Regional Office (RO) Liaison to notify the RO Liaison that another state or tribe with an approved title IV-E plan that maintains a registry is not responding appropriately to an information request

708.2 State Criminal History

09/2025

All direct and indirect child care institution (CCI) staff as well as volunteers for the CCI shall be checked with the Identification Bureau of the Division of Arkansas State Police to determine if the person has pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to or has been found guilty of the offenses listed in A.C.A. 9-28-409.

The CCI administration will:

A. Require all employee applicants and volunteer applicants to complete the Identification Bureau of the Division of Arkansas State Police form designated by the Office of Early Childcare (OEC) and submit to the designated OEC personnel or email address for processing.
B. Document eligible or ineligible results and dates of results for each employee into the Provider Invoice Entry (PIE) system once available:
    1) This documentation in PIE will ensure that if any employee ever becomes ineligible due to a lapsed background check or other issue, the DCFS information management system will automatically suspend IV-E payments to that CCI until that employee's eligibility is reinstated with updated checks.

The Division will:

A. For Identification Bureau of the Division of Arkansas State Police requests, OEC will process the form via the Arkansas State Police and:
    1) Follow the procedures in 713.3 Fingerprint-Based Federal Criminal History for applicants

2) Notify the appropriate CCI personnel of the eligible or ineligible results of the Identification Bureau of the Division of Arkansas State Police for applicants as per A.C.A. 9-28-409

B. Ensure that the Identification Bureau of the Division of Arkansas State Police check is completed every two (2) years for employees and volunteers.

708.3 Fingerprint Based Federal Criminal History

09/2025

All direct and indirect child care institution (CCI) staff for the CCI shall submit a fingerprint-based criminal background check performed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in compliance with federal law and regulation to determine if the person has pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to or been found guilty of the offenses listed in A.C.A. 9-28-409.

For fingerprint-based criminal history checks, the CCI administration will:

A. Document eligible or ineligible results and dates of results for each employee into the Provider Invoice Entry (PIE) system:
    1) This documentation in PIE will ensure that if any employee ever becomes ineligible due to a lapsed background check or other issue, the DCFS information management system will automatically suspend IV-E payments to that CCI until that employee's eligibility is reinstated with updated checks

For fingerprint-based criminal history checks, the Division will:

A. Email the transaction number that is generated through the Identification Bureau of the Division of Arkansas State Police check for each employee back to the requesting CCI:
    1) The CCI will provide the employee or applicant with the correct ORI and the transaction number for each employee to complete the fingerprint-based criminal background check process
    2) The employee or applicant will take this information to the nearest DCFS fingerprint scanner where the information will be used to electronically submit their fingerprints. Employees or applicants should allow approximately fifteen (15) minutes per person to complete the scanning process
    3) State Police will process the requests and submit the FBI and state criminal record results to OEC through INA
    4) Results will be sent by email to the requesting CCI indicating eligible or ineligible for the applicant

B. Fingerprint-based federal criminal history results must be received prior to beginning employment with a CCI unless there has been a declaration of a major disaster in a portion of Arkansas as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that would allow Arkansas to request the modification or waiver allowed under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act from the Children's Bureau. If the Division receives approval to exercise this flexibility, DCFS staff will:
    1) Submit fingerprint-based criminal history checks prior to the applicant's start date for employment (the exception for this submission will be if fingerprint scans cannot be conducted at all)
    2) Conduct all available name-based criminal background checks for CCI staff:

a) If the fingerprint-based criminal history checks have been submitted and all applicable name-based criminal background checks deem the individual to be eligible for employment as per A.C.A. 9-28-409, then the applicant may begin employment with the CCI prior to receipt of the fingerprint-based criminal history checks

3) Complete the fingerprint-based criminal history checks pursuant to §471(a)(20)(A), (C), and (D) of the Social Security Act as soon as it can safely be conducted, in situations where only name-based checks were completed

Internal Procedure 709: Requirements for Specialized Placement Settings

06/2026

Specialized placements are utilized only when a child's clinical or behavioral needs cannot be safely met in a family setting. These placements require structured referral, review, and approval processes to ensure appropriate level of care and compliance with federal and state requirements. Even when children are placed in specialized placements, location of a kinship placement will remain a priority for the children.

A. General Requirements for All Specialized Placements:
   1) Specialized placements must:
      a) Be based on documented clinical or behavioral need
      b) Reflect that less restrictive options have been considered and are insufficient
      c) Be supported by current assessments and family case planning documentation
   2) The Social Service Specialist is responsible for:
      a) Submitting required documentation
      b) Ensuring all approvals are obtained prior to placement unless otherwise specified
   3) CFS-367: Specialized Placement Applications are required only for the following placement types:
      a) TFC
      b) DDS
      c) Subsidized Independent Living
      d) QRTP
      e) Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF)/Subacute

B. Placement Specific Requirements:
   1) Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC):
      a) Submit completed CFS-367 to TFC.Referral@dhs.arkansas.gov
      b) Contact TFC case management staff directly to follow up on referrals but do not contact individual TFC homes regarding potential placement
      c) Do not attempt to place a child in a TFC placement without approval notification from the Specialized Placement Unit (SPU) regarding a match for the child with a TFC family
   2) Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) referrals:

a) Submit completed CFS-367 directly to the DDS provider via the provider's preferred method of submission:
    i. Provider's can be found on the SPU Directory or by contacting the SPU
    ii. Provider's preferred method of submission will also be included in the SPU Directory
b) Call providers to follow up verbally regarding the child and placement needs
c) Prior to making any placement in a DSS home gain written approval for the placement to occur from the Assistant Director of Placement Support and Community Outreach or designee
d) For HDC, the PASSE is responsible for submitting the application packet. If the PASSE does not support the HDC referral, DCFS may choose to submit an application packet by:
    i. Creating a DDS Waiver Application as outlined in Internal Procedure Placement Monitoring for Specialized Placements in Sub-Acute, PRTF, and QRTP and Internal Procedure DDS Waiver Referral Process referencing CFS-347-A: HDC Checklist
    ii. If placement occurs in a HDC:
        1. Attend a meeting within ninety (90) days to determine if the child will be admitted for long-term care

3) Supervised Independent Living (SIL):
    a) Submit to the TYS Program Specialist:
        i. Completed CFS-367 or completed CFS-371: Supervised Independent Living Referral and Admission
        ii. CFS-009: Extended Foster Care Agreement
        iii. Most recent Ansell-Casey Assessment
    b) Provide additional information ad requested by TYS Program Specialist
    c) The TYS Program Specialist will:
        i. Review the SIL request
        ii. Request any additional information necessary to request SIL placement
        iii. Submit referrals to specific SIL, as appropriate, within one (1) business day of receiving all necessary information for the referral
        iv. Update SIL spreadsheet on U-drive with new referral
        v. Follow up with SIL providers as necessary
        vi. Ensure placements for SIL youth are keyed appropriately in the Division information management system (provider type and level) within twenty-four (24) hours of placement or prior to the upcoming board preview date
4) Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) and Community Reintegration (CRI)):
    a) Submit to the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit by emailing Residential.Placement.Referral@arkansas.gov. Referral email will include:

i. Completed CFS-382-A: ORTP Admission Justification for Youth Ages 10-12, as applicable
ii. Completed CFS-367: Specialized Placement Referral
iii. Current Family Case Plan demonstrating need
iv. Current child assessment demonstrating need
v. Child's placement history
vi. Therapy notes within the past three hundred sixty-five (365) days
vii. Educational documents
viii. Psychiatric evaluation within the last one hundred eighty (180) days
ix. Immediate Safety Plan, if applicable
x. Developmental evaluation within the last three hundred sixty-five (365) days
xi. Psychological evaluation within the last three hundred sixty-five (365) days
xii. Discharge notes within the last sixty (60) days

b) Participate in a discussion with the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit about appropriateness of specialized placement, as applicable:
    i. If specialized placement is determined to be appropriate, discuss with the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit the potential available placements to meet the child's specific needs:
        1. Complete further documentation as requested by the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit

c) Placement of any child under thirteen (13) years of age will require DCFS Director or designee approval

d) If placement occurs in a QRTP:
    i. Within forty-eight (48) hours of QRTP placement, contact eQHealth assessor to request and set QRTP Assessment meeting date, time, and location:
        1. The QRTP Assessment meeting itself must take place within fourteen (14) business days of the assessment request
        2. The QRTP Assessment meeting must take place in a location convenient for the youth and the youth's family
    ii. Invite the following people to the QRTP meeting preferably via email for documentation purposes but the best mode of communication may be determined for each person (* denoted mandatory attendance) and carbon copy (cc) the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit on all email invitations for QRTP Assessment meetings:
        1. Child *
        2. Child's caregivers*
        3. Other relatives in the child or immediate family's life if applicable
        4. Child's most recent placement provider prior to QRTP placement
        5. Child's ALL

6. eQHealth Assessor*
7. Current QRTP case manager, clinician, or other QRTP representative*
8. Any kin or others who would qualify as supportive adults, if applicable
9. County of origin Specialist*
10. Supervisor or alternate DCFS Supervisor if Specialist's direct Supervisor is not available
11. Resident county Specialist, if applicable (may participate by phone)
12. Child's CASA, if applicable

iii. Complete QRTP Assessment Meeting screen in the Family Case Plan tab in the Division information management system

iv. Expect eQHealth Assessor's QRTP placement determination letter within twenty-one (21) days of making the assessment request and forward this letter to the child's permanency team and all other stakeholders listed above

v. Work with the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit to appeal any QRTP placement denied as a result of the eQHealth assessment within twenty-four (24) hours of denial:
    1. If the denial is upheld, collaborate with the child's team to determine next steps for the child. This may involve moving the child to another safe and appropriate placement type within thirty (30) days of the denial or continuing at the QRTP but without federal funding for that placement if approved by the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit

vi. Collaborate with local OCC to ensure that a hearing is held within sixty (60) calendar days of QRTP placement:
    1. Document need for QRTP placement in court report and in all subsequent court reports, as applicable

vii. Work with Mental Health and Treatment Services unit to obtain Division Director approval for any QRTP placement that:
    1. Needs to go beyond twelve (12) consecutive months or eighteen (18) non-consecutive months for children ages thirteen (13) and older
    2. Needs to go beyond six (6) months for any child under thirteen (13)
    3. The initial requests to the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit to go beyond these timeframes must be made at least one (1) month prior to the six (6), twelve (12), or eighteen (18) month anniversary dates above as applicable

viii. Participate in family team meetings as part of the on-going assessment process

ix. Begin discharge planning to a family-like setting on the day the child is placed in the QRTP placement to include, but not limited to, promptly responding to any phone, electronic, or written correspondence from the QRTP provider

5) Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF)/Subacute:
   a) Complete the CFS-367: Specialized Placement Referral and submit to the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit by emailing residential.Placement.Referral@dhs.arkansas.gov. Referral email will include:
      i. Completed CFS-367: Specialized Placement Referral
      ii. Completed CFS-383-B: PRTF Admission Justification
         1. Current Family Case Plan demonstrating need
      iii. Youth placement history
      iv. Therapy notes within the past three hundred sixty-five (365) days
      v. Educational documents
      vi. Psychiatric evaluation within the last one hundred eighty (180) days
      vii. Immediate Safety Plan if applicable
      viii. Developmental evaluation within the last three hundred sixty-five (365) days
      ix. Psychological evaluation within the last three hundred sixty-five (365) days
      x. Discharge notes within the last sixty (60) days
   b) Participate in a discussion with the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit about the appropriateness of specialized placement:
      i. If specialized placement is determined to be appropriate, discuss with the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit the potential available placements to meet the youth's specific needs
      ii. Placement of any youth under thirteen (13) years of age will require DCFS Director or designee approval
   c) When acute placement for children under the age of ten (10) needs to be assessed:
      i. Contact the Assistant Director of the MHU and request approval to obtain an assessment for the children. No assessment may be obtained without prior approval
      ii. Upon receipt of approval to obtain an assessment for the child, schedule and attend the assessment with the child
      iii. Upon placement in an acute facility provide notification of placement to the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit (MHU) by emailing dcfs.clinicalfacilitator@dhs.arkansas.gov and providing:
         1. Child's name
         2. Placement date
         3. Hospital information
6) Contracted bed placements follow a separate approval process. Requests must be reviewed and approved through the supervisory chain of command prior to

placement. No contract placement will be made without prior approval from the Division Director

7) Placement for youth identified as victims or at risk of human trafficking follow a separate, specialized procedure and must be coordinated with DCFS human trafficking procedures
8) Emergency Shelter:
    a) Follow the chain of command to obtain permission to seek placement in an emergency shelter from the Division Director or designee
        i. No placement in an emergency shelter may be sought without prior approval from the Division Assistant Director of Field Operations
    b) Complete CFS-398: Approval to Place Children 12 and Under in an Emergency Shelter or Shelter Extension Approval
    c) Submit completed and approved CFS-398 directly to the emergency shelter via the shelter's preferred method:
        i. Referrals to Dana's House must be pre-approved by Assistant Director of Placement Support and Community Outreach or designee
    d) For a child to remain in an emergency shelter placement longer than fourteen (14) days:
        i. Complete CFS-398: Shelter Extension Approval
        ii. Email the Assistant Director of Field Operations completed CFS-398

When placement occurs in a specialized setting, the Specialist will:

A. Update the placement screen in the Division information management system within forty-eight (48) hours of placement occurring.
B. Within seventy-two (72) hours of placement, provide written notification via CFS-300A: ALL, CASA, and Child Notification of Change in Out-of-Home Placement (may be emailed) to:
    1) The local OCC attorney
    2) Child's attorney ad litem (ALL)
    3) Child's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), if applicable
    4) Parent counsel

The Supervisor will:

A. Confer with the Specialist regarding need for specialized placement.
B. Support Specialist through the referral and placement process to include ensuring the Specialist follows procedures and timeframes described above.
C. Attend meetings or arrange for an alternate DCFS Supervisor to attend meetings as necessary to support on-going placements.

The Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit will:

A. Monitor the Residential.Placement.Referral@dhs.arkansas.gov inbox for referrals.

B. Review CFS-367 and supporting documentation to ensure specialized placement is an appropriate level of care for the child:
    1) If appropriate, the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit will send CFS-367 to providers for review and placement request
    2) If not appropriate, the Mental Health and Treatment Services Unit will conference with Specialist and Supervisor to explain and offer additional guidance
C. Notify Specialist when a placement is secured by email to include:
    1) Type of placement secured or approved
    2) Location of placement
    3) Next steps necessary for placement to occur
D. Enter a request for a QRTP Assessment in eQSuites within two (2) business days of placement in a QRTP:
    1) Retrieve eQHealth Assessor's QRTP placement determination letter from eQSuites
    2) Collaborate with Specialist regarding any needed QRTP placement extensions beyond twelve (12) consecutive months for youth ages thirteen (13) and older (or eighteen (18) non-consecutive months for youth ages thirteen (13) or older) or beyond six (6) consecutive months for children younger than thirteen (13) years of age and submit requests to the Division Director, as appropriate
E. Review and approve or deny requests for placements in a psychiatric residential treatment facility within forty-eight (48) hours.

The Division Director or designee will:

A. Review QRTP placement extensions beyond twelve (12) consecutive months for youth ages thirteen (13) and older (or eighteen (18) non-consecutive months for youth ages thirteen (13) and older) or beyond six (6) consecutive months for children younger than thirteen (13) years of age.
B. Approve or deny extension requests as appropriate.

Internal Procedure 710: Therapeutic Foster Care

06/2011

710.1 Referrals for Therapeutic Foster Care

If the Social Service Specialist believes TFC to be the most appropriate placement for a child, they will:

A. Complete CFS-367: Specialized Placement Referral Form.
B. Email the completed CFS-367:Specialized Placement Referral Form to: TFCReferral@arkansas.gov.
C. Retain a paper copy of the CFS-367: Specialized Placement Referral Form in the child's case file.

If the child is accepted into a TFC placement, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Forward additional required documents to the provider, as requested.
B. Continue to maintain the child's case file while they are in TFC.
C. Coordinate a monthly contact with the TFC case manager to assess the health and safety

of the child placed in the TFC home.

The Specialized Placements Unit Manager will:

A. Review the completed CFS-367: Specialized Placement Referral Form for appropriateness.
B. Forward appropriate referrals to the TFC providers.
C. Notify the Specialist if the child is accepted into the TFC program.

710.2 Therapeutic Home Transitioning to DCFS Resource Home

If a current TFC resource home wishes to become a DCFS resource home or a former TFC resource home wants to reopen as a DCFS resource home, the Resource Social Service Specialist will:

A. Request a referral on the family from the TFC provider.
B. If the request is positive, ensure that all required DCFS background checks are in place and current. Complete appropriate screens in the Division information management system.
C. If the request is from a former TFC resource home, complete new background checks on all appropriate household members, regardless of whether previous background checks are still current.
D. Once background checks have been verified, conduct an In-Home Consultation Contact with the family.
E. Verify that the family has completed:
    1) Pre-service training with the TFC provider:
        a) If the family did not complete pre-service training with the TFC provider, refer the family to MidSOUTH for pre-service training upon successful completion of all background checks and the In-Home Consultation Contact (see Internal Procedure Initiation of Pre-Service Training and Pre-Service Training)
    2) CPR and Standard First Aid Certification. First Aid and CPR training and certification will only be accepted from a certified trainer associated with the American Heart Association, the National Safety Council, or the American Red Cross. First Aid training provided through the National Safety Council must be the Standard First Aid, not Basic First Aid:
        a) If the family does not have current CPR and Standard First Aid Certification, assist the family in accessing appropriate training
    3) Six (6) hours of continuing education related to fostering within the past calendar year:
        a) If he family has not earned six (6) hours of continuing education within the past calendar year, they are responsible for obtaining the remaining hours. However, the time spent during the in-home consultation contact and orientation may count toward the six (6)-hour continuing education requirement
F. If the family will not be attending pre-service training, ensure that the individual conducting the home study receives the completed SAFE Questionnaire I.
G. Arrange for a SAFE Home Study to be completed on the family (Internal Procedure Home Study).

H. If the family's SAFE Home Study is approved, ensure:
    a. CFS-475: Initial Checklist for Resource Home Assessment is completed
    b. Safeguard measures deemed necessary have been implemented
    c. Requested alternative compliances or Policy waivers have been approved
I. Invite the County Manager to attend the final face-to-face contact and final visual inspection of the home.
J. Conduct a final face-to-face contact with the prospective resource parents and a final visual inspection of the home (preferably with the County Manager).
K. Provide the family with an Approval Packet.
L. Review the DCFS Approval Packet which includes:
    1) Stamped envelopes addressed to the appropriate county office
    2) Examples of the completion of travel documentation that must be submitted monthly
    3) Copy of the Code of Ethics
    4) Copy of the Arkansas Practice Model
    5) CFS-381: Training Record Log
    6) CFS-372: Medication Log
    7) CFS-350: Personal Property Inventory Log
    8) CFS-374: Fire and Tornado Drill Log
    9) CFS-352: Medical, Dental, Vision, Hearing and Psychological Episodic
    10) After hours contact sheet
    11) Foster Care Board Sheet
    12) Appropriate Resource Parent Association contact information
M. Complete the CFS-462: Initial Resource Family Agreement with the family.
N. File the CFS-462: Initial Resource Family Agreement in the resource home record.
O. Enter a disposition as to the approval or denial of the resource home within three (3) business days of receipt of the Area Manager's approval or denial:
    1) If the recommendation is approval, then:
        a) If the orientation has not already taken place, schedule a date for a County or Area Orientation Session for newly approved resource parents
        b) Complete Provider Alternate Care Screen in the Division information management system if family has determined they are willing to serve as an Informal Respite Home and, using CFS-419: Resource Family Support System (FFSS) Information, enter all appropriate identified Resource Family Support System Individual Members including information on their cleared background checks (see Division POLICY 9 CAR § 40-814: Alternate Care For Children In Out-Of- Home Placement)
        c) Enter Begin Date on Availability Status on Provider Service Status screen and Request Approval on Provider Service Detail Screen in the Division information management system
        d) If the family has indicated interest and been approved to foster children with specific characteristics, identify the appropriate Disability Willing to Accept selection under the Preferences Tab in the Provider Services/Admission Criteria Button

e) File the approval letter in the resource home record

2) If the recommendation is denial, then:
   a) Send a "Letter of Denial" to the applicants who were not approved. See Division POLICY CAR § 40-807: Denial of a Resource Home Applicant and document in Provider Contact Information Screen in the Division information management system
   b) End Date the Foster Family Service on the Provider Services Tab selecting the appropriate Reason for End Date
   c) Specify why the home was denied in the comment box on the Provider Services Tab

The County Manager or designee is encouraged to:

A. Participate in the final face-to-face contact and final visual inspection of the home with the Resource Specialist.

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. If appropriate, approve the Resource Specialist's Request for Approval in Provider Service Detail Screen in the Division information management system to finalize the approval of the resource family. Upon approval, the Division information management system automatically provides the Resource Family Approval Letter to be printed, mailed, and filed in the resource home record.

Internal Procedure 711: PLPA Transitioning to Division Resource Home

08/2020

If a current PLPA home wishes to become a DCFS resource home, the Resource Social Service Specialist will:

A. Request a referral on the family from the PLPA while confirming with the PLPA that the resource home is being closed out by the PLPA.
B. If the referral is positive, ensure that all required DCFS background checks are in place and current. Complete appropriate screens in the Division information management system (see Internal Procedure Background Check Processing).
C. Once background checks have been verified, conduct an In-Home Consultation Contact (see Internal Procedure In-Home Consultation Contact) with the family.
D. Verify that the family has completed:
   1) Pre-service training with the PLPA: If the family did not complete pre-service training with the PLPA, refer the family to Midsouth for pre-service training upon successful completion of all background checks and the In-Home Consultation Contact
   2) CPR and Standard First Aid Certification: First Aid and CPR training and certification will only be accepted from a certified trainer associated with the American Heart Association, the National Safety Council, the American Red Cross, or the Health & Safety Institute:
      a) First Aid training provided through the National Safety Council must be the Standard First Aid, not Basic First Aid
      b) If the family does not have current CPR and Standard First Aid Certification, assist the family in accessing appropriate training

3) Six (6) hours of continuing education related to fostering within the past calendar year:
    a) If the family has not earned six (6) hours of continuing education within the past calendar year, they are responsible for obtaining the remaining hours
    b) The time spent during the in-home consultation contact and orientation may count toward the six (6) hour continuing education requirement

E. Obtain a copy of the family's SAFE Home Study and any SAFE Home Study Updates for review and assessment.
F. If based on the review of the information described above the family will continue with the approval process, invite the County Manager or designee to accompany Specialist on the final face-to-face contact and final visual inspection of the home.
G. Conduct a final face-to-face contact with the prospective resource parents to include a final visual inspection of the home (preferably with the County Manager or designee) and review of the Approval Packet.
H. Complete the CFS-462: Initial Resource Family Agreement with the family:
    1) File the CFS-462 in the resource home record
I. Enter a disposition as to the approval or denial of the resource home within three (3) business days of receipt of the Area Manager approval or denial:
    1) If the recommendation is approval, then:
        a) If the orientation has not already taken place, schedule a date for a County or Area Orientation Session for newly approved resource parents
        b) Complete Provider Alternate Care screen in the Division information management system if family has determined they are willing to serve as an Informal Respite Home and, using CFS-419: Resource Family Support System (RFSS) Information, enter all appropriate identified Resource Family Support System Individual Members including information on their cleared background checks
        c) Enter Begin Date on Availability Status on Provider Service Status screen and Request Approval on Provider Service Detail screen in the Division information management system
        d) If the family has indicated interest and been approved to foster children with specific characteristics, identify the appropriate Disability Willing to Accept selection under the Preferences tab in the Provider Services/Admission Criteria button
        e) File the approval letter in the resource home record
    2) If the recommendation is denial, then:
        a) Send a "Letter of Denial" to the applicants who were not approved and document in Provider Contact Information screen in the Division information management system
        b) End Date the Foster Family Service on the Provider Services tab selecting the appropriate Reason for End Date
        c) Specify why the home was denied in the comment box on the Provider Services tab

The County Manager or designee is encouraged to participate in the final face-to-face contact and final visual inspection of the home with the Resource Specialist.

The Area Manager or designee will, if appropriate, approve the Resource Specialist's request for approval in Provider Service Detail screen in the Division information management system to finalize the approval of the resource family. Upon approval, the Division information management system automatically provides the resource family approval letter to be printed, mailed, and filed in the resource home record.

711.1 Former PLPA Home Reopening as Division Resource Home

08/2020

For former PLPA resource homes that express interest in opening as a Division resource home, the Resource Specialist will:

A. Request a referral on the family from their former PLPA.
B. If the referral is positive, see Internal Procedure Reopening a Resource Home and follow accordingly.

Internal Procedure 713: Monitoring Placement in Sub-Acute, PRTF, QRTP

08/2025

The Division of Children and Family Services recognizes youth are best served in a family setting. Placement of youth in a more restrictive setting should only be considered when their needs cannot be met in less restrictive environments. DCFS is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children placed in more restrictive settings such as Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs), Sub-Acute, and Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs).

The following is a detailed list of programs, including placement types and names. This compilation serves as a reference for staff to ensure accurate documentation and appropriate placement decisions:

Subacute:

- Arkansas State Hospital
- Bridgeway
- Pinnacle Point Hospital
- Springwoods
- United Methodist Behavioral Hospital
- Valley
- Vantage

Hospital/Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF)

- Centers
- Delta
- Methodist
- Millcreek
- Perimeter (Forrest City)
- Perimeter of Ozark
- Perimeter (West Memphis)

- Timber Ridge
- Yellow Rock
- Youth Home

Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP)

- Boys Shelter
- Compact
- Consolidated Youth Services (CYS)
- Dana's House
- East Arkansas Youth Servies (EAYS)
- Fostering Change
- Haven
- Maggie House
- Methodist
- Open Arms
- Ouachita Children's Center (OCC)
- Vera Lloyd
- Ridgeview
- Youth Home

When a youth is placed in a specialized environment, the primary Social Service Specialist will:

A. Make the primary placement of a youth in PRTF, Sub-Acute, or QRTP:
    1) Provide comprehensive and accurate information about the child during the assessment and admission phase
    2) Sign consents and facilitate treatment and treatment planning
    3) Collaborate with the facility in the development of the plan of care
    4) If the assigned Specialist is not the one that makes the placement, an initial face to face contact between the youth and the primary Specialist must occur within three (3) business days to maintain consistency and engagement
B. Update the placement screen for the child in the Division information management system.
C. Provide written notification of changes in placement according to Internal Procedure Changes in Out-of-Home Placement to the following via CFS-300, CFS-300-A, text, or email, as applicable:
    1) The local Office of Chief Counsel attorney
    2) Youth's Attorney ad litem (AAL)
    3) Youth's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
    4) Parent Counsel
    5) The youth's biological caregivers
    6) The youth's siblings
D. A second contact should be made within fourteen (14) days of the initial placement to assess the child's adjustment, engagement in their treatment plan, and immediate safety. This ensures continuity and immediate engagement.

E. Maintain ongoing engagement with the youth and the youth's treatment team:
    1) Remain engaged in the treatment process and determine with the therapist at the beginning of treatment the degree and methods of engagement (phone, conversation, written reports, conferences)
    2) Complete weekly phone check-ins with the youth and document in the Division information management system
    3) Attend each appointment scheduled with a psychiatrist or physician, ensuring the youth's health and well-being are being monitored comprehensively as well as maintaining involvement in the youth's therapeutic process and support their reintegration into a family setting, if applicable
    4) Encourage, if applicable, the youth's family members to the extent appropriate (when in the best interest of the youth) to take part in discharge planning and family therapy (This decision should be made in coordination with the youth's therapy team)
F. Maintain Monthly Face-to-Face Contacts:
    1) Complete monthly face-to-face contacts with the youth in the facility to ensure consistent engagement and follow up on the treatment progress. These contacts must include:
        a) Detailed observations of the youth's physical and emotional state
        b) Private conversations that give the youth an opportunity to express concerns or needs
        c) Inspection of the facility to ensure it meets cleanliness, safety, and sanitation standards
        d) Review and discussion of the youth's treatment progress, including input from facility staff and therapists
        e) Documentation in the Division information management system to ensure thorough records are maintained
        f) All concerns regarding youth safety must be reported to the Supervisor immediately
G. Ensure discharge planning begins at the time of admission and ensure Specialist continues involvement in discharge planning throughout the placement episode.
H. Coordinate aftercare plans:
    1) Facilitate timely discharge by identifying specific placement plans as early as possible to promote a transition from one level of care to another
I. Ensure compliance with all scheduled outpatient appointments.

Internal Procedure 714: Facilitated Discharge Planning

08/2025

DCFS strives to prevent crisis placements regarding treatment and to ensure a seamless transition process for children discharging from acute, sub-acute, or QRTP settings. To that end, DCFS Clinical Facilitators will facilitate discharge planning meetings with the assigned Social Service Specialist

(county of origin Specialist and resident county Specialist, Supervisors, and any other members of the local DCFS team as needed, and to assess if appropriate for the child's caregivers to be present, if parental rights are still in place, attorney ad litem, the PASSE, and the current facility from whom the child is receiving services.

During discharge planning meetings, the Clinical Facilitator will pose questions regarding the mental health treatment of the child, the responsibilities of all parties involved, information about their medications, if applicable, and level of care recommendation. Please follow the procedures listed below for each respective placement type.

714.1 Entry and Discharge from Acute Placements

10/2021

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. When a child is going to be admitted to an acute placement, send an email to the DCFS Clinical Facilitator box at DCFS_clinicalfacilitator@dhs.arkansas.gov to provide notification of the placement. The email will need to include the following information in the following format:
    1) Name
    2) DOB
    3) Where is the child being admitted?
    4) What PASSE is the child in?
    5) Who is the care coordinator and contact information?
B. Key the placement change within two (2) business days.
C. Continue to check in with child's hospital team (nurse, social worker, or therapist).
D. Invite caregivers if parental rights are in place and it is assessed as appropriate.

The Clinical Facilitator will:

A. Call or email within one (1) business day to set up a discharge planning meeting.
B. Ensure daily calls occur until the child's discharge plan is made and confirmed.

714.2 Subacute

08/2025

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Email DCFS_clinicalfacilitator@dhs.arkansas.gov within three (3) business days of a child going into a sub-acute residential placement. The email will need to include the following information in the following format:
    1) Name
    2) DOB
    3) Where is the child being admitted?
    4) What PASSE is the child in?
    5) Who is the care coordinator and contact information?
B. Initiate emergency calls if the child goes acute while in a subacute setting per Internal Procedure Entry to and Discharge from Acute Placements.

C. A Specialist or Supervisor will ensure that family time or phone calls happen with children in sub-acute at least once every two (2) weeks.

The Clinical Facilitator will:

A. Call or send an email within three (3) business days of receiving the notification email to set up a discharge planning meeting that will occur during the first (1st) week of the child's stay.
B. Set up and facilitate weekly calls until the provider reports that child is stable at the facility.
C. Resume facilitation of weekly calls when the thirty (30)-day discharge notice is given by the provider.
D. Emergency calls will take place if the child is admitted into an acute placement while in a subacute setting immediately.

714.3 Qualified Residential Treatment Program

08/2025

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Make contact every other week with the child placed in the QRTP.
B. Continue to keep the CFS-367 updated based on the last ninety (90) days of behaviors happening at the QRTP so that when discharge meetings start, the CFS-367 is prepared to send out for referrals.
C. If a child is admitted into an acute placement while in QRTP, facilitate a call with the QRTP facility to confirm child's acceptance back into program.

The Clinical Facilitator will:

A. Upon receipt of invitation, participate in the assessment to discuss discharge planning, barriers, and timelines.
B. Ensure the team receives a thirty (30)-day notice prior to discharge as written per the QRTP contracts.
C. Ensure the team has the discharge summary within then (10) days of discharge.
D. At the six (6)-month placement mark at the QRTP facility, increase the number of meetings or calls to develop an appropriate discharge plan.

714.4 Therapeutic Foster Care

08/2025

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. If child in TFC is admitted to an acute placement, follow Internal Procedure Entry to and Discharge from Acute Placements, which will also include the TFC provider.

The Clinical Facilitator will:

A. Arrange and facilitate progress meeting at six (6)-month therapeutic resource care (TFC) home placement mark to address what services are being utilized, the progress of the child, what level the child is currently maintaining, and the permanency plan.

B. Assist in coordinating meetings to include TFC provider, adoptive caregivers, and the PASSE when the pre-adoptive home is located and selected to ensure smooth discharge process.

Internal Procedure 715: Permanency Safety Consultations

07/2026

Permanency Safety Consultations (PSCs) are structured case consultations designed to support timely permanency, ongoing safety planning, and case progression for children in Division custody. PSCs provide an opportunity to identify and address safety concerns, permanency barriers, concurrent planning efforts, and action next steps needed to achieve permanency outcomes. PSC facilitators provide consultation and support to assist staff in moving toward safe and timely permanency.

PSCs are action-oriented consultations intended to identify barriers, establish accountability, and advance timely permanency for children in care.

PSCs shall utilize the Collaborative Assessment and Planning (CAP) Framework to guide discussion regarding safety concerns, permanency barriers, and action planning for the family. PSCs may be conducted in person or virtually, when necessary, as determined by the PSC Facilitator. The PSC structure reinforces the use of Safety Organized Practice (SOP) principles and tools to support assessment, engagement, and permanency focused case planning. The three (3), six (6), nine (9), and twelve (12)-month PSC Desk Guides shall be utilized as reference tools to ensure permanency focused considerations are reviewed at each PSC interval and to supplement the CAP Framework.

Division staff are expected to complete follow-up actions from PSCs within established timeframes.

The primary Specialist will:

A. Prior to the scheduled PSC date, prepare for PSCs by:
    1) Updating CFS-305: Kinship Efforts Log
    2) Updating the CAP Framework for the family
    3) Ensuring all relevant case documentation is updated and accessible for discussion during the PSC
    4) Ensuring all applicable TDM recommendations have been reviewed and addressed prior to the three (3) month PSC
    5) Ensuring all follow-up tasks from the previous PSCs have been completed, as applicable
B. Attend each PSC as scheduled by the PSC Facilitator:
    1) Invite the Adoption Specialist to participate in PSC as soon as adoption is identified as a potential permanency outcome or concurrent goal
    2) Actively participate in case consultation, problem solving, and permanency planning discussions to support timely permanency and concurrent planning efforts, as appropriate

C. Complete all assigned follow-up tasks from the PSC within the agreed timeframes established during the PSC.

The Supervisor working with the case will:

A. Prior to scheduled PSCs, supervisors will:
    1) Ensure required documentation has been updated
    2) Review permanency barriers, concurrent planning efforts, and outstanding action items with the Specialist
    3) Ensure the Adoption Specialist is invited to participate in the PSC as soon as adoption is identified as a potential permanency outcome or concurrent goal
    4) Ensure follow up tasks from previous PSCs and TDM recommendations have been addressed, as applicable
B. During PSCs:
    1) Attend as scheduled by the PSC Facilitator
    2) Actively participate in discussions and planning efforts to advance reunification and concurrent permanency planning, as appropriate
C. After PSCs:
    1) Complete assigned follow-up tasks within the agreed upon timeframes established during the PSC. Supervisors shall monitor progress, address barriers to completion, and ensure follow up tasks are completed timely.

The PSC Facilitator will:

A. Schedule PSCs for permanency cases to occur at least every ninety (90) days while reunification remains the primary permanency goal:
    1) Required participants may include Specialists, Supervisors, Adoption Specialists, Resource Staff, or other individuals identified based on the needs of the case
B. Facilitate each PSC utilizing the CAP Framework tool, PSC Desk Guides, and PSC Facilitator Framework, as appropriate:
    1) All PSC action items shall identify the responsible party and target completion date
C. At the conclusion of every PSC, within two (2) business days:
    1) Document agreed upon action items, responsible parties, target completion dates, and identified strategies in the Division information management system
    2) Send the Permanency Action Plan to PSC participants and Supervisors
D. Between PSCs:
    1) Follow up with assigned staff responsible for PSC action items to monitor progress, address barriers to completion, and ensure action items are completed by the target date

DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCE HOMES & SUPPORT TO RESOURCE PARENTS

Internal Procedure 800: Resource Home Roles

06/2022

DCFS is licensed by the Child Welfare Agency Review Board as a child placement agency to approve foster and adoptive homes for DCFS. The Division utilizes the term "resource home" to refer to both foster and adoptive homes and "resource parent" or "resource family" to refer to an individual or family in those homes that provide a family-like setting on a twenty-four (24) hour basis for children in the custody of and placed there by the Division. Resource homes must meet all applicable Minimum Licensing Standards for Child Welfare Agencies and all Division Policy requirements. They must meet these standards for the duration of a child's placement while the child is in the Division's custody.

There are two (2) types of DCFS resource homes that provide permanency services:

A. Traditional resource homes, which may only be opened and accept placement of children in the home once fully approved and meeting all Minimum Licensing Standards for Child Welfare Agencies and all Division Policy requirements, to include clearing all required background checks.
B. Kinship homes (relatives and fictive kin) which may be opened on a provisional basis or as a fully approved resource home. Kinship homes opened on a provisional basis are identified, recruited, and opened in an expedited manner to allow same day placement for children in a familiar, yet safe, environment.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

All traditional resource home applicants and required members of their households, and all contracted placement providers must clear all background checks, including Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) checks, and resolve any issues arising from the background checks before any child may be placed in the home.

To expediate placement with kin, open a provisional kinship home, and place children in that home, the following checks must be received on all applicable household members and any issues identified on the checks resolved:

A. An Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry check.
B. An Arkansas State Police criminal record check.
C. A traffic violation record check.
D. A visual inspection of the home.

The child in Division custody may be placed in a provisional kinship resource home before:

A. The results of the FBI check are received.
B. Out-of-state child maltreatment checks are received.
C. The provisional kinship resource parents have completed pre-service training.

D. The full home study is completed.

Once opened as a provisional kinship home the kinship parents must come into full compliance with both minimum licensing standards and Division policies within six (6) months to become a fully approved kinship home. Provisional resource homes that are not in full compliance at the end of six (6) months must be closed and the children must be removed from the home unless the kin have acquired legal custody.

Internal Procedure 801: Resource Home Recruitment and Retention

06/2022

The Division will partner with other agencies to recruit enough resources families to ensure that all children are placed in the least-restrictive, most family-like setting that meets each child's individual needs. Recruitment should result in an increased number of qualified, trained resource families in Arkansas. The Division will diligently recruit potential resource families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in care.

Targeted recruitment will take place for resource parents who are willing and able to meet special needs of children needing placement. Targeted recruitment will begin with a diligent search and assessment of each youth's kin as potential placements, both at the initial removal from the family home and continuing throughout the dependency-neglect case.

801.1 Response to Traditional Resource Applicant Inquiries

08/2025

Designated Centralized Inquiry Unit staff will:

A. Enter information documenting all activities with the family beginning with applicant status (inquiry) to the approval process in the Division information management system.
B. Respond to all phone and internet inquiries within three (3) business days of receiving the assignment from the inquiry site:
    1) Give a brief explanation of the foster care needs for the county
    2) Explain the resource parent assessment process
C. If moving forward with the process:
    1) Within one (1) business day after initial contact is made provide the family with Resource Packet 1. Resource Packet 1 will consist of:
        a) A letter that:
            i. Thanks the family for their interest
            ii. Identifies a contact person
            iii. Indicates the date, time, and location of the next information meeting in their county or, if applicable, a neighboring county that is hosting prospective resource parents from surrounding counties

b) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check Instructions (form electronically generated per the Central Registry Request instructions)
c) CFS-341: Certification of Absence of Criminal Record
d) CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check or instructions for electronically generating the CFS-342
e) CFS-419: Resource Family Support System Information
f) CFS-593: Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Additional Requirements for DCFS Drivers
g) VSP-1: Authorization to Operate State Vehicles and Private Vehicles on State Business
h) VSP-2: Authorization to Obtain Traffic Violation Record
i) Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Manual
j) CFS-401: Current Household Information Sheet
k) CFS-405: Worksheet for Social Security Benefits
l) CFS-406: Family Financial Worksheet
m) CFS-407: Employment Information Sheet
n) CFS-415: Reference for Resource Family
o) CFS-419: Resource Family Support System Information
p) CFS-455: Consent for Department of Health Services
q) Road to Fostering Infographic
r) Inquiry to Adoption Flowchart

D. Upon receipt of completed forms, route all background check forms to applicable units:
1) See DCFS Internal Procedure Background Check Processing for Traditional Resource Applicants for specific instructions
2) If all checks clear, provide Resource Packet 2 to the family. Resource Packet 2 will include:
a) Cover letter
b) CFS-363: Resource Parent Applicant Smoking Certification
c) CFS-484: Landlord Notification of Potential Tenant Foster Care Services
d) CFS-404: General Medical Report
e) PUB-30: Resource Parent Handbook
f) Instructions for Online Pre-Service Training
g) PUB-23: Foster Care Court Process Infographic
h) PUB-24: Resource Home Contact Guide Infographic
3) If all checks are not clear, consult with Centralized Inquiry Unit Manager regarding next steps in terms of whether:

a) Inquiry must be deleted, and the provider number closed due to specific background check result information
b) If Centralized Inquiry Unit staff may gather additional information from the family to determine, in consultation with the applicable Resource Social Service Specialist and Resource Supervisor, if the family is interested in and eligible to pursue an alternative compliance or Policy waiver request, as applicable

E. Attempt to contact the family to follow-up if the completed forms have not been received within ten (10) calendar days of sending them to the family.
F. If the Centralized Inquiry Unit staff is unable to contact the family after three (3) attempts (combination of phone and email):
    1) Send an email to the family informing them that the Centralized Inquiry Unit staff has attempted to contact them and will not be contacting them further, and welcoming the family to contact the Centralized Inquiry Unit if they are still interested in becoming a resource home
    2) Delete the inquiry in the Division information management system and close the provider number (Centralized Inquiry Staff may reopen the provider number if the family decides to resume the application process in the future)

801.2 Background Check Processing for Traditional Applicants

08/2025

The Centralized Inquiry Unit will:

A. Submit to the appropriate person in the DCFS Background Check Unit for processing:
    1) Signed CFS-593: DCFS Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program
    2) VSP-1: Authorization to Operate State Vehicles and Private Vehicles on State Business
    3) VSP-2: Authorization to Obtain Traffic Violation Record
    4) A clear copy of the driver's license for each prospective resource parent and any applicable teenage drivers:
        a) Ensure copy of the driver's license includes front and back of license
        b) The county office must receive the results of the Traffic Violations Record check before the family can be approved for training
B. Assist with completion as needed, and submit to the Central Registry Unit:
    1) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check for each household member age fourteen (14) years and older, excluding children experiencing foster care:
        a) CFS-316 must be notarized
        b) CFS-316 should be conducted on each household member aged fourteen (14) years or older, in any state of residence in which they have lived for the past five (5) years, and in their state of employment, if different
    2) Provide a copy of the results to the county office for filing in the resource home record:

a) The county office must receive the results of the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check before the family can be approved for training
b) Training waivers may be approved if child maltreatment check results from other states are still pending

C. Use CFS-341: Certification of Absence of Criminal Record to obtain written certification from the resource parents that any household member ages ten (10) through seventeen (17) does not have a criminal record:
    1) Provide a copy of results to the county office for filing in the resource home record
D. Submit completed CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check for each household member, excluding children experiencing foster care, to the DCFS Criminal Background Check Unit or assist the applicant with submission of the State Police Criminal Record Check via the online Information Network of Arkansas (INA) process, as applicable:
    1) CFS-342 must be notarized
    2) CFS-342 must be completed prior to requesting the FBI Criminal Background Check
    3) Document submission in the Division information management system
    4) Provide a copy of the results to the county office:
        a) For filing in the resource home record
        b) The county office must receive the results of CFS-342 before the family can be approved for training
E. Facilitate the initial steps of the FBI fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check for all resource parent applicants and all members of the prospective resource home who are eighteen and a half (18.5) years of age and older, excluding children experiencing foster care:
    1) Fingerprint-based FBI Criminal Background Check must be submitted prior to the family attending training
    2) Results are not required before the family can attend training
    3) Forward completed CFS-342 to the Criminal Background Check Unit or ensure completion via the online process, as applicable
    4) Upon receipt of the transaction number from the Criminal Background Check Unit:
        a) Forward the transaction number to the applicant's Resource Specialist who will ensure the applicant goes to an approved electronic harvester to have fingerprints scanned
    5) In the event of an applicant's fingerprints being rejected, the Criminal Background Check Unit will receive the rejection letter from the Arkansas State Police:
        a) The Criminal Background Check Unit will send the rejection letter to the Resource Specialist or other requestor to provide to the applicant
        b) The applicant must schedule a new fingerprint appointment using the online scheduling tool and take the rejection letter with them to the new appointment
        c) The applicant's fingerprints will be run again using the initial transaction number:
            i. If there are two (2) fingerprint rejections using the same transaction number both times, the Arkansas State Police may then run a name

search. This can only be done when there have been two (2) rejections on the same transaction ID per federal requirements

F. Document the results in the Division information management system:
    1) FBI results will be uploaded directly into the Division designated system and the assigned Resource Specialist or designee will receive an email from the Criminal Background Check Unit notifying them the FBI result is available to be viewed
    2) Only those who have CJIS clearance and have an absolute need to view FBI results will be given access to view background checks in the Division designated system

If there are any offenses listed on an applicant's criminal background check results, the Resource Social Service Specialist will:

A. Send CFS-508-A to the applicant via certified, restricted mail and document the letter in the Division information management system:
    1) If the applicant chooses to challenge the accuracy and completeness of their criminal history record or obtain missing disposition information and contacts the assigned Resource Specialist within thirty (30) days of receipt of the CFS-508-A to inform the Resource Specialist that the family will challenge the results, keep the resource parent application and associated provider number open in the Division information management system until the requested corrections are either approved or denied at which point further action will be taken, as appropriate:
        a) If there are changes or updates to an applicant's criminal history record and the decision is made to move forward with a request for an alternative compliance request from the Child Welfare Agency Review Board, see Internal Procedure Alternative Compliance and Policy Waiver Protocol
    2) If the Resource Specialist does not receive notification that the family has elected to challenge the results of their criminal history report, then remove the resource parent application from the system and close the associated provider number:
        a) If the family chooses to review and request corrections to their state or FBI criminal history reports in the future, they may reapply to become a resource parent at any point once corrections are made. Resubmission of a resource parent application does not guarantee approval as a resource parent

Internal Procedure 802: Resource Home Assessment Process

08/2025

To ensure quality resource homes, DCFS will complete a thorough home assessment for each prospective resource family. The purpose of the assessment process is to educate prospective resource parents on the characteristics of children in out-of-home placement and evaluate their ability to meet those needs, as well as evaluate the applicants' ability and willingness to comply with the Minimum Licensing Standards for Child Welfare Agencies and DCFS Policy requirements for resource homes. The home assessment is a mutual selection process. It involves several components including, but not limited to, background checks, an in-home consultation contact,

pre- service training, a home study, and ongoing consultation with the prospective resource parents to ensure that all appropriate criteria related to both compliance and quality are met.

802.1 Assessment of Driving Records

08/2025

When assessing a current or potential resource parent's ability to provide placement for a child experiencing foster care, the applicant is required to submit an authorization for the Division to obtain their traffic violations record from the Office of Driver Services as permitted by A.C.A. § 27-50-908. This record returns the number of traffic offenses and other violations incurred by the resource applicant, to include the number of points assessed by the Office of Driver Services for convictions of moving traffic violations as per the Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program (ASVSP). DCFS repeats traffic violations record checks every two (2) years for active resource parents.

To ensure child safety DCFS will carefully assess what, if any, safety concerns exist for any applicant or current resource parent accumulating ten (10) or more points on their Traffic Violations Record.

Upon receipt of a Traffic Violations Record containing ten (10) or more points, staff will:

A. Ensure the applicant or current resource parent has a valid driver's license issued by the State of Arkansas.
B. Assess for safety issues.
C. Ensure the applicant or current resource parent participates in a defensive driving course.
D. Ensure applicants are not denied on the sole fact that they have ten (10) or more points on their driving records, but rather that their driving record and any related information is assessed for safety issues.
E. Complete the Safety Assessment portion of the In-Home Consultation while considering the driving record results as part of that Safety Assessment.
F. Ensure that applicants having between ten and seventeen (10-17) points on their driving record successfully complete a defensive driving course, which can be completed on-line prior to becoming an approved resource home.
G. Ensure applicants with eighteen (18) or more points on their driving record successfully complete an in-person defensive driving course prior to becoming an approved resource home.

802.2 In-Home Consultation Contact

08/2025

See Division Policy 9 CAR § 40-806: Resource Home Assessment Process regarding overarching directives related to the in-home consultation (IHC) contact for resource home applicants.

The In-Home Consultation Contact is generally the local Resource Specialist's first opportunity to meet the resource applicants. This contact helps the Resource Specialist begin to assess the family's functioning and capacity to meet the needs of the children experiencing foster care, to include verifying if the home meets Minimum Licensing Standards and Division Policy requirements.

The contact will also be used to continue to explain the approval process to the applicants and answer any questions they may have. Other contacts at the home may be required prior to the final walk-through and orientation to ensure the home comes into full compliance with all Minimum Licensing Standards and DCFS Policy requirements and to offer continued support to the applicants through the process.

802.2.1 ASSIGNMENT OF IN-HOME CONSULTATION CONTACT FOR TRADITIONAL RESOURCE APPLICANTS
08/2025

The Centralized Inquiry Unit staff will:

A. Provide the background check results electronic file and other documentation to the Resource Supervisor for traditional resource applicants.
B. Assign the traditional applicant family to the Resource Supervisor's inbox.

The Resource Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conduct a thorough history check in the Division information management system.
B. Assign the family to a Resource Specialist within one (1) business day upon receipt.

802.2.2 RESOURCE SPECIALIST IN-HOME CONSULTATION CONTACT RESPONSIBILITIES
08/2024

The Resource Social Service Specialist will:

A. Within five (5) business days after being assigned the resource home, contact the prospective resource family to schedule an in-home consultation (IHC) contact and FBI fingerprinting. The in-home consultation contact for traditional resource applicants will take place within two (2) weeks of the scheduling call:
    1) However, IHC contact for prospective provisional kinship resource families will be conducted as soon as possible as needed for a particular case
B. During the in-home consultation contact:
    1) Review and complete the resource staff portion of the CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Resource Parent Information and Questionnaire for provisional applicants and send to the applicable MidSOUTH Training Academy by the next business day via REDcap:
        a) The CFS-446: In-Home Consultation Contact Report for provisional applicants must be completed and submitted to MidSOUTH via REDcap within two (2) weeks of the initial in-home consultation taking place
    2) Review and complete the CFS-446: In-Home Consultation Contact Report for traditional applicants:
        a) Provide a copy of pages six and seven (6-7) of the CFS-446 to the applicants

3) Discuss minimum licensing standards and other DCFS Policy requirements related to resource homes as outlined in PUB-30: Resource Parent Handbook and answer any questions the family may have
4) Review and complete CFS-480: Alternate Compliance of Water Supply Agreement for Resource Homes, if applicable:
    a) Provide a copy of CFS-480: Alternate Compliance of Water Supply Agreement for Resource Homes to the resource applicants, if applicable
5) Inform the prospective resource family that they will not be approved until they meet minimum licensing standards, DCFS Policy requirements, and any other qualifications deemed appropriate (except for certain non-safety standards that may be waived for kinship providers)
6) Discuss training required prior to approval, including completion of CPR and standard first aid training and certification
7) Provide CFS-409: Resource Family Preference Checklist to traditional resource applicants only and ask them to complete and return the document to the Resource Specialist:
    a) Enter prospective resource family preferences (based on their selections on CFS-409) in the 'Preferences' tab in the Provider Services/Admission Criteria Button
8) Provide SAFE Questionnaire I to traditional resource applicants only
9) Inform the family that three (3) positive confidential references are required, including at least one (1) from a relative and one (1) from a non-relative (family's selected references should already be provided from Centralized Inquiry Unit via CFS-415)
10) Ensure that the reference letter templates (SAFE Reference Letters for traditional applicants and CFS-458: Kinship Reference Letter for Provisionals are delivered to the identified references with instructions:
    a) For returning the completed references
    b) That the reference is not to share the completed reference letter with the prospective resource family
11) Ensure the prospective resource family members understand that they will not view the reference letters
12) Begin completing CFS-475-A: Initial Checklist for Resource Home Assessment and determining what non-safety alternative compliances or Policy waivers may be required for kinship homes
13) Determine whether traditional applicants would be willing to serve as an informal respite home in addition to a regular resource home
14) If the family is being opened as a provisional resource home, also:

a) Complete the CFS-452: Provisional Resource Home Verification with the family:
    i. Provide a copy of the CFS-452: Provisional Resource Home Verification to the family and file the original in the resource home record
b) Show the provisional applicants how to access PUB-30: Resource Parent Handbook
c) Review and provide the following to the provisional applicants and ask them to complete, as applicable:
    i. CFS-363: Resource Parent or Applicant Smoking Certification
    ii. CFS-404: General Medical Report
    iii. CFS-419: Resource Family Support System Information
    iv. CFS-455: Request and Consent for Department of Health Services, if applicable
    v. CFS-484: Landlord Notification of Potential Tenant Foster Care Services, if applicable
    vi. PUB-15: A Relative's Guide to the Arkansas Child Welfare System
    vii. PUB-23: Foster Care Court Process Infographic
    viii. PUB-26: Roadmap to Kinship Resource Home

15) File all completed forms, including those received from the Centralized Inquiry Unit, in the resource home record

802.3 : Assessment of Prescribed and Over-the-Counter Substances

05/2026

When assessing a potential resource placement for a child experiencing foster care, the applicant is required to disclose any medications or other substances currently prescribed or otherwise consumed as well as the conditions those medications or other substances are designed to treat. Open resource providers must also disclose any medications or other substances consumed and the conditions for which they are designed to treat if obtained after initial approval.

Knowledge that an individual is prescribed certain medications or other substances is, by itself, insufficient to impact an individual's ability to be a resource placement. However, prescriptions and other substances taken by a resource applicant or open provider are a legitimate and necessary area of inquiry. An open conversation about the use of alcohol will also be held with resource applicants and open providers (frequency, volume, past or current struggles with alcohol consumption, etc.).

In addition to prescribed medications, staff must assess the use of any substances that may have a mind- or mood-altering effect, whether prescribed, legally obtained, or otherwise consumed in the household, including medical marijuana following Arkansas Department of Health guidance.

The presence or use of such substances does not automatically disqualify an applicant; however, staff must conduct a thorough assessment of how use may impact child safety and the caregiver's ability to provide appropriate supervision at all times.

This assessment must include, but is not limited to:

- Frequency, timing, and method of use
- Whether use occurs in the presence of children
- The impact on the caregiver's ability to safely supervise and respond to children's needs
- The presence of other caregivers and their use of similar substances
- Storage practices and accessibility to children
- Any additional safety concerns within the home environment

For traditional resource homes, applicants must meet all Child Welfare Agency Review Board Minimum Licensing Standards. Substance use within the household that is inconsistent with those standards, or that cannot be mitigated to ensure continuous supervision and a safe environment, shall result in the home not being approved.

For relative and fictive kin placements, staff may assess substance use on a case-by-case basis, consistent with state and federal requirements to prioritize placements with relatives when safe and appropriate. Approval in these situations must be supported by clear documentation demonstrating that the placement remains safe and in the best interest of the child.

Upon receipt of this information, staff will carefully assess:

A. If the conditions for which the applicant is being treated would in any way limit the person's ability to adequately supervise and otherwise appropriately care for children placed in their home whether physically, behaviorally, or emotionally with or without the use of the medication or other substance. The age and any special needs of children being considered for placement in the home will be taken into account during this assessment.
B. Whether the prescribed medication or other substance has a mind- or mood-altering effect when ingested and how that effect would then impact the person's ability to adequately supervise and appropriately care for children placed in their home whether physically, behaviorally, or emotionally. Questions to explore during this assessment may include:
    1) Why were the children removed? Was the removal at all tied to use of similar medications or other substances and the impact those had on caretaker's ability to parent?
    2) How often does the applicant use the prescribed medication or other substance? For example, only before bedtime? Only while school-age children are at school? Only when another caregiver is present, etc.?
    3) Are there other caregivers in the home? If so, do any of those other caregivers use the same or similar mind- or mood-altering prescriptions or other substances?

As per Child Welfare Agency Review Board Minimum Licensing Standard 200 and 314, all over-the-counter medications shall be stored in an area not readily accessible to children, and all

prescription medications, excluding Epi-pens, inhalers, and Glucagon kits, shall be locked. In addition, if possible, resource parents will not ingest medications or other prescribed substances in the presence of children experiencing foster care.

Source: Arkansas Department of Health, Medical Marijuana Program FAQs

Using medical cannabis is prohibited in a school bus, on the grounds of any preschool or primary or secondary school, in any correctional facility, in any motor vehicle, in a private residence used at any time to provide licensed childcare or other similar social service care on the premises and in any public place where an individual could reasonably be expected to be observed by others. A public place includes all parts of buildings owned in a whole or in part, or leased, by the state or local unit of government. A public place does not include a private residence unless the private residence is used to provide licensed childcare, foster care, or other similar social service care on the premises. Using medical marijuana is also prohibited in a health care facility or any other place where smoking is prohibited by the Clean Indoor Air Act of 2006 and knowingly in close physical proximity to anyone under the age of eighteen (18).

802.4 Initiation of Pre-Service Training

08/2025

Potential resource parents must complete the Division-approved preservice training. The training curricula is dependent on whether the applicant is a kinship applicant or a traditional resource parent applicant.

Applicants must also complete and receive certification in infant, child, and adult CPR and standard first aid training. Traditional applicants must complete and certify before children may be placed in their home and kinship applicants must complete and certify within six (6) months of the child being placed in their home.

To approve applicants for pre-service training, within one (1) business day of successfully completing the In-Home Consultation Contact for kinship applicants and five (5) business days of successfully completing the In-Home Consultation Contact for traditional applicants, the Resource Specialist will:

A. Submit the signed and completed CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Resource Parent Information and Questionnaire or CFS-446: In Home Consultation Contact Report, as applicable, to the Resource Supervisor or designee with one (1) of the following recommendations:
    1) Invite the applicant to attend pre-service training
    2) Do not invite the applicant to pre-service training and provide an explanation

A. If the Resource Supervisor or designee approves the recommendation to send the applicant to pre-service training:
    1) Complete the contact purpose of “In-Home Consultation/Approval for Training” in the Provider Contact Information Screen

2) Log receipt of the CFS-450 or CFS-446, as applicable, on the DCFS Resource/Adopt Home in the Division information management system
3) Submit a copy of the CFS-450 or CFS-446, as applicable, to MidSOUTH via REDcap (unless one-on-one pre-service training has been arranged or the applicant is attending training through The CALL, Foster Love, or another community partner) approving the family to attend pre-service training:
    a) Inform the prospective resource parents that the MidSOUTH trainer will contact them to schedule pre-service training

B. When an applicant is NOT approved:
1) Send a letter to applicants who were not approved to attend pre-service training
2) Forward a copy of the letter to the Resource Supervisor
3) Log notice of non-selection on the Provider Household Member Required Checks screen in the Division information management system
4) Select "IHC/Not Approved for Training" and document why the family was not approved

C. Arrange or provide one-on-one pre-service training to the family if group training sessions are unavailable locally.

The Resource Social Service Supervisor or designee will:

A. Either approve or disapprove as appropriate the recommendation of the CFS-450 or CFS-446, as applicable, from the Resource Specialist.
B. Return the signed CFS-446 to the Resource Specialist.

802.4.1 RESOURCE HOME PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

08/2025

The prospective resource family will:

A. Complete a minimum of fourteen (14) hours of pre-service classroom training for traditional applicants or seven and one half (7.5) hours of pre-service classroom training for kinship applicants:
1) One (1) hour of a panel of DCFS staff, current or former resource parents, and/or youth experiencing foster care (may be pre-recorded and shown via DVD or streaming) is also required for both traditional as well as kinship applicants (must occur prior to a child being placed with traditional resource parents)
2) All make-up sessions will also be completed for a family to fully complete pre-service training

B. Complete CPR and Standard First Aid Training and receive certification for infant, child, and adult training in both areas, as applicable.
C. Submit the completed SAFE Questionnaire I for traditional applicants to their pre-service trainer on the first day of training, as applicable.
D. Ensure that the individuals providing references have delivered their letters to the agency responsible for the home study before completing pre-service training.

The Resource Social Service Specialist will:

A. Document the CPR Training and First Aid Training effective and expiration dates, in the Provider Household Members/Requirements Tab in the Division information management system.
B. File all completed forms in the resource family record (CFS-404; CFS-455, and CFS-484, if applicable).
C. Enter prospective resource family preferences (based on their selections on CFS-409) in the Preferences Tab in the Provider Services/Admission Criteria Button.
D. Attend the last training module and as many other training modules as possible.
E. Hold the Area or County Orientation Session using the CFS-465: Resource Parent Orientation Checklist to guide the orientation session.

802.5 Home Study Assessment

08/2025

The individual conducting the home study will:

A. Conduct an initial face-to-face interview with the prospective resource parents in the applicant's home.
B. Evaluate the first interview and note responses that will require further clarification or development.
C. Conduct a second face-to-face interview with the applicants to include pursuing clarification or other follow-up items from the first interview:
    1) It is permissible for one (1) of the two (2) interviews to be conducted over a virtual conference platform (for example, Zoom, Facetime) with the approval of the applicable DCFS Program Manager or designee who oversees the home study provider contracts
D. Evaluate the second interview and note responses that will require further clarification or development.
E. Conduct additional face-to-face interviews with the prospective resource parents or other household members to further explore topics noted during the evaluation process:
    1) Interview each household member who is ten (10) years of age or older separately
    2) Observe younger children and interview if appropriate
F. Review the three (3) reference letters and ensure that all three (3) letters are positive references.
G. Using information collected during the interviews, complete the Division-approved template and any other associated tools.
H. Complete and submit the final home study report to the Resource Specialist for review and assessment within:
    1) Thirty (30) days of completing Session 1 of National Training and Development Curriculum for provisional resource applicants
    2) Forty-five (45) days of completing Session 4 of National Training and Development Curriculum for traditional resource applicants

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Review the final home study report and other assessment documents.

B. Based on the review, submit the recommendation to approve or deny the home to the Resource Supervisor or designee within five (5) business days of receiving the final home study report.
C. Document the initial home study completed date on the 'Provider Service Details' screen in the Division information management system.
D. Notify the applicant in writing if a determination to approve or deny the home based on the final home study report and other assessment documents cannot be completed within sixty (60) business days of the family completing pre-service training and explain the reason.
E. Provide a copy of the final home study report, stamped with "DCFS use only" and "Not for private use" to the family regardless of approval or denial.
F. Maintain all components of the Division-approved home study including the report template, reference letters, questionnaires or other documents per the Division record retention schedule.

The Resource Supervisor or designee will:

A. Review and assess the completed final home study report and other assessment documents as well as the Resource Specialist's recommendation to approve or deny.
B. Approve or deny the home within five (5) business days of receipt of all final documents from the Resource Specialist.

802.6 Orientation

08/2025

For kinship resource parents, the orientation will take place within fourteen (14) business days of placement of the children. Review of this information is also encouraged when the home is ready to be opened as a fully approved kinship resource home, as appropriate.

For traditional applicants, the orientation will take place during the final walk-through of the home which will occur within two (2) weeks of final home study approval by the Resource Supervisor.

Orientation constitutes three (3) hours of the pre-service training requirements.

The Resource Specialist will:

A. For traditional resource applicants, conduct a final walk-through of the home.
B. Review and complete the CFS-465: Resource Parent Orientation Checklist with the applicants to include reviewing and discussing all forms and publications listed on that checklist.
C. Invite any questions from the resource parents.
D. Provide a copy of all forms referenced above to the resource parents and maintain the originals in the resource home record.

Internal Procedure 803: Denial of an Applicant

06/2022

If at any point during the home assessment the Division determines that an applicant does not meet the standards or any other criteria of a quality resource home, DCFS will deny approval of the home.

803.1 Denial as a Result of a Background Check

06/2022

The Resource Specialist or designee will:

A. Share the results with the applicant and inform them of their ineligibility to attend training.
B. For denials related to criminal background check record results, ensure that a CFS-508-A: Letter of Denial was previously sent to the applicant via certified, restricted mail and document the letter in Provider Contact Information Screen in the Division information management system:
    1) If the family chose at initial notification of the criminal history via CFS-508-A to challenge the accuracy and completeness of their criminal history record or obtain missing disposition information and contacted the assigned Resource Specialist within thirty (30) days of receipt of the CFS-508-A to inform the Resource Specialist that the family planned to challenge the results, keep the resource parent application and associated provider number open in the Division information management system until the requested corrections are either approved or denied at which point further action will be taken, as appropriate:
        a) If there are changes or updates to an applicant's criminal history record and the decision is made to move forward with a request for an alternative compliance request from the Child Welfare Agency Review Board
    2) If the Resource Specialist does not receive notification that the family has elected to challenge the results of their criminal history report, then remove the resource parent application from the system and close the associated provider number:
        a) If the family chooses to review and request corrections to their state or FBI criminal history reports in the future, they may reapply to become a resource parent at any point once corrections are made. Resubmission of a Resource Parent application does not guarantee approval as a resource parent
C. Document the results of the background check in the Division information management system:
    1) Select the appropriate reason for end date
    2) Specify why the home was closed

803.2 Denial as a Result of the IHC

06/2022

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Inform the family of their non-compliance with any identified standard or policy and determine if the family is willing or able to implement a safeguard measure in a timely manner to achieve compliance. The family cannot be approved to open as a resource home until the safeguard measure is implemented.
B. If the family chooses not to address compliance issues or, despite trying, fails to achieve compliance, share the non-compliance with the family and document it on the CFS-446: In-Home Consultation Contact Report with all signatures:
    1) The family will sign the In-Home Consultation, acknowledging non-compliance
C. Recommend non-approval for training if the family cannot comply with all approval standards.
D. End date the resource family service on the Provider Services tab by selecting the appropriate reason for the end date in the Division information management system.
E. Specify why the home was closed in the comment box on the Provider Services tab.

The Resource Social Service Supervisor or designee will:

A. If a family fails to address non-compliance issues:
    1) Disapprove the family and provide them with a copy of the CFS-446: In-Home Consultation Contact Report with all signatures

803.3 Denial as a Result of the Home Assessment

06/2022

The Resource Supervisor or designee will:

A. Send a denial letter to all applicants who are not approved:
    1) Document in Provider Contact screen in the Division information management system
B. End date the resource family service on the Provider Service tab, by selecting the appropriate reason for the end date in the Division information management system.
C. Specify why the home was closed in the comment box on the Provider Services tab.

Internal Procedure 804: Opening Kinship Homes

08/2025

DCFS in accordance with Executive Order EO 23-18 must establish a streamlined process to open and license kinships home within a forty-five (45)-day deadline. The goal is to ensure the safety and well-being of the child while minimizing delays in placement, as mandated by the executive order, to expedite the approval of kinship homes.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Upon removal of the child from their home, identify and assess potential kinship caregivers.
B. Assist with completion of the CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Resource Parent Information and Questionnaire as appropriate to the specific case or local county procedures.
C. Keep the Resource Specialist informed of any changes to the child's need for a provisional

placement and any other relevant information.

D. Collaborate with the Resource Specialist to evaluate the prospective provisional home.

The Resource Social Service Specialist will:

A. Prior to placement of the child:
    1) Process all necessary background checks:
        a) Expedited Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check (via CFS-316: Request for Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check)
        b) Expedited State Police Criminal Record Check (via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check)
        c) Vehicle Safety Program (DMV) Check (see Procedure 815.4 for forms to be completed)
        d) Submit the FBI Criminal Record Check (FBI results do not have to be received to open the provisional home, but results must be received and cleared to approve as a regular DCFS Resource Home)

B. Within the first forty-eight (48) hours of placement:
    1) Conduct an In-Home Consultation:
        a) Complete a visual inspection of the home (via CFS-446: In Home Consultation Contact Report)
        b) Follow up on any compliance issues identified during the night of placement if completed by On-Call staff
    2) Based on the results of the background checks listed above and the visual inspection of the home, begin the process for requesting any necessary Alternative Compliances or DCFS Policy waivers, if applicable
    3) Determine if the caregiver can complete the required training through group sessions with MidSOUTH or if they would benefit from personalized 1:1 training:
        a) If the caregiver is deemed suitable for group training with MidSOUTH, send the CFS-450 or CFS-446 to Redcap to initiate the training process
        b) If the caregiver is not a candidate for completing training with MidSOUTH, schedule 1:1 training to be completed within fourteen (14) days
    4) Provide family with the Kinship Support Resource Guide:
        a) Explain the process related to being opened as a fully approved DCFS Resource Home
        b) Clearly communicate that all documents must be submitted within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the checklist to allow time for processing and meeting the forty-five (45)-day deadline

C. Enter kin into the Division information management system as a provider Within first ten (10) days of placement:
    1) If any documents have not been received, contact the caregiver to remind them of the missing items
        a) Offer assistance in gathering or completing the documents if any challenges are identified
    2) Determine if the caregiver has started required training:

a) If the family was referred to MidSOUTH for training and has not yet begun:
    i. Pivot to scheduling 1:1 training within next fourteen (14) days
    ii. Document the reasons for the change in training format and ensure the caregivers are informed of the new schedule
3) Verify the status of the home study:
    a) If 1:1 training is required, assess whether the home study should be completed by a contract provider or by resource staff
4) Conference with Supervisor about status of opening home

D. Within first thirty (30) days of placement:
1) If documents remain outstanding, conduct a follow-up emphasizing the approaching deadline and the potential impact of the placement process if documents are not received
2) Provide additional support or resources as needed, such as transportation assistance or referral to community services
3) If a home is not on track to open within the forty-five (45) day deadline:
    a) Schedule a meeting with the Area Manager to assess the situation:
        i. Set action steps for remaining tasks
        ii. Document in the Division information management system

E. Within first forty-five (45) days of placement:
1) Complete final walkthrough of home:
    a) Provide any necessary support to family and explain next steps
2) Complete necessary steps in the Division information management system to open home as an approved Kinship Resource Home.

The Resource Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Ensure completion or opening home within first forty-five (45) days of placement.
B. Conference with and support the Resource Specialist as necessary regarding opening the provisional home.
C. Review and approve the home study.

Internal Procedure 805: Alternate Compliance and Policy Waiver Protocol

08/2025

The approval of resource homes and kinship placements is a critical process within DCFS, aimed at ensuring safety, stability, and well-being of children in care. This procedure is necessary to provide a clear, standardized framework for preparing and submitting Policy Waiver and Alternative Compliance packets to the Placement and Residential Licensing Unit (PRLU) for review and approval.

By streamlining this process, DCFS will:

- Reduce delays in placement decisions
- Ensure compliance with legal and procedural requirements
- Enhance communication and collaboration among staff, families, and the licensing board
- Promote consistency and accountability in the submission of complete and accurate

documentation

"Policy Waiver" is defined as a request to deviate from DCFS Policy and procedures. The DCFS Director, or designee, approves all Policy waiver requests. The following situations require a Policy waiver:

A. Any misdemeanor convictions, except for minor traffic violations.
B. Driving Under the Influence or Driving While Intoxicated.
C. Any issues that are not in compliance with DCFS Policy.
D. Record of maltreatment:
    1) However, any person found to have a record of child maltreatment will not only be reviewed by the DCFS Director or designee, but the DCFS Director or designee will also notify and consult with the Child Welfare Agency Review Board, via the Residential Licensing Unit Manager as its designee, regarding the policy waiver and any corrective action associated with the Policy waiver

The following misdemeanors and policy standards may be granted Policy waivers at the local level by the Area Manager:

KIN

Regardless of when the offense (if applicable) took place provided there have been no other offenses since the date of the incident:

- Three (3) children under the age of six (6)
- Ten (10) points on driving record provided there is a documented plan in place outlining who would transport and how the child would be transported
- Exemptions for immunizations approved by the Health Department
- Insufficient income or government assistance
- Non-payment of fine
- Possession of alcohol in a dry county
- Walk-through room (child sleeps in room where others walk through to get to another room in house)

If they occurred more than five (5) years ago and provided there have been no other offenses since the date of the incident:

- Criminal mischief
- DUI and DWI
- Failure to appear for traffic violations
- Forgery
- Hot checks
- Public Intoxication
- Shoplifting
- Suspended driver's license
- Theft by receiving

IF they occurred more than ten (10) years ago and provided there have been no other offenses since the date of the incident:

- Animal cruelty
- Any drug charges IF applicant also has a clean drug screen at the time of application
- Bribing public official
- Destruction of property
- Furnishing alcohol to a minor
- Harassment
- Leaving scene of an accident
- Obstruction or attempt to destroy evidence
- Possession of controlled substance with or without intent to deliver IF applicant also has a clean drug screen at the time of application
- Terroristic threatening
- Theft of property

TRADITIONAL RESOURCE APPLICANTS (NON-KIN)

Regardless of when the offense, if applicable, took place provided there have been no other offenses since the date of the incident:

- Three (3) children under the age of six (6)
- Exemptions for immunizations approved by the Health Department
- Non-payment of fines
- Possession of alcohol in a dry county

IF they occurred more than ten (10) years ago and provided there have been no other offenses since the date of the incident:

- Any drug charges if applicant also has a clean drug screen at the time of application
- Bribing a public official
- Criminal mischief
- Destruction of property
- DUI and DWI
- Failure to appear for traffic violations
- Forgery
- Hot checks
- Leaving scene of an accident
- Obstruction or attempt to destroy evidence
- Possession of controlled substance with or without intent to deliver IF applicant also has a clean drug screen at the time of application
- Public Intoxication
- Shoplifting
- Suspended driver's license
- Theft of property
- Theft by receiving

"Alternative Compliance" is defined as a request for approval from the Child Welfare Agency Review Board to allow a licensee to deviate from the letter of a regulation. The licensee must demonstrate substantial compliance with the intent of the regulation. This includes, but is not limited to, regulations governing criminal background checks and convictions for prohibited offenses.

To expedite the placement of a child with safe and appropriate kin and reduce the amount of trauma a child experiences when entering foster care, a temporary Alternative Compliance may be granted when attempting to place a child with kin on a provisional basis. A temporary Alternative Compliance may be initiated by the Social Service Specialist via phone or email but must go through the chain of command, receiving approval from the Supervisor or designee, the Area Manager or designee, and the DCFS Director or designee (refer to the Central Office Approvals document). If a temporary Alternative Compliance is approved by the Division Director or designee, the Division Director or designee will then notify the Placement and Residential Licensing Unit Manager or designee of the temporary Alternative Compliance approval.

LICENSING BOARD

Licensing Board meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month. In months when a holiday interferes, changes to this schedule will be communicated in advance. All documentation in the standardized request packet will be completed prior to a family being scheduled for review. Family members and staff are not required to attend the meeting unless the Licensing Board notifies the Resource Specialist of their required presence. When attendance is necessary, attendance will be allowed via zoom.

The standard protocol for requesting a Policy waiver or an alternative compliance is the same, up until the point when the request is given to the Division Deputy Director, or designee.

The protocol for standard Policy waiver and alternative compliance requests are as follows:

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Determine if a Policy waiver or alternative compliance will be requested based on their professional judgment. Issues to take into consideration on criminal convictions and record of maltreatment include:
    1) The nature and severity of the crime or maltreatment
    2) Consequences of the crime or maltreatment
    3) Frequency and duration of the crime or maltreatment and when the maltreatment occurred
    4) Relationship between the crime or maltreatment and the health, safety and welfare of any individual
    5) For maltreatment offenses listed on the Child Maltreatment Central Registry, whether the offender is eligible to request removal from the Child Maltreatment Central Registry Review Team
B. If approval is recommended by the Specialist and Supervisor or designee, a request to the Area Manager will be sent within two (2) business days for a Policy waiver or an alternative

compliance using the CFS-509-B: Request for Alternative Compliance or Policy Waiver. The Specialist will attach all appropriate supporting documentation, as applicable:

1) Detailed Staff Letter: The Specialist must submit a detailed letter outlining the nature of the family's request, any concerns identified in the background checks, the circumstances surrounding the concerns, and the Specialist's assessment of the family's explanation and mitigating factors. The letter must also confirm that the Specialist has reviewed the background checks and verified that the information provided by the family aligns with the background check findings
2) Detailed Family Letter: The family must provide a detailed letter addressing the nature of the request, any incidents noted on background checks, the circumstances surrounding those incidents and any corrective actions or other factors
3) CFS-446: In-Home Consultation Contact Report
4) The police report and any other reports or court orders regarding any criminal charges or convictions
5) When request is due to central registry hits, also include:
    a) Three (3) personal character references
6) When request is due to a required space waiver, also include:
    a) A drawing of the floorplan of the home
7) When request is due to a swimming pool, also include:
    a) Photographs of the pool and fencing
8) When request is for sleeping arrangements, also include:
    a) Photographs of the sleeping space

The Resource Supervisor or designee will:

A. Determine if the requested Policy waiver or alternative compliance is appropriate for approval.
B. If approved, send it to the Area Manager or designee.
C. If denied, notify the Specialist and the family.

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Within five (5) business days of receipt of the request for traditional applicants or two (2) business days for kin, determine if the requested Policy waiver or alternative compliance is appropriate for approval based on the considerations previously outlined in this protocol:
    1) If approved, forward the request to the DCFS Director or designee (refer to the Central Office Approvals document)
    2) If denied, return the request to the Supervisor or designee:
        a) The Supervisor will notify the Specialist and the family

At this point, the procedures for requesting a Policy waiver differ from the procedures for requesting an Alternative Compliance.

POLICY WAIVERS

When a Policy waiver has been requested, the DCFS Director or designee will, within three (3) business days of receipt of the request:

A. Deny any inappropriate request for a Policy waiver and return it to the Area Manager or designee.
B. Approve an appropriate request for a Policy waiver.

The DCFS Director's or designee's final decision will be conveyed to the Area Manager or designee for appropriate action.

ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE

When an Alternative Compliance has been requested, the DCFS Director or designee will:

A. Deny any inappropriate request for an alternative compliance and return it to the Area Manager or designee within three (3) business days.
B. Approve an appropriate request for an alternative compliance and notify the Area Manager or designee and send it to the Placement and Residential Licensing Unit Manager or designee, within three (3) business days.

The Placement and Residential Licensing Unit Manager will:

A. Review the alternative compliance request to ensure the correct regulation has been requested and all required documents are in the packet.
B. Request any missing documentation.
C. Respond via email within three (3) business days, verifying that the request will be placed on the board agenda (indicating for which month).

The Placement and Residential Licensing Unit Assistant will:

A. Place the alternative compliance request on the agenda of the next scheduled meeting of the Child Welfare Agency Review Board.
B. Gather packets received to be delivered to the Board Members three (3) weeks prior to the scheduled board meeting.
C. Send packets to the Board Members for review at the three (3)-week mark requesting their response, questions, and request for appearance by the one (1)-week mark.
D. Notify staff if their presence, or the presence of the family, is required via Zoom for the meeting by the one (1)-week mark or as soon as possible following a response from the Board Members.

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Notify the resource parent applicant or resource parent of the Child Welfare Agency Review Board meeting via telephone and CFS-510 sent by certified, restricted mail.
B. Prepare the resource parent applicant or resource parent for what to expect at the Child Welfare Agency Review Board meeting.
C. Appear with the resource parent at the Child Welfare Agency Review Board meeting to answer questions, if applicable.

The Child Welfare Agency Review Board will give final approval or denial of the request for alternative compliance.

Internal Procedure 806 Resource Home Monitoring and Reevaluation

08/2024

806.1 Quarterly Contacts

08/2025

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Monitor approved resource homes through quarterly contacts to ensure compliance with Minimum Licensing and Division standards:
    1) At least one (1) quarterly contact will be unannounced
    2) Document in the Division information management system that the contact was unannounced
B. Complete 475-B: Quarterly Monitoring Checklist for Resource Home to document completion of each quarterly monitoring contact:
    1) Include background check request forms and tools when the family's child maltreatment central registry checks and state criminal background checks must be updated
C. File each completed 475-B in the resource home record and document in the Division information management system.

806.2 Annual Reevaluation or Reevaluation After Major Life Change

08/2025

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Conduct a reevaluation of the resource home annually and in the event of any major life change.
B. Complete Division-approved update and reevaluation tools, CFS-451: Resource Parent Reevaluation and CFS-475-C: Reevaluation Checklist for Resource Home.
C. Document completion and approval of all resource home reevaluations in the Division information management system.
D. Document in the resource home record that the resource parents have maintained current certification in both CPR and Standard First Aid and document in the Provider Household Members/Requirement tab in the Division information management system.
E. Update any expired State Police Criminal Record Checks and Central Registry Checks for each member of the household or members of the RFSS and document in the Provider Household Members/Requirement tab.
F. Enter the resource parents' hours of continuing education training in the Training Screen in the Division information management system.
G. Request an exception for any resource parent whose annual in-service training hours are sixty (60) calendar days overdue, if applicable.

H. Submit documentation with recommendation to approve or disapprove the home to the Resource Supervisor or designee.
I. Complete the Provider Reevaluation Screen and Request Approval for Resource Supervisor's review and approval.

The Resource Supervisor will:

A. Review the Division-approved update and reevaluation tools, CFS-451: Resource Parent Reevaluation and CFS-475-C: Reevaluation Checklist for Resource Home and Resource Specialist's recommendation to approve or deny the home.
B. Approve the Resource Specialist's request for approval on the Provider Reevaluation screen in the Division information management system.

When an exception to the in-service training requirements is requested, the Area Manager will:

A. Receive the request for extension to in-service training requirements.
B. Review the quality of care provided by the resource family and the reasons for overdue training.
C. Determine whether to grant an exception to the in-service training requirement for up to sixty (60) calendar days.

Internal Procedure 807: Resource Home Reopening

06/2022

For former resource homes that have been closed and express interest in reopening, the Resource Specialist will:

A. Complete new background checks (Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check, applicable out of state child maltreatment checks if the applicant has lived or worked in another state outside of Arkansas in the last five (5) years, Arkansas State Police Record Check, FBI Background Check, Vehicle Safety Checks) on all appropriate members of the household regardless of whether previous background checks are still current.
B. Conduct a re-evaluation of the prospective home as an annual reevaluation of any standing resource home would be completed to determine if the prospective resource home would still be an appropriate placement for a child in care, based on the following:
    1) Date and reasons for closure
    2) Motivation to re-open
    3) Changes in circumstances since last closure
    4) Updated in home consultation report
    5) Recommendations
    6) Completed background check results
    7) Original home study
    8) Home study updates completed prior to closure of the resource home.
C. Submit a reconsideration to reopen request to the Resource Family Review Committee via

the Foster Care Manager for any resource home that was previously closed and has any history of child maltreatment investigations:

1) The reconsideration to reopen packet will be submitted to the Resource Family Review Committee via the Foster Care Manager who will present the request to the Committee for consideration

D. For resource homes closed two (2) years or less, in addition to the steps above:
    1) Collect documentation of fifteen (15) hours of continuing education training completed
E. For resource homes closed more than two (2) years, complete the steps above with the exception of collecting documentation of fifteen (15) hours of continuing education training completed and:
    1) Submit a recommendation to complete pre-service training again
    2) Submit a waiver request packet to exempt applicant from pre-service training to include:
        a) Parenting experiences since resource home closure
        b) Training participated in related to trauma, behavior issues, child development, parenting, etc.
F. Notify resource parents of determination and any additional requirements to be completed prior to the resource home re-opening, such as CPR and First Aid, current physical report, current proof of insurance, etc.

**The exception to this requirement is for a family who is eligible for the streamlined adoption process per Arkansas Code section 9-9-701. A family is eligible for the streamlined adoption process if the family has adopted a child from the Division and then chooses to adopt another child from the Division and DCFS selects the family to be the adoptive caregivers of a child in DCFS custody. An adoptive family is not eligible for the streamlined adoption process if more than five (5) years have passed since the adoptive family finalized the initial adoption. If a family qualifies for the streamlined adoption process or if there are questions regarding a family's eligibility for the streamlined adoption process, please consult with the local Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) attorney for additional information and next steps.*

Internal Procedure 808: Kinship Home Transitioning to Traditional Home

08/2025

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Assess the level of positive collaboration the kinship resource provider has had with the Division to determine if the provider is a candidate for becoming a traditional resource home.
B. If the outcome of the assessment is that the kinship home is a candidate for a traditional resource home based on prior positive collaboration with the Division, review any alternative compliances or Policy waivers the family may have had approved to open their kinship home and, in consultation with their Supervisor, determine:

1) Any licensing standard or Policy requirement for which the family had an alternative compliance (AC) that must now be rescinded and for which the family must now come into full compliance to become a traditional resource home
2) Which ACs or Policy waivers the Division wishes to keep in place:
    a) If it is determined that an AC or Policy waiver will be kept in place, a re-approval of that AC or Policy waiver must be requested and considered for the home as a traditional resource home rather than a kinship home

C. Once any AC or Policy waiver decisions and related actions have been completed, determine the proper training curriculum:
    1) Families that have had a DCFS placement and positive collaboration for at least six (6) months are eligible to complete *Bridging the Gap* Training in lieu of the Division current traditional resource parent training
    2) Families that wish to open as a traditional resource family home while continuing to serve as a kinship resource home (dual placement types) must have at least twelve (12) months of placement and collaboration with the Division and are then eligible to complete *Bridging the Gap* Training in lieu of the Division current traditional resource parent training
    3) Families that had a kinship placement for less than six (6) months are required to attend Connecting AR Families training
D. After a determination has been made, notify the family of approval or denial:
    1) If denial, the reason for denial shall be provided
    2) If approved, refer the family for necessary training
E. Encumber a SAFE Update for the family.

The Resource Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Review the recommendation by the Resource Specialist.
B. Recommend approval or denial of the family:
    1) If approved, determine the training courses needed
    2) Email the courses need to the Area Manager or designee

The Area Manager or Designee will:

A. Approve or deny the request.
B. Notify the Foster Care Manager and Kinship Connect Manager of the request and determination outcome.

Internal Procedure 809: Traditional Home Transitioning to Private Home

08/2025

If a current DCFS resource home wishes to become a Private Licensed Placement Agency (PLPA) resource home, the DCFS Resource Specialist will:

A. Discuss this request with the resource family to ensure their wishes are to convert from DCFS resource home to PLPA resource home.

B. Request the family sign the DHS-4000 (Authorization for Release of Information) allowing for the provider's resource file to be shared with the PLPA:
    1) Note: This *excludes* background checks
C. Complete the DCFS to PLPA Resource Home Memo that provides the DCFS recommendation regarding the resource home to become a PLPA resource home.
D. Provide the DCFS to PLPA Resource Home Memo and allowable documents to the PLPA Specialist in the Central Office Specialized Placement Unit:
    1) Allowable documents include, but may not be limited to:
        a) CFS-475-A: Initial Approval Checklist
        b) CFS-446: In-Home Consultation
        c) CFS-475-C: Reevaluation Checklist, as applicable
        d) CFS-363: Resource Applicant Smoking Certification
        e) CFS-404: General Medical Report
        f) Current Immunizations for all children in the home
        g) Current rabies vaccinations for all household pets
        h) CFS-448: Privacy and Use of Surveillance in Resource Homes
        i) CFS-455: Request and Consent for Health Department Services, as applicable
        j) CFS-480: Alternate Compliance of Water Supply Agreement, as applicable
        k) CFS-484: Tenant Notification to Landlord Regarding Potential Tenant Foster Care Services, as applicable
        l) Current floor plan
        m) Proof of homeowner or rental insurance and general liability insurance
        n) SAFE Home Study, SAFE Home Study Updates, SAFE Questionnaires, and other SAFE related documents, as applicable
        o) CPR and First Aid Certification
        p) CFS- CFS-445: Agency Approved Tornado Plan
        q) Connecting AR Families Training Certificate
        r) Continuing education hours certificates, as applicable
        s) Other records as deemed appropriate

The PLPA Specialist in the Central Office Specialized Placement Unit will:

A. Review the DCFS to PLPA Resource Home Memo to determine the recommendation from the DCFS resource team.
B. If the recommendation is in favor of the family converting to a PLPA resource home:
    1) Review all shared documents to ensure that shared documents are permissible under the release of information agreement signed by the resource provider
    2) Provide the recommendation memo and all approved shared documents to the PLPA
    3) Notify the DCFS Resource Specialist that the information has been provided to the PLPA and the DCFS provider services may be closed or reassigned for adoption subsidy purposes only
C. If the recommendation is not in favor of the family converting to a PLPA resource home:

1) Discuss with the DCFS Resource Specialist and Supervisor regarding the unfavorable recommendation to determine necessary action steps related to the home remaining a DCFS resource home
2) Notify the PLPA of the Division recommendation
    a) Note: DCFS cannot share specific information regarding the resource home's status (for example, whether the home is involved in a child maltreatment investigation, whether the home is currently on unavailable status, whether the home is under corrective action)

Internal Procedure 810: House Parent Transitioning to Division Adoptive Family

08/2025

The prospective family will:

A. Provide a letter of intent to become a DCFS resource family home.
B. Provide a letter from their respective organization detailing that they are currently in good standing along with the organization's support for the family to open for adoptive placement:
    1) This will include detailed information ensuring the family is not in violation of any agency policies by becoming adoptive parents

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Assess the family's length of time partnering with the agency and the collaborative relationship between both parties.
B. If the family meets eligibility for opening as an adoptive home, recommend to the Resource Supervisor whether they should continue the process to open as an adoptive home for DCFS.
C. After the determination has been made, notify the family of approval or denial:
    1) If denied, the reason for denial must be provided to the family
    2) If approved by the Area Manager, refer the family for Connecting AR Families training and continue with outlined steps for opening a resource home

The Resource Supervisor will:

A. Review the recommendation letters from the Resource Specialist, family, and agency.
B. Recommend approval or denial of the family opening as a DCFS resource home to the Area Manager.

The Area Manager or Designee will:

A. Approve or deny the request and provide notice to the Resource Supervisor.
B. Notify the Foster Care Manager of the request and determination of the outcome.

Internal Procedure 811: Therapeutic Homes that Plan to Adopt

08/2025

When a therapeutic foster care (TFC) home is selected to adopt a child that is already placed in their home, the following steps are to occur:

A. The TFC agency will provide a referral to the DCFS Adoption Supervisor over the referenced child's case indicating that the home is appropriate to be an adoptive home and wishes to adopt the child placed in the home.

B. The DCFS Resource Specialist, assigned based on the family's residence, will:

1) Complete all necessary background checks, including:
    a) Child Maltreatment Central Registry
    b) State Police Criminal Record Check
    c) FBI fingerprint based Criminal Background Check
    d) Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) Traffic Violations check:
        i. Note: DCFS cannot request or accept previous background checks from the TFC provider or agency
2) Request a copy of the training certification for Pressley Ridge
3) Request the SAFE Home Study and any SAFE Home Study Updates completed by the TFC agency:
    a) If the SAFE Home Study is provided, ensure the SAFE Home Study is current based on the provider's re-evaluation status
    b) If the home study provided is not a SAFE Home Study:
        i. Complete a referral to their local contract provider for a SAFE Home Study
4) Open the provider for adopt only services in the Division information management system:
    a) This will be a different provider identification number than the TFC home:
        i. Do not close the TFC provider services in the Division information management system:
            1. If a change or closure is needed related to the TFC home, notify the Specialized Services Unit Manager
            2. The TFC agency will continue to ensure that the provider is completing requirements per minimum licensing standards for re-evaluations (SAFE Home Study updates, First Aid, CPR, CEUs, and background checks)
5) Confirm that the TFC provider has been opened for adopt only services in the Division information management system
6) Continue to leave the child keyed into the TFC resource home until one (1) calendar day prior to the adoption
7) On the calendar day (or next business day) prior to the adoption hearing, key the child into the pre-adoptive placement

8) After the finalization of the adoption, key the child into the adoptive placement

Internal Procedure 812: PLPA Homes that Plan to Adopt

07/2023

This procedure includes private licensed placement agency (PLPA) and specialized private licensed placement agency (SPLPA) resource homes that wish to adopt. This includes resource homes opened through the following Agencies:

- Sparrow's Promise (formerly Searcy Children's Home)
- Children's Homes Inc. (formerly Paragould Children's Home)
- Southern Christian Children's Home
- Free Will Baptist Ministries
- Arkansas Baptist Children's Home (Connected)
- COMPACT
- Second Chance Youth Ranch

When a PLPA or SPLPA resource home is interested in adopting a child placed in their home the PLPA or SPLPA resource home or agency will request a Consideration to Adopt family team meeting (FTM) by notifying the child's Social Service Specialist or Adoption Social Service Specialist that the home is interested in adoption and deemed appropriate to be an adoptive home by the PLPA or SPLPA Agency.

The Social Service Specialist assigned to the children's case shall:

A. Schedule and conduct the consideration to adopt FTM within ten (10) business days from the request to include:
    1) Adoption Specialist
    2) Age-appropriate child
    3) Kinship resource parent, as applicable
    4) Resource parent (to include private licensed placement agency (PLPA) parents, as applicable)
    5) PLPA staff, as applicable
    6) Resource parent's assigned Resource Specialist, as applicable
    7) DCFS Supervisor
    8) Other county staff
    9) Attorney ad litem
    10) OCC Attorney
    11) CASA
    12) Other professionals, if applicable
B. Utilize CFS-489: Resource Parent Consideration to Adopt to record the desire of the resource parents.
C. Enter a contact in the Division information management system detailing the outcome of the consideration to adopt FTM.

D. If the result of the consideration to adopt FTM the PLPA or SPLPA resource home is not selected to move forward in the adoption process, there are no additional steps related to this procedure.
E. If the result of the consideration to adopt FTM is that the PLPA or SPLPA resource home is selected to move forward with the adoption process, the Resource Specialist will:
    1) Complete all necessary background checks, including:
        a) Child Maltreatment Central Registry
        b) State Police Criminal Record Check
        c) FBI fingerprint based Criminal Background Check
        d) Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV)
            i. NOTE: DCFS cannot request or accept previous background checks from the PLPA or SPLPA provider or agency
F. Request a copy of the training certificate for Connecting AR Families (or pre-service training utilized by the PLPA or SPLPA provider).
G. Request the SAFE Home Study and any SAFE Home Study Updates completed by the PLPA or SPLPA Agency:
    1) If the SAFE Home Study is provided, ensure the SAFE Home Study is current based on the provider's re-evaluation status
    2) If the home study provided is not a SAFE Home Study, complete a referral to their local contract provider for a SAFE Home Study
H. Open the provider for adopt only services in the Division information management system:
    1) This will be a different provider identification number than the PLPA or SPLPA Home:
        a) Do NOT close the PLPA/SPLPA Provider services in the Division information management system:
            i. If a change or closure is needed related to the PLPA or SPLPA Home, notify the Specialized Services Unit Manager
        b) The PLPA or SPLPA Agency will continue to ensure that the provider is completing requirements per minimum licensing standards for re-evaluations (SAFE Home Study updates, First Aid, CPR, CEUs, and background checks)

The Division Adoption Specialist will:

A. Confirm that the PLPA or SPLPA Provider has been opened for adopt only services in the Division information management system.
B. Continue to leave the child keyed into the PLPA or SPLPA resource home until one (1) calendar day prior to the adoption.
C. On the calendar day (or next business day) prior to the adoption hearing, key the child into the pre-adoptive placement.
D. After the finalization of the adoption, key the child into the adoptive placement.

Internal Procedure 813: Retention of Resource Homes

06/2022

All Division staff will:

A. Ensure good communication among all team members, as well as mutual respect, understanding, and honesty.
B. Keep resource parents informed of DCFS programs, services, and policies that relate to foster care.
C. Support resource homes as needed to best serve children and families.

Resource Specialists will:

A. Discuss and assist resource parents in understanding their rights and responsibilities as resource parents as well as the rights and responsibilities of the Division.
B. Provide resource parents with the county on-call contact information sheet.
C. Contact homes quarterly for monitoring to ensure compliance with licensing standards and resource home requirements, address any issues, and offer support to the resource family.
D. Engage external stakeholders and share relevant information, thus supporting the practice model.
E. Inform resource parents of the internal review of adverse action procedure, when differences arise with DCFS which have not been resolved to the resource parents' satisfaction, as outlined in PUB-30: Resource Parent Handbook.
F. Collaborate with adoption staff as appropriate when a child's permanency goal is changed to adoption and when a child is transitioning from a resource home to an adoptive home.
G. Provide resource parents with information about the Division opt-in text application used for placement purposes and the resource family provider portal. Encourage use of both programs during quarterly contacts to resource homes.

Internal Procedure 814: Resource Family Support System Approval

08/2025

The RFSS is designed to help ensure a certain sense of normalcy for children if and when the resource parents cannot care for the children for short periods of time. RFSS members should be people such as the resource parents' relatives, friends, neighbors who are regularly in contact with the resource family and the children placed in their home.

Resource parents can locate their approved RFSS in the Resource Provider Portal under the "My Home" tab.

To establish a RFSS, the Resource Social Service Specialist will:

A. Ensure the resource home is open and fully approved.

B. Obtain information from the proposed RFSS to determine if proposed RFSS may be approved, to include for each adult household member:
    1) State Police Criminal Background Checks
    2) Central Registry Checks
    3) DMV Checks
    4) Out-of-state Central Registry Checks for each household member who has lived outside of Arkansas within the last five (5) years
C. Submit background checks (that were not submitted directly by RFSS online) to proper agency for processing within seven (7) business days of receipt of the background checks.
D. Receive background check results (typically in 2-3 weeks):
    1) Document background check results in the Division information management system upon receipt:
        a) Note: out-of-state central registry checks can take ninety (90) or more days to receive results
    2) Determine if continuing to process the RFSS will be necessary based on background checks results:
        a) Deny RFSS who have true child maltreatment and appear on the Central Registry
    3) RFSS who have a criminal background check will only be approved in the process if it's a criminal offense that can be waived by the Area Manager. The prospective RFSS will be required to provide information about the criminal offense
E. Contact RFSS to schedule a walk through of the RFSS home. The walk through will be scheduled to occur within seventy-two (72) hours.
F. Conduct the final walk through and document this information in the Division information management system in the appropriate locations.
G. Notify the resource family upon approval of the RFSS.

Internal Procedure 815: Alternate Care

07/2025

See Division Policy 9 CAR § 40-814: Alternate Care regarding overarching directives related to alternate care for children in the custody of the Division.

815.1 Normal Age-Appropriate Activities

08/2025

The resource family or authorized official of a contract placement provider will:

A. Use the reasonable and prudent parent standard in determining whether to give permission for a child living in an out-of-home placement to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, or social normal age-appropriate activities by considering:
    1) The child's chronological age, maturity level, physical and behavioral capacities, and cognitive and emotional developmental levels

2) The potential risk factors and the appropriateness of the activity
3) The best interest of the child, based on information known by the caregiver
4) The importance of encouraging the child's emotional and developmental growth
5) The importance of providing the child with the most family-like living experience possible
6) The behavioral history of the child and the child's ability to safely participate in the proposed activity

B. Notify the Social Service Specialist if the child will participate in an age-appropriate activity that will cause the child to be outside of the approved placement for more than twenty-four (24) continuous hours:
    1) Resource family will provide as much notice as possible, particularly for normal age-appropriate activities that require the child to be outside the approved placement for several days such as summer camps
C. Provide Specialist with:
    1) Activity location address
    2) Contact name at identified location
    3) Contact phone number
    4) Anticipated dates for which the child will stay at this location
    5) Date the child returns to the home once the activity has ended (actual end date of activity)

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Assess the appropriateness of the proposed activity when notified by the resource family or the authorized official of a contract placement provider that the child in care will be outside the approved placement for more than twenty-four (24) continuous hours to participate in said activity:
    1) If the proposed activity is determined to be appropriate:
        a) Select the Alternate Care button in the placement screens in the Division information management system:
            i. (Note: The child must be keyed into a placement before the Alternate Care button is accessible)
        b) Complete the Alternate Care screen:
            i. If the child is already participating in the activity, this screen should be completed immediately
            ii. If the child has not yet begun participating in the activity, this screen should be completed prior to the start of the activity
        c) Enter the actual end date of the activity on the Alternate Care screen when the resource family or other placement provider confirms with the Specialist that the child has returned to the resource home
    2) If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of the proposed activity:
        a) Notify the Supervisor
        b) If the Supervisor and Specialist determine that the proposed activity is inappropriate, notify the resource family or authorized official of a contract placement provider that the child will not participate in the said activity

c) Document notification in the Contact screen

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. After receiving any notification of concerns from the Specialist, hold a case conference with the Specialist to determine if proposed activity is appropriate.
B. Notify the Area Manager of the Specialist's concern and the action taken as a result of the case conference between the Specialist and the Social Service Supervisor.

815.2 Babysitting

08/2025

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Notify the County Manager if they have cause to believe that babysitting services are being used inappropriately, excessively, or if the Specialist has concerns about the character or competence of the individuals providing baby-sitting services.
B. Call a meeting with the resource family, if deemed appropriate by the Supervisor, to clarify the appropriate use of babysitting services.
C. Document the meeting with the resource family in the Contact screen.

The Social Service County Manager will:

A. After receiving any notification of concerns from the Specialist, hold a case conference with the Specialist, to determine if a meeting with the resource family or another action is needed to ensure the appropriate use of babysitting services.
B. Notify the Area Manager of the Specialist's concern and the action taken as a result of the case conference between the Specialist and the Supervisor.

815.3 Child Care

08/2025

For routine child care services, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Complete the Child Care Referral Request screen.
B. Authorize services for a maximum of three (3) months.
C. Make verbal requests to the County Manager for approval in an emergency, followed by a completed automated request within five (5) business days .
D. Initiate renewals no later than the first day of the last month of the eligibility period.
E. Notify the childcare center in writing ten (10) business days prior to last day the child will attend if the child will no longer be attending.
F. Complete a new Child Care Referral Request if the child exits foster care and but will have an in-home services case and child care is to continue.
G. Complete a new Child Care Referral Request if the child has been part of an in-home services case and enters foster care and child care is to continue.

If the child leaves the foster care or in-home services program, the Division information management system will automatically notify the child care system.

The Social Service County Manager will:

A. Approve the Child Care Referral Request, which will then be sent automatically to Central Office for review and approval.

For non-routine child care services (for example, when the resource parents are obtaining resource parent training), the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Assist resource parents in obtaining childcare.
B. All other requests must receive prior approval from the Area Manager.

815.4 Resource Family Support System

08/2025

The Resource Specialist will:

A. Review the CFS-419: Resource Family Support System Information provided by the Centralized Inquiry Unit and provide background check forms for each appropriate member of each resource family support system (RFSS) family as follows:
    1) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check (as generated by the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry website)
    2) CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check
    3) CFS-593: Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program (ASVSP)
    4) VSP-1: Authorization to Operate State Vehicles and Private Vehicles on State Business
    5) VSP-2: Authorization to Obtain Traffic Violation Record
B. Complete and document visual inspection of the RFSS home.
C. Select the Support System button on the Provider screen.
D. Complete the Resource Family Support System Individual Member tab and Required Checks tab for all appropriate members of the resource family support system.
E. Update this information as necessary following each annual reevaluation.

The resource family will:

A. Notify the Specialist each time the child in care will stay with a member of the RFSS for more than twenty-four (24) continuous hours and indicate:
    1) With which member of the RFSS the child will be staying
    2) The dates that the child will be with the identified member of the RFSS
    3) Date that the child returns to the home once the activity has ended (actual end date of activity)

The child's Social Service Specialist will:

A. Select the Alternate Care button on the child's current placement screen each time a child stays with a member of the RFSS for more the twenty-four (24) continuous hours.
B. Complete the Alternate Care screen.
C. Enter actual end date of stay with RFSS on the Alternate Care screen when the child returns to the regular resource family.

815.5 Respite

08/2025

The resource family will:

A. Notify the Specialist in advance of each time the child in care will stay with an informal respite home and indicate:
    1) With which informal respite home the child will stay
    2) The dates that the child will be with the identified informal respite home
    3) Date that the child returns to the home once the activity has ended (actual end date of activity)
B. Request approval from the Specialist for informal respite home stays longer than seven (7) consecutive days.
C. Notify Specialist immediately if the child needs formal respite care to prevent a child's current placement from disrupting or to prevent a residential, Division of Youth Services (DYS), juvenile detention center, acute psychiatric, or similar placement.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. For informal respite care:
    1) Select the Alternate Care button on the foster child's Placement screen each time a child stays with an informal respite home for more than twenty-four (24) continuous hours
    2) Complete the Alternate Care screen
    3) Update the Alternate Care screen with the actual end date when the child returns to the regular resource family
    4) Request extension approval for stays in an informal respite home longer than seven (7) consecutive days from the Area Manager through the Division information management system
    5) Notify the resource family as to whether a request for the child's placement in an informal respite home for longer than seven (7) consecutive days is approved or denied
    6) Complete Alternate Care screen accordingly
B. For formal respite care:
    1) Contact the Area Financial Coordinator to request formal respite placement for up to seven (7) days
    2) If a formal respite placement is authorized and available, make necessary arrangements with the formal respite care provider (however, please note the referral form for the formal respite provider must be signed by a DCFS County Manager, Area Financial Coordinator, Area Manager, or Central Office Staff) and the regular resource family
    3) Select the Alternate Care button on the child's Placement screen each time a child stays with a formal respite placement
    4) Complete the Alternate Care screen
    5) Update the Alternate Care Screen with the actual end date when the child returns to the regular resource family

6) If an extension is needed beyond seven (7) days, consult with the Area Manager as to whether it is in the child's best interest to request an extended stay in formal respite care from the designated representative in Central Office
7) If the request for an extended stay in formal respite care is deemed in the child's best interest, request extension approval from the designated representative in Central Office
8) Notify the resource family and Area Financial Coordinator as to whether a request for the child's placement in a formal respite placement, for longer than seven (7) days, is approved or denied

The Area Financial Coordinator or designee will:

A. Contact the appropriate provider to assess formal respite availability for up to seven (7) days.
B. If formal respite is available, notify the Specialist and encumber in PIE, CFM.
C. If formal respite is needed for more than seven (7) days, encumber in PIE, CFM once approval from Central Office is granted.

Internal Procedure 816: Collaborating with Resource Parents

08/2025

See Division Policy 9 CAR § 40-815 regarding overarching directives for providing information to and gathering information from resource parents.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Provide resource parents with copies of the Family Case Plan, court report, and court orders within five (5) calendar days of completion or revision for any child currently placed in their home.
B. Provide the resource parent with the child's social security number, when it is required, to obtain services, care, or treatment for the child.
C. Review and update the child's health and education records and provide copies to the resource parent at the time of placement.
D. Provide any additional information, as it becomes available, such as a complete copy of the most recent Family Case Plan tool and the Family Case Plan.
E. Collaborate with the Office of Chief Counsel during court preparation family team meetings to ensure resource parents are called as witnesses as appropriate.
F. Submit the CFS-343: Notification of Court Appearance or other form of notification (email) to resource parents within ten (10) calendar days of any review hearing to be held with respect to a child in their care:
    1) Regardless of method used to notify resource parents of upcoming court hearings, document when notification was provided and what method of notification was used in the Division information management system

G. Provide the resource parent with a copy of a substantiated child maltreatment report on the child in their care, if requested.
H. If a current or previously licensed resource parent requests records for a child previously placed in their home other than the social security number of that child for tax filing purposes, the Specialist will consult with their Supervisor within two (2) business days to determine if the resource parent has a legitimate need for that information:
    1) If the Supervisor agrees that the resource parent has a legitimate need for the information, they will send the request to the DCFS Release of Information Coordinator for review and approval within two (2) business days of receipt of the request
    2) The DCFS Release of Information Coordinator will review the request to assess if the resource parent has a legitimate need for the information and:
        a) Approve or deny the request accordingly
        b) Inform the Supervisor and Specialist of the decision within two (2) business days of receipt of the request

The resource parents will:

A. Maintain the information shared as confidential.
B. Use information contained in the Family Case Plan and other provided information to assist the child placed in the resource home in understanding the progress of the child's permanency case.

Internal Procedure 817: Changes In Out-Of-Home Placement

08/2013

817.1 Resource Parent Request for Placement Change

08/2013

If a request for removal is made by the resource parent, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Remove the child immediately without holding a family team meeting if the request for removal from the resource parent indicates there may be a safety threat that places the child or a resource family member at risk of harm:
    1) When the request for removal meets the definition of safety threat conduct a Safety Assessment to address safety of the child to be moved and any other children in the resource home
    2) Depending on the outcome of the Safety Assessment, make decisions about the placement of the child using the applicable procedures
    3) If the Safety Assessment determines that a situation exists that would constitute maltreatment, make a report to the Child Abuse Hotline and inform the Supervisor to coordinate with CACD for investigation of the allegation
    4) If the Safety Assessment determines there is no safety threat confer with the Supervisor as to whether to pursue immediate removal or to follow the steps below
B. Prepare for a family team meeting to be held within forty-eight (48) hours of notification of a request for removal from the resource parent and immediately notify the OCC attorney,

attorney ad litem, CASA, and the child experiencing foster care (if age appropriate) of the family team meeting date, time, and location.

C. If appropriate, request by phone or email, that a licensed mental health professional or private mental health provider attends, or otherwise participates in, the family team meeting.
D. Hold a family team meeting within forty-eight (48) hours of notification of a request for removal from the resource parent. If the request is made on the weekend or a holiday, the family team meeting must be held by the close of the next business day.
E. Make an appropriate alternative placement within five (5) business days from the date of the family team meeting, if the placement cannot be stabilized.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with Specialist as necessary regarding change in placement.
B. Inform the Area Director if the Safety Assessment in cases of removal due to a safety threat reveals a situation that requires a report to the Child Abuse Hotline.

817.2 Non-Emergency Changes

08/2013

Non-emergency changes in placement include a planned transfer to another resource home or residential setting that better meets the child's needs, a trial home placement, and a return to the caregiver when a child exits care.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Conference with Supervisor as necessary regarding change in placement.
B. Provide written notice via the completed CFS-300: Parent and Parent Counsel Notification of Change in Placement to the child's birth caregivers at least two (2) weeks prior to any placement changes.
C. Provide written notice to the child (if age appropriate), the resource parents, the child's attorney ad litem, the child's OCC attorney, and the court at least two (2) weeks prior to any placement changes via the completed CFS-300-A: Attorney Ad Litem, CASA, and Child Notification of Change in Placement.
D. Place copies of the completed CFS-300: Parent and Parent Counsel Notification of Change in Placement and CFS-300-A: Attorney Ad Litem, CASA Notification of Change in Placement in the child's record.
E. Select the out-of-home placement that best fits the needs of the child:
    1) A child who has been identified as an Exempted from Finding Underaged Juvenile Offender or Sexual Offender must not be placed in a resource home with other children, unless the child's therapist provides written notification that the child is no longer a danger to other children:
        a) Place any written notifications from the child's therapist in the child's hard copy file
    2) If the recommended placement for a child who has been identified as an Exempt from Finding Underage Juvenile Offender or Sexual Offender is a facility, the facility

must receive information regarding the allegations:

a) Document in the Recommend Placement screen in the Division information management system that the facility received information regarding allegations for a child with an exempted from finding underaged juvenile offender or sexual offender

F. Arrange for a pre-placement contact.
G. Provide the new address to attorney ad litem.
H. Inform age-appropriate child of the right to appeal a change in placement.
I. Update child placement information in the Division information management system (updating the placement information will open a response window to notify the Eligibility Unit of the placement change).
J. Document submission of the CFS-300: Parent and Parent Counsel Notification of Change in Placement and CFS-300-A: Attorney Ad Litem, CASA Notification of Change in Placement in the Division information management system Document Tracking screen.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with Specialist as necessary regarding change in placement.

817.3 Emergency Changes

08/2013

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Notify the Supervisor immediately of the emergency placement change.
B. Notify the child's birth caregivers, OCC Attorney, and attorney ad litem by phone or in person within twenty-four (24) hours of the emergency placement change:
    1) If the whereabouts of the caregiver are unknown, reasonable diligence to locate the caregivers must be made and documented
C. Provide the attorney ad litem with the name, address, and telephone number of the new resource home or placement provider within twenty-four (24) hours of the emergency placement change.
D. Provide written notice to the child's birth caregivers within seventy-two (72) hours of the emergency placement change via the completed CFS-300: Parent and Parent Counsel Notification of Change in Placement.
E. Provide written notice within seventy-two (72) hours of the emergency placement change to the attorney ad litem via the completed CFS-300-A: Attorney Ad Litem, CASA, and Child Notification of Change in Placement.
F. Place a copy of the completed CFS-300-A: Attorney Ad Litem, CASA Notification of Change in Placement in the child's record.
G. Update child placement information in the Division information management system. Updating the placement information will open a response window to notify the Eligibility Unit of the placement change.
H. Document submission of the CFS-300: Parent Notification of Change in Placement and CFS-300-A: Attorney Ad Litem, CASA and Child Notification of Change in Placement in the Division information management system Document Tracking screen.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist as necessary regarding change in placement.

Internal Procedure 818: Financial Support to Resource Parents

03/2024

818.1 Special Board

To determine the exact amount of an increased special board rate the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Check documentation of the child's special needs and the additional activities required of the resource parents to meet the needs.
B. Complete the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate by determining the level of care needed in each of the three (3) need categories.
C. Submit the form to the Supervisor.
D. Once approved review the continuing need for the request on a quarterly basis and if appropriate, resubmit for reevaluation by the Supervisor and the Area Manager.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Review the request for completeness and appropriateness and recommend approval or disapproval within three (3) business days.
B. If approved forward to the Area Manager for approval or disapproval.
C. If disapproved forward to the Area Manager with a recommendation for disapproval.
D. Once approved, review the continuing need for the special board payment and, if appropriate, resubmit the request on a quarterly basis.
E. Inform the resource parents in writing of the approval or denial of the request for a special board rate and the reason for the decision:
    1) Note that approval is only for ninety (90) days
    2) Documentation of continuing need must be reviewed quarterly

The Area Manager will:

A. Review the request for completeness and appropriateness:
    1) Consider the Supervisor's recommendations
    2) Make the decision to approve or disapprove the request for special board payment within three (3) business days
B. Have the authority to approve all special board rates up to nine hundred sixty ($960.00) dollars.
C. Refer the request to the Foster Care Unit Manager for a second party review if they cannot decide on approval or disapproval:
    1) Inform the Supervisor of the disposition and the reasons for approving, denying, or referring the request to the Foster Care Unit Manager
    2) The special board rate becomes effective the day the Area Manager or Assistant Director approves it
    3) Retroactive payments will be determined on a case-by- case basis and must be approved by the Assistant Director of Field Operations

D. Once approved ensure that the special board rate is reevaluated on a quarterly basis for continued appropriateness.
E. Maintain a file for each approved special board rate that contains:
    1) The requesting memo
    2) Supporting documentation
    3) CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate
    4) Notification of approval memo
    5) Computer printout of entry of the special board rate
F. Maintain a log of special board rate approvals including:
    1) Child's name
    2) Case number
    3) County
    4) Effective date
    5) Termination date
    6) Rate
    7) Reason

The DCFS Assistant Director of Field Operations will:

A. Have the authority to approve or disapprove all special board rates over nine hundred sixty dollars ($960.00).
B. Receive completed request packages for special board rates over nine hundred sixty dollars ($960) from the Area Manager.
C. Check each request packet for completeness to include:
    1) A completed CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate
    2) Clear and convincing documentation of any emotional, physical, or ancillary problems the child has that may justify a special board rate
    3) The Area Manager's dated signature on the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate
    4) A cover memo from the Area Manager to the Assistant Director that:
        a) Identifies the proposed subsidy as over nine hundred sixty dollars ($960)
        b) Provides justification for the proposed special board rate
        c) Makes a recommendation regarding approval or disapproval
D. Review the request for appropriateness and consider the Area Manager's recommendation.
E. Refer the request to the Foster Care Manager for technical assistance if desired.
F. Reach a disposition regarding the request within three (3) business days.
G. Inform the requesting Area Manager in writing of the request's disposition and the reasons for approval or disapproval.

The Foster Care Unit Manager will:

A. Provide only technical assistance when requested regarding special board rates.
B. Return the request to the Area Manager or Assistant Director for decision and action.

818.1.1 DIVISION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. If the special board rate is approved for the initial entry date at the provider placement service, complete the provider recommendation screen:
    1) In the Payment Scale Information grouping select the Child Requires Special Rate checkbox
    2) Enter the total approved special board rate monthly amount in the Monthly Authorized Amount field
    3) Select the appropriate Reason for Special Board Rate picklist value of Special Board Rate Justification or Other
        a) Enter a brief justification for the special board rate in the Explanation for Special Board Rate text box
        b) This is mandatory if Other is selected as the Reason for Special Rate
    4) Click 'Add'
    5) Click the Approval button to check the Request for Approval checkbox

B. If the special board rate is approved after initial entry date at the provider placement service, complete the Payment Scale. This can also be completed if the special board rate was approved but was not entered on the Provider Recommendation screen as it should have been:
    1) Enter the End Date of the open Payment Scale and click Change
    2) Select the OK button to the following message:
        "382 This is the open placement for this client. Please open a new Payment Scale or remove the End Date for the last Payment Scale
    3) Click the Clear button to complete the following:
        a) Select the Child Requires Special Rate
        b) Select the appropriate Reason for Special Rate picklist value of Special Board Justification Rate or Other
        c) Enter the total approved special board rate monthly amount in the Monthly Authorized Amount field:
            i. Enter a brief justification for the Special Board Rate in the Explanation for Special Rate textbox
            ii. This is mandatory if Other is selected
    4) Enter the start date of the approved special board rate in the Begin Date field
    5) Enter the review date if deemed necessary
    6) Click 'Add'
    7) Click Approve button to check the Request for Approval checkbox

C. The special board rate approvals are three (3) tiered:
    1) Specialist requests are completed following the process set out above
    2) Supervisor recommends:
        a) Highlight the Payment Scale Request for Approval in the Supervisor Approval's Box and click 'Show'
        b) Review information for accuracy and click Approval button:
            i. If the information is accurate click the 'Recommend' checkbox

ii. If the information is not accurate click ‘Deny’ checkbox and enter the Denial Reason
iii. If denied the special board rate payment scale must be end-dated and a new one (1) entered

3) Area Manager approves:
    a) Highlight the Payment Scale Request for Approval in their Supervisor’s Box and click ‘Show’
    b) Review information for accuracy and click ‘Approval’ button:
        i. If the information is accurate click the ‘Recommend’ checkbox
        ii. If the information is not accurate click ‘Deny’ checkbox and enter the Denial Reason
        iii. If denied the special board rate payment scale must be end-dated and a new one (1) entered

ADOPTION SERVICES

Internal Procedure 900: Fast Track Adoption Under Garrett's Law

01/2021

If a report of neglect under Garrett's Law is made to the Hotline, the mother has the option to fast-track an adoption of her newborn. Newborn refers to an infant who is thirty (30) days of age or younger. The mother has the option to place the newborn for:

A. Adoption through a licensed child placement agency under the Child Welfare Agency Licensing Act.
B. A private adoption through a person licensed to practice medicine or law.

A fast track adoption under Garrett's Law may occur for newborns not in the custody of the Division and newborns who are already in Division custody.

900.1 Fast Track Under Garrett's Law

A. If, during the course of an investigation, the mother elects to place her newborn for adoption in either A or B noted above , the Division will:
    1) Consult with OCC immediately
    2) Will not take a seventy-two (72) hour protective hold before consulting with OCC
B. If a hold is not taken on the newborn and the mother carries out item A or B above:
    1) DCFS is not required to make a home contact to the selected adoptive home since it is not considered a DCFS adoptive home and because the newborn is not in DCFS custody
C. DCFS is not required to make a home contact at the caregiver's residence unless there are siblings or other children under the care of the mother living in the home whose safety must be assessed:
    1) DCFS will consult with OCC to verify the need or lack of need, for a home contact to the biological caregiver's home
    2) DCFS and OCC will confer each business day until the fast track adoption has finalized to monitor whether the caregiver withdraws her consent to the adoption:
        a) If the caregiver withdraws her consent to the adoption, the Division will initiate a Safety Assessment to ensure protection of the child, including without limitation taking the child into custody if the Safety Assessment identifies an immediate threat to safety and an appropriate Immediate Safety Plan cannot be implemented

900.2 Fast Track Adoption Under Garrett's Law

A. If DCFS takes custody of the newborn as the result of the Garrett's Law investigation, the caregiver still has the option for a fast-track adoption to place the newborn for:
    1) Adoption through a licensed child placement agency under the Child Welfare Agency Licensing Act

2) A private adoption with a person licensed to practice medicine or law

B. If the proposed adoptive family, including kinship families, has not completed the adoptive home study process, including required criminal background checks, the Division will place the newborn in a resource home that is licensed and approved under the Child Welfare Agency Licensing Act:
    1) The newborn will remain in a licensed or approved resource home or in the custody of the Division until the required home study and criminal background checks are completed on the proposed adoptive parents
    2) In addition, if the newborn is in the custody of the Division:
        a) An order transferring custody to the proposed adoptive parents is required before the newborn is placed in the home of the proposed adoptive caregivers
        b) Any petition for adoption shall be filed in the open dependency-neglect case
        c) The adoption shall be granted only if the proposed adoptive placement is in the best interests of the newborn
C. An adoption by kin of the newborn shall be denied unless:
    1) The proposed kinship adoptive parents have an approved home study
    2) The Division approves the adoption (under state law on adoption, child welfare agency licensing laws and regulations, and Division Policy and procedures)
    3) The court determines the proposed kinship adoptive parents have the capacity and willingness to abide by orders regarding care, supervision, and custody (so that child protection will not be an issue if the adoption is granted)
    4) The court enters an order describing the level of contact, if any, that is permitted between the birth caregivers and the proposed kinship adoptive parents and the consequences for violation of the order
D. If DCFS is the licensed child placement agency selected by the mother to facilitate the adoption of her newborn that has already entered Division custody, the Division will conduct the required home study and all other requirements for opening a resource home with an adoptive service on the proposed adoptive family, including a kinship family.

Internal Procedure 902: Relinquishing Infants Under Safe Haven

03/2024

The Arkansas Safe Haven Act allow a parent to voluntarily relinquish physical custody of a newborn to a designated emergency provider under specific circumstances established by law.

Any medical provider, law enforcement agency, or fire department will take possession of a child who is thirty (30) days old or younger, without a court order, if the parent of the child, without expressing an intent to return for the child, leaves the child either:

A. With, or voluntarily delivers the child to, a medical provider (including when a parent leaves a newborn child with a medical provider staff after delivery of the newborn child), law enforcement agency, or fire department.
B. In a newborn safety device as described in Arkansas Code § 9-34-202.

Medical providers, law enforcement agencies, or fire departments will keep the identity of the parent who relinquishes a child under the Safe Haven provisions confidential. Staff from these entities will take a seventy-two (72) hour protective hold and will notify DCFS. The Division will:

A. Contact OCC to request a petition be filed for an order of emergency custody.
B. Utilize the Arkansas Attorney General's Missing Children Services Program along with any national or state resources to determine whether the child is a missing child before placing the infant in an appropriate legal risk adoptive placement.

If the identity of the parent is made known to the Division, the case will proceed as a dependency-neglect actions but with the same protection from liability as if an anonymous Save Haven surrender was made:

A. The parent will not be held criminally liable.
B. A true but exempt finding will be made in the Division information management system.
C. The Division will not subsequently use a resulting termination of parental rights against a parent who surrenders their child as allowed under the Voluntary Placement of a Child chapter in Arkansas law.

Internal Procedure 903: Adoptive Placements

01/2021

The Division focuses on finding families for children rather than finding children for families. The child's health, safety, and well-being are the paramount concerns in the development of adoptive placements.

When it is in the child's best interest, the Division supports adoption by resource parents (including provisional and kinship resource parents) who have a well-established relationship with the child. The Division will also pursue kin as possible adoptive placements even if these kin have not previously or are not currently serving as kinship resource homes.

903.1 Family Team Meeting and Recommendations

01/2021

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Invite Adoption Specialist to permanency planning family team meeting.
B. Prior to the permanency planning family team meeting, complete CFS-426: Adoption Packet Checklist, ensuring that the child's out-of-home placement record is up to date and that all attachments that are required for an adoption packet (Appendix 1) are in the child's record. These will be copied and forwarded to the Adoption Specialist within three (3) business days after the permanency planning hearing.
C. Conduct permanency planning family team meeting and enter a contact, detailing the outcome of the family team meeting in the Division information management system.
D. Notify the Adoption Specialist within fourteen (14) days prior to TPR staffing and hearing.
E. Notify the Adoption Specialist, in writing within two (2) business days of the court hearing,

that termination of parental rights with power to consent to adoption has been granted (if the Adoption Specialist was not at the hearing).

F. Determine if the resource parent, provisional resource parent, or kin is interested in adopting the child if parental rights have been terminated.
G. Complete a written account of all kin for the child, via CFS-305: Relative and Fictive Kin Efforts, including but not limited to, the name, address, phone number, and reasons for denial of placement in the kin's home. This written account should also address the location of the child's siblings and current family time arrangements. Provide this written account of all kin for the child to the adoption staff during the permanency planning family team meeting (as part of the adoption packet). Document this written account of kin in the following locations in the Division information management system:
    1) Contact screen
    2) Collateral Information screen
    3) Court Report Relative Interest screen
    4) Family Case Plan
H. Schedule and conduct a Consideration to Adopt family team meeting within ten (10) business days from the court hearing that terminates parental rights, being sure to include:
    1) Adoption Specialist
    2) Age-appropriate child
    3) Kinship resource parent, as applicable
    4) Resource parent (to include private licensed placement agency (PLPA) and therapeutic foster care (TFC) parents, as applicable)
    5) PLPA or TFC staff, as applicable
    6) Resource parent's assigned Resource Specialist, as applicable
    7) Supervisor
    8) Other county staff
    9) Attorney ad litem
    10) Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) attorney
    11) CASA
    12) Other professionals, if applicable
I. Utilize CFS-489: Resource Parent Consideration to Adopt to record the desire of the resource parents.
J. Enter a contact in the Division information management system detailing the outcome of the consideration to adopt family team meeting.

The Adoption Specialist will:

A. Participate in the permanency planning family team meeting.
B. Complete a CFS-471: Disclosure for Adoption for each child in need of adoptive placement.
C. Complete an Adoption Data Match for each child.
D. Participate in the consideration to adopt staffing.

After Termination of Parental Rights has occurred the Adoption Specialist will:

A. If the recommendation from the family team meeting supports the resource parent,

provisional resource parent, or kin adoption, the Adoption Specialist will:

1) Staff with the Adoption Supervisor
2) Within five (5) business days of the family team meeting, enter a contact in the Division information management system that provides the date of the family team meeting, names and titles of people participating, and findings on compliance to the placement criteria and recommendation
3) Complete and send a copy of CFS-447: Consideration to Adopt Notification to the Specialist, County Manager, Adoption Supervisor, resource parent, OCC attorney, Ad Litem, and CASA, as appropriate

B. If the recommendation from the family team meeting does not support the resource parent, provisional resource parent, or kin adoption, the Adoption Specialist will:
    1) Assess the recommendation and request any additional information for review with Adoption Supervisor
    2) Notify the resource parent, provisional resource parent, or kin, in writing, within ten (10) business days of the decision and state the reasons for the decision and internal review procedures
    3) Complete and send a copy of CFS-447: Consideration to Adopt Staffing Notification, to the Specialist, County Manager, Adoption Supervisor, OCC attorney, resource parent, Ad Litem, and CASA, as appropriate
C. If those attending the family team meeting disagree about support of the resource parent, provisional resource parent, or kin adoption, the Adoption Specialist will:
    1) Schedule another family team meeting within ten (10) business days, to include the Area Manager or designee, Adoption Supervisor, and any other appropriate parties
    2) Depending on the outcome of the family team meeting, follow the procedures listed above
D. After consultation with Adoption Supervisor, make a decision to approve or deny the resource parent, provisional resource parent, kin's application to adopt within ten (10) business days of receiving the completed home study, and send a written notification to the resource parent, provisional resource parent, or kin, utilizing CFS- 447: Consideration to Adopt Decision.
E. Explain in the written notification the reasons for denial and the internal review procedures.

903.2 Permanent Separation of Siblings

08/2025

DCFS prioritizes keeping siblings together which is paramount in adoptive considerations to maintain familial bonds. However, in cases where separation is determined to be in the best interest of one or more siblings, a structured decision-making and approval process must be followed to ensure transparency, thorough assessment, and compliance with best practice and Policy. Sibling relationships should be considered in each placement decision, along with the child or youth's needs. Simply because siblings were separated once in foster care, they do not have to remain separated throughout foster care or into adoption.

Some viable reasons siblings may not be placed together include:

A. Safety Concerns:
    1) A sibling poses a risk of harm to another sibling due to severe behavioral issues, including aggression, abuse, or violence
    2) There is documented evidence of one (1) sibling victimizing another
B. Specialized Needs:
    1) A sibling has complex medical, emotional, or psychological needs that require individualized care, making joint placement impractical
C. Conflictual Relationships:
    1) Evidence from therapists or other professionals indicated that separation would benefit the children's development or healing
D. Age and Developmental Differences:
    1) Significant age differences between siblings may create challenges in identifying a family capable of addressing their diverse needs

Each of these reasons must be thoroughly documented and supported by evidence, such as:

A. Evaluations from therapists, counselors, or psychologists.
B. Input from resource parents, teachers, and other professionals.
C. Efforts made to locate and secure a family capable of adopting all siblings together.

Maintaining sibling groups will be paramount in adoption considerations. Siblings will be placed together in the same pre-adoptive home unless all the following criteria are met:

A. A current mental health professional for one of the siblings provides written documentation that adoptive placement as a sibling group is not in the best interest of one or more of the siblings.
B. The DCFS Adoption Manager has executed a CFS-412: Request and Waiver for Permanent Separation of Siblings.
C. There is a current judicial ruling (court order) that adoptive placement of the siblings together would be detrimental to their best interests or is otherwise not possible at the time of placement due to treatment needs of one (1) or more of the siblings (one (1) of the children is currently in a residential treatment facility and will need to be placed with the siblings in the adoptive home upon completion of treatment).

Prior to placement of any sibling into a pre-adoptive home, the Adoption Specialist will:

A. Request from the primary Specialist and review provided documentation of reasonable efforts to maintain a sibling bond for all siblings placed in separate resource homes.
B. Review the CFS-305: Kinship Efforts Log as well as all documentation of reasonable efforts to locate kin, ensuring that all individuals who should have been considered have been properly considered as permanency options for the sibling group:
    1) Do not move forward with discussions of pre-adoptive placement until all individuals have been properly evaluated as placement options

2) Document all evaluations in the Division information management system including evaluations of kin and reasons that each are not appropriate as considerations as a permanent placement for the sibling group

C. Request and review documentation that the siblings have been consulted regarding potential permanent separation from their siblings for purposes of adoption. Verify that:
   1) Each sibling has been advised that they have a right to placement with their siblings, so long as the placement is not detrimental to the safety of any sibling
   2) Each sibling has been consulted and advised that separation of siblings for the purpose of adoption means they will no longer be guaranteed, and in some cases allowed, to have contact with their siblings
   3) The response and desires of each sibling

D. Consider the validity of reasons for recommendation for permanent separation of siblings with the understanding that the following must be considered as part of a best interest decision:
   1) Routine sibling contact is mandated by law and siblings must have a minimum of bi-weekly contact while in out-of-home placement
   2) The relationship between a resource parent and a child is not a factor in the consideration of the separation of siblings for adoption
   3) Arkansas is not an open adoption state, and statements of intent to continue sibling contact after adoption should not be taken at face value
   4) Siblings are likely to be the longest-standing life connection for one another and to sever the sibling bond is a loss
   5) Kinship options are preferred in permanency, to include in adoption, because they allow a child to hold a connection to their origin story, family genetic history, and community which results in better outcomes for the child

E. If, after review of documentation and consideration of best interests, permanent separation of siblings is necessary to ensure the safety of one (1) or more of the siblings:
   1) Schedule and conduct a Separation of Siblings family team meeting (FTM). Invite:
   1) Primary Specialist
   2) Primary Specialist Supervisor
   3) Adoption Supervisor
   4) Area Manager
   5) Adoption Manager
   6) Program Administrator for Foster Care and Adoption
   7) Assistant Director of Placement Supports and Community Outreach
   2) If the FTM results in agreement for permanent separation of siblings:
   1) Complete CFS-412: Request and Waiver for Permanent Separation of Siblings
   2) Obtain signatures from all required attendees on the CFS-412
   3) Provide any additional information as requested by the Adoption Manager
   3) Complete an adoption court report recommending permanent separation of the siblings for purposes of adoption
   4) Attend the court hearing and follow subsequent recommendations of the court regarding pre-adoptive placement of the siblings

903.3 Identification and Disclosure

01/2021

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Notify the Adoption Specialist within fourteen (14) days prior to the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) staffing and hearing.
B. Send additional attachments to the Adoption Specialist once the initial adoption packet is completed, to maintain current information until a child is placed with an adoptive family.
C. Document the efforts to secure needed attachments and the reason for an attachment not being available, in the child's out-of-home placement record and in the Division information management system.
D. Provide information requested by the Adoption Specialist in the preparation of the child's "CFS-418: Adoption Summary" and in the selection of an adoptive family.
E. Place siblings together in the same resource home unless there is a valid reason that this is not in the best interest of the children.

The child's Adoption Specialist will:

A. Prior to the TPR hearing, determine if there is a resource home with an open adoptive service to consider for a child who may have a permanency goal of adoption:
    1) Enter characteristics of child into the computer matching system to obtain listing of approved adoptive applicants
    2) If there are not approved resource homes with an open adoptive service, initiate generalized recruitment for an adoptive family who may be interested in adopting a child with similar characteristics
B. Respond to notification of inquiries timely:
    1) Reply to adoption inquiries within three (3) business days of receipt of notification of inquiry. Notification to potential adoptive families can be made by phone or email
    2) Collect and review home studies for inquiring families within fourteen (14) business days
    3) Notify inquiring parties of selection status within three (3) business days of reviewing home study
    4) Respond to out-of-state Inquiries:
        a) Ensure all in-state kin options have been exhausted
        b) Ensure all in-state recruitment efforts have been exhausted (for example, child is in the Arkansas Heart Gallery, child has been attending matching events, short film has been completed)
        c) Submit inquirer's home study to Adoption Manager or designee for review
        d) Participate in staffing scheduled by and with Adoption Manager or designee regarding best interests of the child in considering an out-of-state inquiry
        e) Schedule and participate in phone meeting with the inquiring family to include Adoption Supervisor, Adoption Manager or designee, and the child's team
        f) If appropriate, schedule a disclosure with the family with the expectation

the family will travel to Arkansas (at the family's expense) for the disclosure

g) Complete and submit an ICPC request for adoptive placement and if approved:
    i. Notify Adoption Manager or designee of desire to move forward with out-of-state placement
    ii. Schedule pre-placement contacts in Arkansas (inquiring family is responsible for costs associated with arrangements for travel and occurrence of pre-placement contacts)

C. Assist the Specialist in preparing the child for adoption.
D. Ensure compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act, if applicable, by notifying and working with the OCC attorney.
E. Prepare the child's adoption disclosure packet within forty-five (45) days from receipt of the completed adoption packet:
    1) Delete identifying information in the child's disclosure packet as it relates to the child's birth or legal caregiver and extended family. The entire name of all family members should be redacted from all documents
    2) Send the child's disclosure packet to the Adoption Supervisor within four (4) months of the court hearing that terminates parental rights
    3) Make a copy of the non-identified disclosure packet for the selected adoptive family and one for the family's Adoption Specialist, if different from the child's Adoption Specialist
    4) Complete and submit encumbrance paperwork for completion of the child's adoption summary
F. Enter characteristics of the child into the Division information management matching system, Adoption Data Matching, prior to the termination of parental rights hearing to obtain a listing of approved and registered adoptive applicants.
G. Decide within fourteen (14) business days of receiving the listing and home studies if recruitment of an adoptive family is needed.
H. Complete and maintain a CFS-433: Individualized Recruitment Plan if an appropriate adoptive family is not available.
I. Refer eligible children for placement on the Arkansas Heart Gallery.
J. Monitor and document the recruitment activities on the CFS-433: Individualized Recruitment Plan.
K. Enter characteristics of the child into the computer matching system on a consistent basis if the initial listing did not result in the selection of an appropriate adoptive family.
L. Update the child's CFS-418: Adoption Summary, annually until an appropriate adoptive family is selected, and ensure that attachments are updated. Send a copy of the updated adoption summary and special evaluations to the Adoptions Manager or designee if the child has a photo-listing, website, or adoption exchange registration.
M. Conduct Identification staffing by providing home studies for adoptive homes, chosen by child's Adoption Specialist as potential matches for the child, to CASA and Ad Litem, as appropriate. This should include a narrowed pool of one to three (1-3) home studies. All input and recommendations from the child's support team should be considered in making a final selection of home study.

N. Select the most appropriate approved adoptive applicant for the child, consistent with the child's needs. Ensure the applicant's ability to meet the special needs of the child, Minimum Licensing Standards for Child Welfare Agencies (Placement), and Division Policy for resource homes.
O. Upon approval of the identified family forward packets and CFS-471: Disclosure for Adoption to the family's Adoption Specialist, if different from the child's Adoption Specialist. The disclosure packet should include significant information about the child including the need for special resources or services, provide a schedule for pre-placement activities, and convey any other significant information that relates to the placement of the child.
P. Prepare and present to the family's Adoption Specialist, resource parent, provisional resource parent, or kin, one non-identifying copy of the child's disclosure packet and a complete CFS-471: Disclosure for Adoption during the assessment and preparation process.
Q. Schedule and conduct a selection family team meeting with the Specialist, the family's Adoption Specialist, and other appropriate DCFS staff and professionals (including the child's attorney ad-litem, CASA appointed to the child, and PLPA or TFC staff, as applicable):
    1) Complete and route CFS-590: Invitation to Family Team Meeting to all court parties
    2) Create a written pre-placement family time plan in conjunction with the parties which addresses the logistical, therapeutic, and developmental needs of all parties:
        a) Ensure that the plan is modified throughout the pre-placement process according to the adjustment of the child and adoptive family
    3) In the Division information management system, complete the Provider Adoption Considerations tab on the selected family (Pre-Adoptive Home Service) identifying the considered child experiencing foster care
    4) Send the completed CFS-470: Selection of Adoptive Family to the Adoption Supervisor within thirty (30) business days. Attach a copy of the child's CFS-418: Adoption Summary and the selected family's home study to the CFS-470
    5) Discuss delays in the selection of an adoptive family with the Adoption Supervisor and document reasons for the delay
    6) Document the selection by completing the CFS-470: Selection of Adoptive Family
R. Determine immediately if another approved adoptive applicant can be selected if the Adoption Supervisor, the adoptive family, or the child does not agree with a selection.
S. Document if another approved adoptive family cannot be selected and continue recruitment activities.
T. Provide written or verbal notification to the family's Resource Specialist for each approved adoptive applicant who has been considered, and document in the Division information management system:
    1) The child's Adoption Specialist will notify the approved applicant in writing if they had asked to be considered for a child who is registered in the DCFS photo-listing and website but was not selected
U. Initiate and follow ICPC procedures if an out-of-state approved adoptive applicant is selected.

V. Discuss any delays in completing the assessment and preparation process with the Adoption Supervisor and document reasons for the delay.

The Adoption Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Ensure eligible children are referred to the Arkansas Heart Gallery.
B. Assess the child's disclosure packet, the home study of the approved adoptive applicant, and the CFS-470: Selection of Adoptive Family from the Adoption Specialist and then determine the appropriateness of the selection within ten (10) business days.
C. Document the determination to approve or deny the selection on the CFS-470: Selection of Adoptive Family from the Adoption Specialist, then explain in writing the reasons for a denial.
D. Return all information to the Adoption Specialist.

The Adoptions Manager or designee will:

A. Coordinate and maintain the computer matching system, to assist in the selection of an adoptive family.
B. Maintain the file for home studies of approved adoptive applicants (regardless of the state they reside in).
C. Provide technical assistance on recruitment and selection of adoptive families.

903.4 Heart Gallery

08/2025

Only children who truly have a need for an adoptive placement will be placed on the Heart Gallery.

Eligibility criteria:

A. Must be thirty (30) days or more past caregivers' Termination of Parental Rights (TPR).
B. All appeals of termination must be exhausted.

Children who should not be referred to the Heart Gallery include those who are:

A. Placed in pre-adoptive placements.
B. Placed with resource parents who likely will adopt or with kin who likely will assume custody or adopt.
C. Other situations where adoptive placement is imminent or very likely (will require one-on-one conversations with adoption staff).

Within ten (10) business days of the child becoming eligible, the Adoption Specialist or Adoption Supervisor will send a referral email to Project Zero Logistics Coordinator (Anna Dietrich, anna@theprojectzero.org), the DCFS Liaison in the Office of Communications & Community Engagement, and the Adoption Manager.

The referral should include the following information:

- Child's full name
- Child's gender

- Case number
- Client ID
- Date of birth
- Area
- County
- Member of sibling group
- Being adopted together or separately

WHAT IS NEEDED FROM THE ADOPTION SPECIALIST AFTER THE DECISION IS MADE TO PLACE THE CHILD ON THE HEART GALLERY?

A. A completed CFS-500: Heart Gallery Bio Request Form on the child or sibling group.
B. A current Project Zero photograph of the child:
    1. The photo will be taken by Project Zero, but the Adoption Specialist or Adoption Supervisor should coordinate with the Project Zero Logistics Coordinator regarding location, transportation, etc.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN INQUIRY IS MADE ON A CHILD FROM THE HEART GALLERY?

A. Project Zero staff will respond via email within three (3) business days of the inquiry, copying the Adoption Specialist, Adoption Supervisor, and Adoption Manager.
B. The Adoption Specialist should respond to the inquiring party within three (3) business days of notification of the inquiry.
C. If the inquiring party is a match and placement is made, the Adoption Specialist should notify the Project Zero Logistics Coordinator within five (5) business days to request that a "Family Found" banner be added to the children's entry on the Heart Gallery.

WHEN SHOULD CHILDREN BE REMOVED FROM THE HEART GALLERY?

A. After their adoptions are finalized.
B. At another change in permanency status:
    1) Child ages out
    2) Child changes permanency goal
    3) Child enters extended foster care
    4) Child placed with kin
C. The Adoption Specialist should notify the Project Zero Logistics Coordinator within five (5) business days of any of these changes to remove the child's information from the Heart Gallery.

903.5 Disclosure, Pre-Placement, and Placement Activities

01/2021

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Continue to prepare the child for adoption.
B. Prepare and support the resource family, or out-of-home placement provider, for separation and enlist their help with the child.
C. Prepare child's school personnel, therapist, and other professionals for the proposed

adoption.

D. Participate in pre-placement and placement activities and remain involved until the process is completed.
E. Assess the feelings and reactions of the child and the resource parents or out-of-home placement provider, then share these with the child's Adoption Specialist.
F. Ensure that the child's clothing and personal belongings are appropriately prepared and packed for the move to the adoptive family's home.
G. Transfer the child's out-of-home placement record (including in the Division information management system) to the child's Adoption Specialist within five (5) business days of the placement date (after pre-placement contacts have been completed). The child's Adoption Specialist will assume primary case management responsibility at the time of placement.
H. In the Division information management system:
    1) Complete the foster child's Termination of Parents Rights Screen on each caregiver
    2) Update Contact screen, Characteristic screen, Medical screen, Family Case Plan tool, Family Case Plan (change goal to adoption), Risk Assessment, and Court Hearing screen to document all current available information on the child
    3) In the Assign or Transfer Screen, assign the family's Adoption Specialist as the Primary Responsible Person for case.

The child's Adoption Social Service Specialist will:

A. Review and discuss the disclosure packet with the family's Adoption Specialist, resource parent, provisional resource parent, or kin.
B. Secure signatures on the CFS-471: Disclosure for Adoption.
C. Prepare the child to meet the selected adoptive family, with the assistance of the family's Adoption Specialist, after the adoptive parents have signed the CFS-471: Disclosure for Adoption.
D. Coordinate with the family's Adoption Specialist times, dates, places, and activities for the pre-placement family time schedule.
E. In the Enter or Exit screen, exit foster child from current resource home placement, selecting Pre-Adoptive Placement, and enter the child in the Pre-Adoptive Service of the adoptive family's home.

After the selection of an adoptive family has been approved, all the following activities will be conducted collaboratively between the child's and the family's Adoption Specialists (if the child and family do not have the same Adoption Specialist):

A. Continue to assist the Specialist in preparing the child for adoption.
B. Prepare the child to meet the selected adoptive family (including the presentation of the family's photograph album) after the adoptive parents have signed the disclosure form.
C. Arrange and conduct pre-placement contacts between the child and the selected adoptive family according to the following guidelines:
    1) There must be at least three (3) pre-placement contacts for a child who is two (2) years of age or older
    2) No pre-placement contacts shall be scheduled until the selected adoptive parents

have signed the disclosure form

3) Supervise the first two (2) pre-placement contacts for every child
4) Follow a natural progression for increasing family time, as appropriate for the child's age and development, to include:
    a) Supervise first two (2) contacts for every child
    b) Complete at least one (1) all-day contact
    c) Complete at least one (1) overnight contact that does not transition directly into a placement in the home
    d) Complete at least one (1) weekend contact that does not transition directly into a placement in the home
    e) Notify the child's attorney ad-litem when pre-adoptive contacts begin and when placement is to be made

D. Supervise contacts of the child with the selected adoptive family, as appropriate.
E. Review information about the child with the selected adoptive family and answer questions:
    1) If adopted youth is age sixteen (16) or older, inform the family that the youth is eligible for ETV (Educational Training Voucher), and that they may participate in youth development activities and life skills classes
    2) Refer youth age sixteen (16) or older to the TYS, if youth desires to participate in said activities
F. Provide the pre-adoptive family with CFS-468: Notification of Adoptive Placement.
G. Provide support to the selected adoptive family.
H. Assess the development of the relationship between the selected adoptive family and the child.
I. Arrange any needed appointments with the family's Adoption Specialist, for the selected adoptive family to meet with special providers such as mental health counselors, doctors, school personnel
J. Ensure the pre-adoptive family obtains a PCP for the child, within thirty (30) business days prior to adoptive placement, and ensure the family understands the need for completion of the CFS-352: Episodic Form for each medical appointment occurring prior to finalization of the adoption.
K. Document dates of pre-placement contacts, contacts, activities, progress, concerns, and other pertinent information and send a copy to the Adoption Supervisor, Specialist, and OCC attorney for the child's initiating county.
L. Enter current resource parent or kin as an adoptive resource completing the Resource screens.
M. Forward a CFS-300-A: Attorney-Ad-Litem, Court Appointed Special Advocate and Child Notification of Changes in Out-of-Home Placement to the Adoption Supervisor and all other parties, within five (5) business days of pre-adoptive placement.
N. Assume primary case management once pre-adoptive placement occurs.
O. Request a resident county Adoption Specialist to be assigned by completing the Assign or Transfer screen in the Division information management system, as appropriate.
P. If child is to exit current resource care placement to enter kin's adoptive home, exit child from current resource parent placement and enter child into the kin's adoptive home in

the Placement screens in the child's in-home service case.

The family's Adoption Social Service Specialist will:

A. Discuss and coordinate with the selected adoptive parent, resources which a child may need (adoption subsidy, counseling, medical, educational services, etc.):
    1) When discussing an adoption subsidy, the family's Adoption Specialist will be clear that they will only be screening for a determination of special needs, subsidy eligibility, and making a recommendation to the Adoption Unit
    2) The Adoption Specialist will notify the family of approval or denial of an adoption subsidy
    3) The family's Adoption Specialist must also explore other resources and assistance that may be available for the child and adoptive family when screening for a subsidy
B. Retrieve and properly dispose of CFS-471: Adoption Disclosure provided to any pre-adoptive resource family choosing not to move forward with pre-adoptive placement.

The Adoption or Resource Supervisor will:

A. Assign the child's Adoption Specialist as the primary Specialist in the Assign/Transfer screen. The child remains in the current resource placement until finalization.
B. Enter current resource parent or kin, as an adoptive resource, by completing the Resource screens.
C. Monitor and ensure an appropriate pre-placement family time schedule is developed and maintained while ensuring that the plan is modified according to the adjustment of the child and adoptive family throughout the pre-placement process.

The resource parent or Out-of-Home Placement Provider will:

A. Help prepare the child for adoption.
B. Participate in the pre-placement and placement activities, as requested by the Adoption Specialist.
C. Provide the selected adoptive family with information about the child, as requested by Adoption Specialist.
D. Assess and report the child's feelings, actions and reactions to the Specialist or the Adoption Specialist.
E. Encourage and support the child to accept the adoptive family.

903.6 Legal Risk Placement

01/2021

A legal risk placement is a pre-adoptive placement with a resource family, involving a child whose caregivers' legal rights have not been terminated or an appeal of termination of parental rights is pending. DCFS, in consultation with other parties to the case, may consider a legal risk placement when there is limited likelihood that reunification will occur.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Evaluate if legal risk placement is appropriate for the child based on the following

considerations:

1) Family history of foster care episodes or prior involuntary termination of parental rights
2) Prior placement history of the child
3) Special needs of the child
4) Sibling group information and placement needs
5) Caregiver's level of current participation in Family Case Planning and court ordered services
6) Availability of kinship placement and kinship permanency options:
    a) Do not consider legal risk placement if all kin options have not been explored

B. Conduct a conference with the Adoption Specialist and County Manager requesting location of a legal risk placement.
C. Provide all information listed above to the Adoption Specialist during the conference.

The child's Adoption Specialist will:

A. Email a request for approval of legal risk placement, to the Area Manager or designee, to include:
    1) Kin information
    2) Sibling information
    3) General circumstances of the case and family
    4) Special needs of the child
    5) Legal status of the case
    6) Data matching information
B. Expedite concurrent planning efforts, by preparing CFS-471: Disclosure for Adoption, as soon as discussions of legal risk placement occur.
C. Upon receipt of approval for legal risk placement from the Area Manager or designee:
    1) Recruit a legal risk placement for the child or sibling group or verify that the current resource parent wishes to be a legal risk placement
    2) Present and explain the "CFS-420: Legal Risk Adoption Placement Agreement," to the selected resource parents if a legal risk adoptive placement is planned
    3) Secure the signature of the resource parents on the CFS-420, and secure approval from the Adoptions Manager or designee prior to placement

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Review the request for legal risk placement.
B. Submit the request for legal risk placement to the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee.
C. Email an approval or denial of request to the Adoption Specialist within five (5) business days.

The Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee will:

A. Review the request for legal risk placement.

B. Consult with the Adoption Manager or designee as necessary and email an approval or denial of request to the Area Manager or designee within three (3) business days.

903.7 Petition to Adopt Without Division Knowledge or Consent

01/2021

The Social Service Specialist or Adoption Specialist, when learning about the petition to adopt, will immediately notify the Area Manager or designee, Adoption Supervisor, OCC attorney, and Adoption Manager or designee, then follow up with written notification.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Arrange a family team meeting to determine if adoptive placement is appropriate to consider.
B. Submit the results and recommendations from the staffing to the Area Manager or designee, Adoptions Specialist, and Adoptions Supervisor.
C. Direct staff to follow procedures outlined above.
D. Work with the OCC Attorney in regard to pending litigation if it appears that the resource parent, provisional resource parent, or kin would not be suitable adoptive parents for the child.
E. Notify the Adoption Supervisor if information regarding other prospective adoptive families for the child is needed.

903.8 Post-Placement Services

01/2021

The family's Adoption Specialist will:

A. Provide casework, counseling, support, and referral to needed resources and services until the adoption is finalized.
B. Inform the family about post-adoption services, via PUB 31: Post Adoptive Services, and document such in Document Tracking in the Division information management system.
C. Make weekly contact during the first month of placement, bi-weekly during the second month of placement, monthly thereafter, and make contact as needed with the family until the adoption is finalized.
D. Have a private conversation with age-appropriate children during each contact.
E. Submit a narrative documenting the place and dates of post-placement contacts, conversations about post adoptive services, activities, progress, concerns, etc. Narrative entries regarding contacts and services will be approved in the Division information management system by the Adoption Supervisor.
F. During the fourth month of adoptive placement, complete the Adoption Subsidy Request Packet and submit to Adoption Supervisor:
    1) Forward approved subsidy request to Subsidy Coordinator.

The child's Adoption Specialist will:

A. Notify pre-adoptive family of the date for a judicial review.

B. Recommend initiation of procedures to finalize the adoption, upon receipt of approval of the adoption by the Adoption Supervisor and approval of adoption subsidy, if applicable, and if the child has resided with the resource parent, provisional resource parent or kin for at least six months. However, residence in the home is not required for a minor to be adopted (if in Division custody) and the minor must reside outside the home to receive medically necessary health care.
C. Inform the family about post-adoption services, via PUB 31: Post Adoptive Services, and document such in Document Tracking in the Division information management system.
D. Complete all Court Hearing screens, for all judicial reviews, in the Division information management system.
E. Finally, the Adoptions Supervisor will review all requests for adoption subsidy and forward a written determination for each request to the family's Adoption Specialist within three (3) business days of receipt of request.

903.9 Disruption of Pre-Adoptive Placement

01/2021

If disruption of an adoptive placement is imminent, the family's Adoption Specialist will:

A. Provide appropriate services to preserve the family and prevent disruption, if applicable .
B. Prepare the adoptive family for the disruption and provide casework counseling and referrals for needed services.

If disruption of an adoptive placement is imminent, the child's Adoption Specialist will:

A. Schedule and conduct a family team meeting to include those listed above and the resource parents (traditional or kinship), provisional resource parents, or kin, any age-appropriate child, and any other significant individuals.
B. Immediately notify the Adoption Supervisor, Adoptions Manager, County Manager, Specialist, Adoption Manager, OCC attorney, and attorney ad litem.
C. In the Division information management system:
    1) Document the family team meeting, reason for disruption, and all contacts with adoptive family in the Contact screen
    2) Exit the child from their current adoptive home placement by selecting Placement Resource Requested Removal or Child Requested Change of Placement, in the Enter/Exit screen
D. Prepare the child for the disruption and provide casework, counseling, and referrals for needed services.

The Adoption Supervisor will:

A. Transfer the case back to the last primary assigned Specialist in the Assign/Transfer screen
B. Return case management responsibility to the Specialist (of the initiating county) and transfer primary Specialist designation (in the Division information management system) back to the Specialist if it is not the plan to immediately select another adoptive family, and disruption occurs.
C. Return the child's paper record back to the Specialist within five (5) business days of the

disruption.

903.10 When a Child Dies Prior to Finalization

01/2021

Upon the death of a child who is in a pre-adoptive placement, the child's Adoption Specialist will inform the resource parents that:

A. The adoption decree may be finalized through the court, upon resource parent's request. The resource parents have thirty (30) days to make such request.
B. The child's last name may be legally changed to that of the adoptive family and may be inscribed on a headstone or other memorial marker.
C. The child may be buried in a location specified by the family.
D. The Division will pay for reasonable, ordinary, and necessary funeral expenses.

Adoption staff will include the following documents in the adoption packet:

A. CFS-432: Checklist for Recommendation for Finalization.
B. Initial home study of the adoptive family and all updates.
C. CFS-418: Adoption Summary of the child and all updates.
D. CFS-471: Signed Disclosure for Adoption.
E. Report of Adoption (accessible at: http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/resource).
F. Court order terminating parental rights.
G. Certified birth certificate of child.
H. FBI, state criminal record checks, and child maltreatment checks as applicable.
I. CFS-428: Adoption Assistance, if applicable.
J. Adoption Information Sheet.
K. Death certificate or medical notes recording the death.

The Adoption Supervisor may approve the adoption consent. Any denial of a postmortem adoption decree must be reviewed by the Division Deputy Director or designee.

903.11 Finalization

01/2021

The child's Adoption Specialist will:

A. Forward the following to the Adoption Supervisor when submitting the recommendation to finalize the adoption:
    1) CFS-432: Checklist for Recommendation for Finalization
    2) Initial home study of the adoptive family and all updates
    3) CFS-418: Adoption Summary of the child and all updates
    4) CFS-471: Signed Disclosure for Adoption
    5) Report of Adoption (accessible at http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/resource);
    6) Court order terminating parental rights

7) Certified birth certificate of child
8) FBI, state criminal record checks, and child maltreatment checks as applicable
9) CFS-428: Adoption Assistance, if applicable
10) Adoption Information Sheet

B. In the Division information management system, complete the Adoption Characteristics and Medical section of the Child's Characteristics screen.
C. Inform the family of post-adoption services utilizing Pub 31: Post Adoptive Services.
D. Document in the Division information management system narrative the plan of action to resolve barriers to finalizing the adoption (if the Adoption Supervisor does not agree with the recommendation):
    1) Inform the family of the recommendation
    2) Monitor and document the implementation of the plan of action and progress toward achieving the plan
E. Assist OCC Attorney in completing the Report of Adoption.
F. Provide detailed instructions for obtaining a new birth certificate to the adoptive family upon adoption finalization.
G. Forward within five (5) business days of Supervisor approval a packet of information to the OCC attorney or private agency attorney which includes:
    1) Signed CFS-471: Adoption Disclosure
    2) Certified birth certificate of child
    3) Termination of parental rights court order
    4) Home study of the adoptive family
    5) Child's CFS-418: Adoption Summary and updates
    6) CFS-428: Adoption Assistance, if applicable
    7) FBI, state criminal and child maltreatment record checks as applicable
    8) Adoption Information Sheet
    9) Report of Adoption
H. Obtain a certified copy of the final decree of adoption and supplemental adoption order and place them in the child's case file.
I. In the Division information management system:
    1) Child In-home Service Case:
        a) Ensure pre-adoptive parent has been added as a collateral in the Collateral Information Screen
        b) Enter a contact in the Contacts screen, addressing the court hearing and documenting, as appropriate, case closure Family Team Meeting, adoption contact, and legal services
        c) Complete Affidavit screen, including the post-adoptive services tab
        d) Complete an aftercare plan and update service status for all children to be adopted
        e) Exit child out of current 'pre-adoptive' placement by selecting Adoption as Exit Reason and entering the finalized adoption date as Exit Date
        f) Ensure completion of the Termination of Parental Rights screen, for each of the child's caregivers, in the Division information management system

g) Complete the Court Hearing screen for the hearing that finalized the adoption
h) Complete necessary steps under "Adoption Case" below
i) Close child in-home service case in Case Summary screen if all children are adopted and no other child in-home services case interventions are being offered to birth family or siblings
j) End-date all children to be adopted, in the Client screen, if the In-Home Services case is to remain open

2) Adoption Case:
a) Open New Adoption Case with adoptive parents and adoptive child as clients or locate previous adoption case and reopen, as appropriate
b) Complete Client General Information screens on all clients, including Relationship screens (retrieve the adoptive child's characteristics, eligibility, and affidavit of disclosure screens from old child permanency case)
c) Complete Adoption screens
d) Complete Adoption Subsidy screens, as applicable, and click Approval button to submit subsidy for Supervisor approval
e) Associate the adoptive case with the child's In-home Service Case by entering Other and then Make Association. Enter the case number for the In-home Service Case to create an association
f) Document contacts with adoptive family in Contact screen

J. Scan and email the following to Eligibility Unit Analyst and Subsidy Coordinator:
1) CFS-494: Notification of Adoption for Medicaid
2) Decree of Adoption
3) Approved Adoption Subsidy

K. Email to the Subsidy Coordinator the Decree of Adoption, Petition for Adoption and original signed Adoption Subsidy.

L. Refer to Internal Procedure Waiver of Residency Requirements for Adoption for situations that do not require that the child or youth be in a pre-adoptive placement for six (6) months before the adoption can be finalized.

The Adoption Supervisor will:

A. Assess the legal packet, information, and recommendation which has been forwarded by the Adoption Specialist, within five (5) business days.

B. Prepare and sign a consent for adoption if it is agreed that procedures to finalize the adoption should be initiated.

C. Notify the Adoption Specialist in writing to explain if there is disagreement to initiating the procedures to finalize the adoption.

D. Formulate with the Adoption Specialist a plan of action to resolve the barriers to finalizing the adoption.

E. Assign the finalized adoption case as primary to the Adoption Manager.

903.12 Waiver of Residency Requirements

08/2025

Per Arkansas Code Annotated §9-9-213, a child must reside in a pre-adoptive home for at least six months before an adoption can be finalized. However, exceptions may apply in certain circumstances. The DCFS Director has the authority to waive this requirement under any of the following conditions:

- The child is under six (6) months of age
- The child lives outside the home to receive medically necessary treatment
- The child is sixteen (16) years of age or older and actively participating in life skills, technical, or vocational program

To request a waiver of the residency requirement under the amended statute the Adoption Specialist will:

A. Complete CFS-421: Adoption Residency Waiver.
B. Submit a request for Waiver of Residency Requirements via email to the Adoption Supervisor:
    1) Attach the Completed CFS-421: Adoption Residency Waiver
C. Upon receipt of CFS-421 from the DCFS Director:
    1) If approved, proceed with finalization of the adoption
    2) If denied, proceed with pre-adoptive placement until the six-month timeframe has been met

The Adoption Supervisor will:

A. Review the request and within two (2) business days:
    1) Approve and submit to the Area Manager
    2) Deny and provide notification of the denial to the Adoption Specialist

The Area Manager will:

A. Review the request and within two (2) business days:
    1) Approve and submit to the DCFS Director
    2) Deny and provide notification of the denial to the Adoption Specialist and Adoption Supervisor

The DCFS Director will:

A. Review the request:
    1) If approved:
        a) Sign CFS-421: Adoption Residency Waiver
        b) Return to all via email
    2) If denied:
        a) Email a notification of denial to the Adoption Specialist, Adoption Supervisor, and Area Manager

903.13 Post-Adoption Services

01/2021

The Adoption Specialist will:

A. Open a Prevention Services case for the family.
B. Make referrals and arrange services upon request from the adoptive family.
C. Assist the adoptive family in completing forms and in following procedures.
D. Document contacts, activities, progress, concerns in Provider screens.
E. For cases remaining open more than thirty (30) days, transfer the Prevention Services case. to an In-home Services unit for assignment to a Specialist for further provision of services.

The Adoption Supervisor will:

A. Assign the case to an In-Home case unit inbox.
B. Consult with In-Home Unit Supervisor to provide information regarding the needs of the family.

The In-Home Unit Supervisor will:

A. Assign the case to a Specialist for service provision.
B. Transfer information from Adoption Supervisor to Specialist.
C. Ensure appropriate services are provided for family preservation.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Provide foster care and reunification services as appropriate.

Internal Procedure 904: Legal Custodian Petition to Adopt

01/2021

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Verify that termination of parental rights has occurred.
B. Request secondary assignment to Resource Specialist.
C. Complete CFS-426: Adoption Packet Checklist for the child and provide to Adoption Supervisor within fourteen (14) business days.
E. Upon provision of completed CFS-426: Adoption Packet Checklist request primary assignment be made to Adoption Specialist.

The Resource Specialist will:

A. For legal caregivers who elect to become an open resource home:
    1) Follow Internal Procedures to open the home as a fully licensed resource home
B. For custodians who do not elect to become an open resource home:

1) Gather all available documentation and document in Provider screens in the Division information management system as appropriate
2) Work with the family to obtain background checks
3) Ensure the family is opened as a resource home by working with the Division information management system support staff to complete necessary Provider screens (despite gaps in available information)

The Adoption Specialist will:

A. Follow Internal Procedure Finalization of an Adoption and Internal Procedure Post-Adoption Services with the exception that, rather than working with OCC for the associated legal proceedings, the Adoption Specialist will make a request to the Adoptions Manager to make a referral to the Division contracted provider for legal services.

The Adoptions Supervisor will:

A. Review CFS-426: Adoption Packet Checklist to ensure completeness.
B. Upon verification of CFS-426: Adoption Packet Checklist, complete primary case assignment to Adoption Specialist.

The Adoption Manager will:

A. Collaborate with the Manager or designee who oversees the Division contracted provider for legal services.

Internal Procedure 905: Adoption Subsidy

905.1 Initial Application for Adoption Subsidy

01/2021

The family's Adoption Specialist will:

A. Follow the same subsidy-related Policy and procedures, including subsidies for non-recurring legal expenses, whether the adoption is being handled in-state or out-of- state.
B. Ensure close coordination with the other state's Adoption Specialist, if applicable.
C. Determine that the child has a special need in relation to adoption planning, is between the age of birth to eighteen (18) years, is in the custody of the Division (for state subsidy only) and is legally free for adoption.
D. Determine if the child is eligible for federal IV-E adoption maintenance subsidy first. If ineligible for title IV-E, determine if the child is eligible for state funded adoption maintenance subsidy.
E. Determine that a reasonable, but unsuccessful, effort has been made to place the child without providing an adoption subsidy.
F. Document in each child's case record the specific factors that make the child difficult to place and describe the efforts to place the child for adoption without providing assistance.
G. Determine what type of adoption subsidies are needed and complete all application procedures by the 4th month of placement.
H. Review and sign the CFS-425: Application for Adoption Subsidy after the adoptive parent completes it.

I. Print title IV-E verification of eligibility from the Division information management system.
J. Be clear in the discussion with the family that they will only be screening for a determination of special needs, subsidy eligibility, and making a recommendation to the Adoption Services Unit:
    1) Under no circumstances will the Adoption Specialist give the adoptive family the subsidy determination prior to receipt of approval from the Adoption Services Unit
    2) The Adoption Specialist must also explore other resources and assistance that may be available for the child and adoptive family when screening for a subsidy
K. Complete the CFS-427: Determination of Eligibility for Adoption Subsidy and attach the following to the CFS-427:
    1) Verification of the costs for a private attorney to finalize an adoption whether in-state or out-of-state, if applicable
    2) Verification of court costs to finalize an adoption, if applicable
L. Complete the following:
    1) Special Board Rate Request to have a professional verify the child's complete medical condition, including dental, psychological, etc., as well as the diagnosis, prognosis, and costs of treatment for one (1) year if a special subsidy is requested:
        a) Children at high risk for the development of a serious physical, mental, developmental, or emotional condition may be considered special needs if documentation of the risk is provided by a medical professional specializing in the condition for which the child is considered at risk
        b) However, no subsidy payment will be made without documentation that the child has developed the actual condition
        c) In order to be eligible for special needs subsidy based on developmental delay, documentation must be provided, current within six (6) months, attesting to the fact that the child has a delay of twenty-four percent (24%) or more in two (2) major developmental categories
    2) Statement that lists the child's source of financial resources and amount (other than foster care board payment, if applicable):
        a) Verification from the appropriate agency which explains the child's eligibility for financial benefits (SSI, other types of Social Security benefits, VA,) once the adoption is finalized, if applicable
        b) Provide the agency with the amount of the adoptive parent's income in order that a statement can be prepared
        c) Once a child has been determined eligible for a federal subsidy, the adoptive parents cannot be rejected for adoption assistance nor can they have payments reduced without their agreement, because of their income, resources, or the child's resources
    3) Verification from Children's Medical Services (CMS) which explains the child's eligibility for services once the adoption is finalized, if applicable:
        a) Provide CMS with the amount of the adoptive parent's income in order that a statement can be prepared

M. Inform the adoptive parents that subsidy payments may continue until the end of the month of the child's 18th birthday, or by the end of the month of the child's 21st birthday if they meet one of the established criteria set out above.
N. Provide the following documentation with the initial adoption subsidy application packet:
    1) Emergency Petition
    2) Emergency Order or other initial custody court order
    3) Order for Termination of Parental Rights with Power to Consent to Adoption
    4) A copy of the CMA Worksheet in the Division information management system or, if applicable, award letter for SSI
    5) A copy of the approved selection form, as applicable
O. Prepare a narrative entitled "Subsidy Family Profile" about the adoptive family to include:
    1) Type of adoption (resource parent (traditional or kin), non-resource parent kin)
    2) Type of subsidy (maintenance, special, non-recurring, non-IV-E Medicaid)
    3) Funding source (federal or state)
    4) Child to receive subsidy (first name, age, race, developmental information, description of special needs, problems, limitation, reasons for being in out-of-home placement, and brief description of out-of-home placement history)
    5) Adoptive father (name, age, education, employment, and health)
    6) Adoptive mother (name, age, education, employment, and health)
    7) Other children in family (adopted, birth, custody, out-of-home placement, name, age, education, and health)
    8) Others in household (explain if applicable)
    9) Marriage (length and comments about the quality of the relationship)
    10) Housing (brief description)
    11) Income and resources (sources and amounts, health insurance coverage)
    12) Exploration of other resources and assistance that may be available for the child and adoptive family when screening for a subsidy
    13) Family and adoptive child relationship (description to include strengths and challenges)
    14) Reason for adoption subsidy (explain reason child needs adoption subsidy and reason for the adoptive parent requesting it)
    15) Subsidy request (maintenance costs per month and for not more than a year), special subsidy type of service and costs for not more than a year, legal assistance, if the OCC Attorney is requested to finalize the adoption, court costs, other subsidy requests and costs
    16) Recommendation to approve or deny
P. Submit the completed packet to the Adoption Supervisor for review and comment.
Q. Upon completion of supervisory review, send completed forms, narrative, documents, and other attachments to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator.

The Adoptive Subsidy Coordinator will:

A. Assess all submitted forms and documentation, make a recommendation to approve or deny the adoption subsidy application, and provide written notification to the Adoption

Specialist of the recommendation within three (3) business days of receiving the initial application packet from the Adoption Specialist:

1) Contact the Adoption Specialist if additional information or forms are needed

B. Prepare the CFS-428: Adoption Assistance Agreement and route it to the Adoption Manager for approval, then send the CFS-428 to the DCFS Director or designee for signature.
C. Send the signed CFS-428 to the Adoption Specialist with written instructions.
D. Notify the adoptive parent in writing if the application is denied and explain the reason, the internal review procedures, and the Administrative Fair Hearing procedures.
E. Send a copy of the notification of denial to the Adoption Specialist.
F. Scan all subsidy packets into eDoctus.

Upon receipt of approval of the adoption subsidy, the Adoption Specialist will:

A. Meet with the adoptive parent to explain an approval.
B. Review the CFS-428: Adoption Assistance Agreement.
C. Secure the adoptive parent's signature on the CFS-428 within five (5) business days from receipt of the agreement or prior to finalization.
D. Send the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator and adoptive parent a copy of the signed CFS-428 within three (3) business days upon receipt.
E. Contact the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator in writing within three (3) business days from the meeting if the adoptive parent has a disagreement with the contents of the CFS-428.
F. Meet with the adoptive parent to explain a denial, review the decision, and explain internal review procedures within ten (10) business days from receipt of written notification to deny.
G. Send a copy of the Adoption Petition and Final Decree of Adoption to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator within five (5) business days upon receipt.

905.2 Title IV-E Redetermination

01/2021

The federal title IV-E adoption assistance program does not require re-determination of a child's eligibility. Although the title XIX Medicaid Program and the programs that, in part, may qualify a child initially for adoption assistance, such as AFDC and SSI, require re-determinations, they are unnecessary for the purpose of maintaining a child's eligibility for title IV-E adoption assistance. Once a child has been determined eligible and is receiving title IV-E adoption assistance, the state may terminate the assistance only under the following circumstances:

A. Upon the adoptive parents' request.
B. Upon the child's death.
C. Upon the death of the adoptive parents of the child (in a two (2)-parent family, this means both parents).
D. At the cessation of legal responsibility of the adoptive parents for the child.
E. If the Division determines that the child is no longer receiving support from the adoptive parents.
F. When the child reaches the age of eighteen (18) unless:

1) The child's subsidy was extended (per the adoption subsidy agreement) past the age of eighteen (18), due to a mental or physical disability which warranted continuation of a federally-funded subsidy or state maintenance to be received, in which case the adoption subsidy would be terminated when the child attains the age of twenty-one (21)
2) The child's subsidy was extended past the age of eighteen (18) (per the adoption subsidy agreement) because the child was adopted at age sixteen (16) or older, in which case the child's subsidy would be terminated when the child attains the age of twenty-one (21), provided that the child also met one of the following circumstances from eighteen (18) years of age through twenty-one (21) years of age:
    a) The child is completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential
    b) The child is enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education
    c) The child is participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment
    d) The child is employed for at least eighty (80) hours per month; or
    e) The child is incapable of doing any of the above described activities due to a medical condition

The Division will ensure that the child meets these employment or education requirements. If a child is incapable of meeting the above referenced education or employment requirements due to a medical condition, the reason for which the child is incapable of meeting the education or employment requirements must be documented by a medical professional and updated annually until the child reaches twenty-one (21) years of age.

905.3 Criteria for SSI Eligible Private Agency and Independent Adoptions

01/2021

A child who is SSI eligible and is part of an independent adoption (not in the custody of a public or private agency) is eligible for a title IV-E subsidy.

If a child received title IV-E adoption assistance in a previous adoption that dissolved or in which the adoptive parents died, the child is eligible for title IV-E assistance when they are subsequently adopted. The Adoption Subsidy Coordinator must be contacted for an application packet.

The Adoption Subsidy Coordinator will:

A. Accept and review referrals for independent adoption and private agency subsidy applications.
B. Assess all submitted forms and documentation, make a recommendation to approve or deny the adoption subsidy application, and provide written notification to the applicant, the person who arranged the independent adoption, or the private agency representative

of the decision, within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the initial application packet from the Adoption Specialist.

C. Contact the applicant, the person who arranged the independent adoption, or private agency representative, if additional information or forms are needed.
D. Prepare the CFS-428: Adoption Assistance Agreement if it is recommended the adoption subsidy application be approved and route the CFS-428 to the Adoption Manager for approval, then send the CFS-428 to the DCFS Director or designee for signature.
E. Send signed CFS-428: Adoption Assistance Agreement to the applicant and Private Agency representative, if applicable, with written instructions.
F. Notify the adoptive parent in writing if the application is denied, to explain the reason for the denial, the internal review, and the Administrative Fair Hearing procedures.
G. In the Division information management system:
    1) Enter the adoptive parents and adoptive child as clients in the newly opened Adoption Case
    2) Complete the adoptive child's Characteristic screen to identify the special needs
    3) Complete the Adoption screens (General Information, Affidavit of Disclosure, and Subsidy) and request the approval of the adoption subsidy

905.4 Amendment to an Adoption Subsidy

01/2021

The Adoption Support Specialist will:

A. Follow the same subsidy-related Policy and procedures, regardless if the adoption is being handled in-state or out-of-state.
B. Ensure close coordination with the other state's Adoption Specialist, if applicable.
C. Amend a subsidy if there is documentation that an "at risk" child has developed a serious physical, mental or emotional condition.
D. Determine with adoptive parents if an amendment to the existing adoption subsidy is needed:
    1) An amendment may be requested at any time
    2) The adoptive family must consent to any subsidy amendment (title IV-E only)
    3) Determine if a change in subsidy payee is appropriate, based on documentation of divorce and custody, by:
        a) Reviewing the divorce decree and custody order to determine which parent was granted full custody of the child
        b) Ensuring that the parent awarded full custody of the child in the divorce decree or custody order signed the original adoption subsidy
        c) Re-routing the subsidy payment to the adoptive parent only after verification of steps one (1) and two (2) above
    4) Determine if there has been a significant change in type of condition of the child to warrant the amendment of a federally funded subsidy:
        a) A state may renegotiate an adoption assistance agreement if the adoptive parents request an increase in payment due to a change in type of condition of the child

b) A higher foster care rate would have been paid on behalf of the child if the child had still been experiencing foster care

5) Review and sign the "CFS-425: Application for Adoption" after the adoptive parent completes it

E. Carefully review all requests for increases in payment for state funded subsidies and special subsidies:
   1) As state dollars are limited, an exploration of other resources is required and must be documented in the narrative when submitting an amendment request
   2) The Division Deputy Director can review extraordinary circumstances at their discretion
F. Complete the "CFS-427: Determination of Eligibility for Adoption Assistance" if a special subsidy is requested.
G. Complete a narrative to address the type of subsidy needed, the source of funding, the reason for the subsidy, the costs, and recommendation.
H. Send all requests, the forms, narrative, and any other documents to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator within twenty (20) business days from the initial contact with the adoptive parent:
   1) For requests of special board rate increases, forward completed packets to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator for review and comment
   2) Communicate with the adoptive parent to:
      a) Explain an approval
      b) Review the CFS-428: Adoption Assistance
      c) Secure the adoptive parent's signature on the CFS-428 within ten (10) business days from receipt of the agreement
I. Send the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator and adoptive parent a copy of the signed CFS- 428.
J. Send the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator a written notification within three (3) business days from the meeting with the adoptive parent to explain a disagreement with the contents of the CFS-428.
K. Meet with the adoptive parent(s) to explain a denial, review the decision, and explain internal review procedures within ten (10) business days from receipt of the written notification to deny.
L. In the Division information management system, if the subsidy amendment is approved, change the Subsidy Ending Date on the Adoption Subsidy screen to stop the existing adoption subsidy. Then, click Clear and enter the new amended subsidy with the new Beginning and Ending dates and the subsidy amount. Request the Approval for the amended subsidy amount.
M. Prepare the CFS-428 if the adoption subsidy application is approved and route the CFS-428 to the Adoption Manager for approval, then send the CFS-428 to the DCFS Director or designee for signature.
N. Notify the adoptive parent in writing if the application is denied, to explain the reason for the denial, the internal review, and the Administrative Fair Hearing procedures.

905.5 Request for Continuation of Maintenance Subsidy after Age 18

01/2021

The Adoption Support Specialist will:

A. Include the above documentation and recommend whether the adoption subsidy should be continued past the child's eighteenth (18th) birthday.
B. If the adoption subsidy is approved to continue past the child's eighteenth (18th) birthday:
    1) Prepare the CFS-428-A: Adoption Assistance Agreement for State Funded Payments or CFS-428-B: Adoption Assistance Agreement for Federal IV-E Funded Assistance, as appropriate
    2) Route the CFS-428-A: Adoption Assistance Agreement for State Funded Payments or CFS-428-B: Adoption Assistance Agreement for Federal IV-E Funded Assistance, as appropriate, to the Adoption Services Unit Manager for review
    3) If the Adoption Services Unit Manager and DCFS Director approve the CFS-428-A or CFS-428-B, as appropriate:
        a) Change the Subsidy Ending Date on the Adoption Subsidy screen in the Division information management system, to continue subsidy past the child's eighteenth (18th) birthday
C. If the adoption subsidy is not approved to continue past the child's eighteenth (18th) birthday by either the Adoption Support Specialist, Adoption Manager, or DCFS Director or designee:
    1) Notify the adoptive parent in writing and explain the reason for denial
    2) Document the denial in the Division information management system

The Adoption Manager will:

A. Approve or deny the CFS-428-A: Adoption Assistance Agreement for State Funded Payments or CFS-428-B: Adoption Assistance Agreement for Federal IV-E Funded Assistance, as appropriate
B. If the Adoption Assistance Agreement is approved, send to the DCFS Director or designee for signature
C. If the Adoption Assistance Agreement is denied, notify the Adoption Support Specialist and explain the reason for denial

The DCFS Director or designee will:

A. Approve or deny the CFS-428-A or CFS-428-B, as appropriate.
B. Return the CFS-428-A or CFS-428-B, as appropriate, to the Adoption Manager.

905.6 Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance

01/2021

A child who is receiving Medicaid as a result of an adoption subsidy may continue to receive the subsidy if the child moves to or from another state.

The Adoption Support Specialist will:

A. Contact the ICAMA Coordinator or refer an adoptive parent to the ICAMA Coordinator in the DCFS Adoption Services Unit.
B. Provide the ICAMA Coordinator with the adoptive family's new address, phone number, and the effective date of the move.

The ICAMA Coordinator will:

A. Complete the ICAMA forms in relation to a child who is moving from the state and forward the forms to the new state of residence. Forward the following:
    1) Form 6.01 (Notice of Medicaid Eligibility/Case Activation)
    2) Form 6.02 (Notice of Action)
    3) Form 6.03 (Change in Child/Family Status), if applicable
B. Forward completed ICAMA forms to the Eligibility Unit in relation to a child who moves into the state:
    1) Form 6.01 OR a COBRA Letter
    2) Copy of the Adoption Subsidy Agreement

905.7 Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses and Special Subsidy

01/2021

The Adoption Specialist will:

A. Submit a billing packet to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator for non-recurring adoption expenses within sixty (60) days after the finalization of the adoption. Non-recurring adoption expenses shall not exceed a total of $1,500.00.
B. For non-travel related expenses, the packet will include: the DHS-1914, original invoice, a copy of the CFS-428-A: Adoption Assistance Agreement for State Funded Subsidy Payments or CFS-428-B: Adoption Assistance Agreement for Federal IV-E Funded Assistance, as applicable, and final adoption decree.
C. For travel-related expenses, the packet will include TR-1, receipts, a copy of the 428-A: Adoption Assistance Agreement for State Funded Subsidy Payments or CFS-428-B: Adoption Assistance Agreement for Federal IV-E Funded Assistance, and the final adoption decree.
D. For payment of a special subsidy, the packet will include DHS-1914; original invoice; copy of the 428-A: Adoption Assistance Agreement for State Funded Subsidy Payments or CFS-428-B: Adoption Assistance Agreement for Federal IV-E Funded Assistance; and the final adoption decree.

The Adoption Subsidy Coordinator will:

A. Review, code, and forward each completed billing packet within ten (10) business days and forward to the Adoptions Manager for approval.

The Adoptions Manager will:

A. Forward the approved packet to the office of finance for payment within ten (10) business days of receipt from the Subsidy Coordinator.

905.8 Termination of Adoption Subsidy

01/2021

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. In the event a child with an adoption subsidy enters foster care:
    1) Contact OCC and discuss a petition for child support in the amount of the full adoption subsidy
    2) Explain to adoptive parents that any monies received by them on behalf of the child should be maintained by the adoptive parents until the issue is resolved by the Office of Child Support Enforcement
B. If termination of parental rights occurs for a child whose parents are receiving an adoption subsidy:
    1) Within five (5) business days, notify the Adoption Support Specialist that termination of parental rights has occurred for a child whose adoptive parents were receiving adoption subsidy payments
    2) Provide a copy of the order terminating parental rights to the Adoption Support Specialist within ten (10) business days of receipt of the signed order

The Adoption Specialist will:

A. Assess any change in the adoptive family's circumstances which would warrant termination of the adoption subsidy.
B. Determine if termination of the adoption subsidy is necessary.
C. Conduct a meeting with the Adoption Manager or designee.
D. Provide written notification to the adoptive parent to explain the reason for the termination of the adoption subsidy and the internal review procedures.

The Adoption Support Specialist will:

A. Upon receipt of the copy of the court order terminating parental rights or other documentation indicating that the subsidy must be terminated as prescribed in the Adoption Assistance Agreement, send written notice to the adoptive parents informing them of the Division intent to terminate the subsidy fourteen (14) calendar days from receipt of the notice:
    1) The notice will also inform the parents of their right to appeal the termination and how to request an administrative hearing for such an appeal
    2) The notice will be sent via process server or via certified mail, restricted delivery with a returned receipt requested
B. In the Division information management system:
    1) If adoption subsidy is terminated, change the subsidy ending date on the Adoption Subsidy Screen to stop the existing adoption subsidy
    2) If there are other adoptive siblings with existing adoption subsidies, end-date the adoptive child's involvement in the case by selecting the appropriate reason on the child's General Information Screen
    3) If there are no other adoptive siblings with existing adoption subsidies, close the

adoption case on the Case Summary screen selecting the appropriate reason

4) Upon receipt of an order terminating parental rights, end date the subsidy on the Adoption Subsidy Screen and close the adoption case on the Case Summary Screen selecting the appropriate reason

Internal Procedure 906: Adult Adoption from Extended Foster Care

08/2025

DCFS strives to achieve permanency for youth experiencing foster care prior to the age of eighteen (18), but recognizes this goal is not always met. However, in the event a young adult participating in the Extended Foster Care Program finds a forever family, DCFS will facilitate an adult adoption prior to the young person turning twenty-one (21) years of age. An adult adoption subsidy is available for youth aged eighteen (18) to twenty-one (21) for the purpose of meeting the needs of the youth. In addition, payments for one-time expenses, known as a non-recurring adoption subsidy, may be obtained to reimburse the family for out-of-pocket pre-adoptive or finalization expenditures.

In these situations, the Adoption Specialist will:

A. Organize and facilitate a family team meeting with the young adult and potential adoptive parent to ensure mutual understanding regarding the goal of the adult adoption, Medicaid coverage, any other benefits that would be impacted by the adoption, and the adoption subsidy:
    1) Typically, the subsidy amount will be the same as the current board payment
    2) Regarding Medicaid coverage:
        a) If the youth is IV-E eligible, then IV-E Medicaid will attach to the adoption subsidy
        b) If the youth is not IV-E eligible, the subsidy will be state funded, and, therefore, Medicaid will not attach to the adoption subsidy. However, the young adult will qualify for Former Foster Care Medicaid once the adult adoption is finalized. The young adult must apply for Former Foster Care Medicaid at the local Department of Human Services (DHS) county office once the adoption is finalized
    3) Once the adoption is finalized, a young adult is no longer eligible for all Transitional Youth Service Supports as set out in the Transitional Youth Services (TYS) Services Table:
        a) The young adult will continue to qualify for the services listed under the General Transitional Youth Services and After Care for Youth sections, being mindful of the eligibility criteria set forth for each Service/Support
        b) The young adult will no longer qualify for the benefits laid out in the Extended Foster Care section
B. If the decision to move forward with the adult adoption is made, complete an adult adoption subsidy packet to submit to the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator in Central Office. This packet must include the CFS-453-H: Checklist for Initial Adult Adoption Subsidy Packet along with all applicable supporting documentation as listed on the checklist.

The Adoption Subsidy Coordinator will:

A. Review the packet and complete the applicable adoption subsidy agreement form:
    1) CFS-428-D: Adoption Assistance Agreement for Adult Adoption (Federal)
    2) CFS-428-E: Adoption Assistance Agreement for Adult Adoption (State)
B. Route completed agreement forms to the Adoption Manager for approval, then send to the DCFS Director or designee for signature.
C. Send the signed CFS-428-D or CFS-428-E, as applicable, to the Adoption Specialist with written instructions.
D. Notify the adoptive parent in writing if the application is denied and explain the reason, the internal review procedures, and the Administrative Fair Hearing procedures:
    1) Send a notification of denial to the Adoption Specialist
F. Scan all subsidy packets into eDoctus.

The Adoption Specialist will:

A. Forward the following to the Adoption Supervisor when submitting the recommendation to finalize the adoption:
    1) CFS-432: Checklist for Recommendation for Finalization of Adoption
    2) CFS-418: Adoption Summary of the child and all updates
    3) CFS-471: Signed Disclosure for Adoption
    4) VR-15 Report of Adoption
    5) Certified Birth Certificate of young adult
    6) FBI, state criminal record checks, and child maltreatment checks as applicable
    7) CFS-428-D or CFS-428-E: Adoption Assistance Agreement for Federal IV-E Funded Assistance for Adoption of Adult in Extended Foster Care or Adoption Assistance Agreement for State Funded Assistance for Adoption of Adult in Extended Foster Care as applicable
    8) Adoption Information Sheet
B. Send the packet to the OCC attorney within five (5) business days following supervisory approval.
C. Complete the steps to finalize the adoption as set out in Internal Procedure Finalization of an Adoption; specifically, steps I through L.

Internal Procedure 907: Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry

01/2021

The Registry Administrator will:

A. Prepare forms to be shared with administrators of other agencies when an applicant identifies another agency as the agency having completed the adoption.
B. Establish office procedures which will ensure the confidentiality of the Registry, its records, and identifying information.
C. Ensure that information contained in the Registry or obtained by Registry staff consists of non-identifying information only.
D. Send information packets containing registration requirements, procedures, and an

affidavit to any person inquiring about registration.

E. Access the agency's closed adoption records and court records (limited to the act of verifying a Registry match or for compilation of non-identifying information).
F. Collect fees for registration services and accept affidavits for registration.
G. Provide written notification to qualified registrants as to the status of the initial search of all registrants who wish to be identified.
H. Send notification to match registrants by certified mail.
I. Determine if non-identifying information is available and if the registrant is eligible to receive it.
J. Provide non-identifying genetic, health, and social history of the adoptee in the form of a written adoption summary.
K. Mail non-identifying written summary of information to the registrant by certified mail.
L. Maintain copies of non-identifying information in a secured location.
M. Keep records of every adult adoptee and birth caregiver reunited through the use of Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry.
N. Provide a de-identified copy of the foster care record to the adoptee upon request. De-identify the names of any reporters of child abuse and/or neglect.
O. Arrange for an adoptee to review their foster care record upon request. This access is NOT available to adoptees who were placed as infants for the sole purpose of adoption.

The Adoption Specialist will:

A. Refer any person inquiring about the Registry to the Registry Administrator, Adoption Services Unit.
B. Provide a minimum of no less than one (1) hour of counseling to Registry applicants for receipt of identifying information and sign the affidavit to verify the service.

Internal Procedure 908: International Adoptions

07/2010

The Adoptions Manager or designee will:

A. Respond to inquiries/referrals about international adoptions.
B. Provide list of licensed private adoption agencies who will complete adoption assessments for inter-country adoptions.
C. Determine if an adoption assessment prepared by a qualified licensed social worker or others designated by the court meet child placement licensing requirements for adoption in Arkansas. (Licensed adoption agencies are exempt from this review.)
D. Provide an approval letter to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) upon request to verify compliance to licensing requirements.
E. Maintain permanent adoption files.
F. Train staff with licensed private adoption agencies, licensed social workers, and others

designated by the court involved with inter-country adoption.

The Adoption Specialist will:

A. Refer inter-country adoption inquiries or referrals to the Adoptions Manager or designee.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES TO PROMOTE PERMANENCY AND WELL-BEING

Internal Procedure 1000: Transitional Youth Services

02/2026

The purpose of Transitional Youth Services (TYS) is to better prepare youth in DCFS custody, who are experiencing out-of-home placement or whose adoption or guardianship is finalized at age sixteen (16) or after, for successful transition to adulthood and to ensure that youth have access to an array of resources.

1000.1 Referral for Transitional Youth Services

01/2011

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Complete the CFS-001: Referral for Transitional Services & Support on all youth entering foster care between the ages of fourteen (14) and eighteen (18):
    1) CFS-001: Referral for Transitional Services & Support will be completed on youth who turn fourteen (14) while experiencing foster care
B. Forward the completed and signed CFS-001 to the TYSC:
    1) The youth must sign the CFS-001 to be eligible for Chafee-specific services and support
C. If the youth chooses to participate, notify the TYSC Supervisor and they will assign the TYSC, as appropriate.
D. Assist the youth in completing a life skills assessment within thirty (30) days of entering care or within thirty (30) days after their 14th birthday.
E. After the Family Case Plan is completed, initiate a transitional team meeting and document on the Contact screen and in the transitional plan as appropriate.
F. Ensure that each youth aged fourteen through seventeen (14-17) is individually assessed every six (6) months to:
    1) Review their Life Plan
    2) Determine what life skills they have attained
    3) Determine what life skills they still need
G. Ensure that each youth aged fourteen through seventeen (14-17) is assessed annually using the appropriate life skills assessment tool.
H. Share the reassessment results with the TYSC and document the results in the Division information management system.
I. Coordinate logistics for life skills training or other youth development activities with the resource parent or caretaker.
J. Prepare the youth for transitional team meetings.
K. Enter data into the Division information management system in a timely manner.

If the youth makes a planned move, such as to attend college or to another county, the Social Service Supervisor in the primary county should communicate with the Social Service Supervisor in the resident county before the youth moves.
If the youth makes an unplanned move to another county, the Social Service Supervisor in the primary county should notify within ten (10) days, by email, the Social Service Supervisor in the resident county. The receiving Social Service Supervisor should then make secondary caseload assignments to the Social Service Specialist and the TYSC and directly notify them of the assignment. All workload assignments will go through the Coordinator's immediate Social Service Supervisor and not the individual County Managers.

If a youth is transferred to another area or county not designated as primary, the Social Service Specialist in the residence area or county should:

A. Assist in obtaining an assessment or reassessment if the date occurs while the client is in the other county.
B. Transfer case files and all records of life-skills training sessions attended, skills acquired or mastered, and copies of assessment results to the Specialist and the TYSC in the resident county to ensure that training needs and goals will continue to be addressed.
C. Assist youth in completing the NYTD survey, if applicable.

The Transitional Youth Services Coordinator (TYSC) will:

A. Update the Contact screen in the Division information management system each time contact is made with a youth. Contacts include group training sessions, face-to-face contact, phone contact, the youth's attendance in life-skills training, transitional team meetings, or ETV consultation:
    1) Document the title of parties involved and content and information covered during discussions as well as information concerning the youth's participation
    2) Complete Education and Employment Screens when appropriate
    3) Develop life skills training resources
B. Complete Coordinator Monthly Summary.
C. Submit the monthly summary to the TYSC Supervisor and the TYS Program Manager by the sixth day of the month.
D. Coordinate and support transitional activities with the Specialist when appropriate.
E. Document the completion of the initial life skills assessment and any reassessments on the IL Checklist screen and that the results were routed to the youth, Specialist, and resource parents or provider in the Document Tracking screen.
F. Document all transitional activities and services on the Client Contact Information screen.

1000.2 Youth Transitional Plan & Life Plan

08/2012

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Develop a transitional plan with all youth experiencing foster care between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one (14 and 21), and for all youth who turn fourteen (14) while experiencing foster care, within ninety (90) days of entering care or within ninety (90) days

after their fourteenth (14th) birthday.

B. Assist the youth in developing a transitional team to include individuals identified by the youth as significant (such as resource parents, bio family, AAL, CASA, mentors, therapists, TYSC, teachers, coaches).
C. Review the transitional plan every six (6) months to ensure consistency with education plan, Family Case Plan, and life plan and coordinate with the youth's school at least annually, until the youth exits foster care or secondary school.
D. Determine, based on the youth's age, maturity, disabilities, and other factors, what is appropriate to include in the transitional plan.
E. Determine at which point in the youth's development to include the following components, all of which must be present by the time the youth is seventeen (17) years old:
    1) Education component
    2) Employment component
    3) Health component to include information on:
        a) Options for health insurance
        b) Importance of designating someone to make health care decisions on their behalf when they exit from foster care, if they become unable, or if they do not have or do not want, an otherwise authorized relative to do so (DCFS serves as the youth's health care power of attorney or health care proxy until the youth exits foster care)
        c) Assist the youth in contacting the individuals who they would like to serve as their health care power of attorney or health care proxy and completing documentation authorizing a health care power of attorney or health care proxy
        d) Documentation of health care power of attorney or health care proxy if the youth chooses to designate one (1)
    4) Housing component
    5) Lifelong connections component
    6) Written confirmation that the youth has been informed of their right to stay in foster care after reaching eighteen (18) years of age for education, treatment, work, or other specific programs and services, including but not be limited to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and other transitional services
    7) The youth's court case record, including information on:
        a) Their biological family
        b) Foster care placement history
        c) Tribal information, if applicable
        d) Whereabouts of siblings, if any, unless a court determines that release of information pertaining to siblings would jeopardize the safety or welfare of the sibling
    8) List of significant individuals in the youth's life
    9) Assistance in obtaining a free credit report and if the youth has a bad credit report because of identity theft, assistance in correcting the credit report
F. Assist the youth or arrange for assistance in:

1) Procuring life skills training
2) Completing applications for:
    a) ARKids First, Medicaid, or assistance in obtaining other health insurance
    b) Referrals to transitional housing, if available, or assistance in securing other housing
    c) Assistance in obtaining employment or other financial support
3) Applying for admission to a college or university, or to a vocational training program, or another educational institution and in obtaining financial aid, when appropriate
4) Developing and maintaining relationships with individuals who are important to the youth and who may serve as a resource to the youth based on their best interests

G. With court permission and if the youth desires, facilitate family time between the youth and their relatives.
H. Assist all youth in or entering foster care at age fourteen (14) or above or in the 9th grade, whichever comes first, within ninety (90) days after their 14th birthday or ninety(90) days after entering the 9th grade, in developing a life plan (CFS-002: Life Plan and Agreement for Youth in Transition):
    1) The life plan shall be youth-driven
    2) The life plan shall contain a concrete to-do list for youth, staff, and stakeholders
    3) The life plan should be adopted by the transitional team within six (6) months of the youth's 16th birthday or entry into foster care, whichever comes first
I. Hold a final transitional team meeting within ninety (90) days of youth's planned exit from foster care.
J. Invite the youth's TYSC to the transitional team meeting to discuss Chafee After Care support and ETV.
K. At the final transitional team meeting, complete CFS-003: Checklist for Youth Approaching Adulthood. Provide the youth with the following and obtain their signature and that of their attorney ad litem confirming receipt:
    1) Social security card
    2) Certified birth certificate or verification of birth record, if available or should have been available
    3) Family photos in the possession of the Division
    4) All the youth's health records for the time the youth was experiencing foster care and any other medical records that were available or should have been available to the Division. A youth who chooses to continue to experience foster care after reaching age eighteen (18) may request that their health records remain private
    5) All the youth's educational records for the time the youth was experiencing foster care and any other educational records that were available or should have been available to the Division
    6) Driver's license and other picture identification
    7) Transitional resources book and life book, if applicable
    8) Life plan
    9) If the youth elected not to designate a health care power of attorney or health care proxy before aging out of care (whether at eighteen [18] or twenty-one [21]),

contact information for legal services if at a later point the youth decides to designate someone to make health care decisions on their behalf, if they become unable to participate in such decisions and do not have, or do not want, a relative who would otherwise be authorized to make such decisions

10) All information contained within the youth's Family Case Plan (current or former, as requested)
11) A list of all the youth's former placements

L. Document a current address and contact information for youth who reside outside the resource home to study, work, or for any other reason. This information must be kept current.
M. Within seventy-two (72) hours of case closure, notify the Eligibility Unit of the case closing and provide the Trust Coordinator with any information requested.

The Transitional Youth Services Unit Manager or designee will:

A. Review the Division information management system report regarding TYS credit check alerts monthly to determine when to run an annual credit check on youth who are sixteen (16) and older:
    1) Submit information on each appropriate youth to each of the three (3) nationwide Credit Reporting Agencies (CRAs) – Transunion, Equifax, and Experian – in succession. Do not contact all three (3) CRAs at the same time to request a credit check. This process will begin within thirty (30) days of the youth's 16th birthday or within thirty (30) days of the youth coming into care, whichever comes first, until the youth exits care:
        a) One (1) CRA must be contacted, the credit check information received from that CRA, and any inaccuracies corrected before the next CRA is contacted. Ensure that one (1) full year has passed since accessing the previous year's report before viewing the current year's report
        b) Obtain a copy of the credit report, if a report exists (the majority of youth under the age of eighteen (18) should not have a credit report), from each of the three (3) Nationwide Credit Reporting Agencies (CRAs) -- TransUnion, Equifax, and Experian -- for each youth (information must be obtained from each CRA in succession. All three (3) CRAs are not to be contacted at the same time regarding a particular youth
B. If problems or inaccuracies are detected on a youth's credit report, contact the CRA that issued the report to resolve any inaccuracies found in the report:
    1) Explain that the youth is a minor and cannot legally enter any type of contract
    2) To prove that the child is a minor, send the CRA:
        a) A copy of the child's birth certificate or other documentation of age, such as a court order
        b) A letter asking them to remove all accounts, application inquiries, and collection notices from the credit report associated with the child's name or personal information
        c) Documentation verifying that the youth is experiencing foster care and the Division is authorized to act on behalf of the youth

3) Discuss with the CRA the appropriate course of action and initiate applicable next steps for the actions

C. Share relevant information with the youth and the youth's Specialist and TYSC.
D. Document credit report review in Contact screen in the Division information management system.

The Eligibility Unit Trust Coordinator will:

A. Within thirty (30) days after the youth exits foster care, provide the youth with the following information:
    1) A full accounting of all funds held by the Division to which they are entitled
    2) How to access the funds
    3) When the funds will be available

Internal Procedure 1001 - Extended Foster Care

05/2022

Extended foster care provides case management services and support, as well as financial assistance with room and board costs for a youth who meets all the following criteria:

A. Was adjudicated dependent or dependent neglected.
B. Was experiencing foster care at eighteen (18) years of age but is not yet twenty-one (21) years of age (or such other age as may be required under federal law).
C. Wishes to participate in extended foster care to benefit from the program.
D. Is one (1) or more of the following:
    1) Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential
    2) Enrolled in an institution that provides post-secondary or vocational education
    3) Participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment
    4) Employed for at least eighty (80) hours per month
    5) Has a viable plan to meet the requirements one (1) through four (4) above
    6) Incapable of completing school or work activities above due to a documented medical condition, which incapability is supported by regularly updated information in the youth's Family Case Plan

1001.1 Extended Foster Care

05/2022

The Social Service Specialist, with support from the Transitional Youth Services Coordinator, will:

A. Explain and complete CFS-009: Extended Foster Care Agreement with the youth when the youth decides to participate in Extended Foster Care and preferably before turning eighteen (18).
B. Consider the following issues with the youth:
    1) The school the youth will attend, if applicable
    2) Searching for and securing a job, if applicable
    3) Living arrangements, including without limitation helping the youth locate a residence and assisting with any housing applications

4) Choosing a sponsor
5) Budgeted income and expenses
6) Amount of board payment
7) Start-up items
8) Transportation needs
9) Continued life-skills training
10) Support needed to help youth remain in school, if applicable
11) Designating a health care power of attorney or health care proxy

C. Assist the youth and their transitional team in determining appropriate housing and needed support.
D. Complete CFS-024: Residence Checklist for Youth for any youth living in their own apartment or other independent setting.
E. Develop a budget via CFS-025 with the youth and their Transitional Team.
F. Contact the youth face-to-face at least once a month.
G. Obtain approval for less than twice-monthly contacts from the County Manager, if appropriate.
H. Maintain monthly contacts with the youth's sponsor. Contacts may be by telephone.
I. Obtain the youth's consumer credit report annually until the youth exits foster care, and:
    1) Access the report via www.annualcreditreport.com within thirty (30) days of the youth's birthday or within thirty (30) days of the youth entering care, whichever comes first; however, only access it on an annual basis (that being, ensure that one (1) full year has passed since accessing the previous year's report before viewing the current year's report)
    2) Review report with the youth and help youth in interpreting the report within ten (10) business days of accessing the report
    3) Assist youth in resolving any inaccuracies found in the report
    4) Document the credit report review in the Division information management system, selecting "Annual Credit Check – Engage Youth"
    5) Share relevant information with the youth's Transitional Services Coordinator
J. Update or otherwise complete CFS-003: Checklist for Youth Approaching Adulthood as the youth approaches twenty-one (21) or other planned exit from the Extended Foster Care Program.

1001.2 Independent Living Program (ILP) Sponsors

08/2026

The Social Service Specialist, with support from the TYS Coordinator, will:

A. Assist the youth in locating and choosing a sponsor who is not the person from whom the youth was removed. The role of the sponsor is to provide support and guidance to the youth as they transition to adulthood. The sponsor will be a supportive adult with whom the youth already has a connection:
    1) For youth who are unable to identify such an individual, staff may recommend someone who is already serving as a sponsor to other youth in extended foster care or a volunteer from the community

2) Before approving an ILP Sponsor, all required background checks shall be completed, including a State Police Criminal Record Check, Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check, and an FBI fingerprint criminal history check:
    a) Background check information shall be documented in the Division information management system prior to the approval of the sponsor
    b) If any background check identifies information requiring review, staff shall consult the Area Manager for guidance. Background check findings will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis:
        i. Offenses requiring review by the Child Welfare Agency Review Board are not eligible for approval as an ILP Sponsor

B. Request that the local resource team establish an "ILP Sponsor" service for the approved sponsor in the Division information management system and key the youth into the placement service with the board amount listed in the youth's approved budget.

The youth's ILP Sponsor will:

A. Serve as a member of the youth's transitional team to include participating in the youth's Transitional Team meetings.
B. Provide support and guidance to the youth as they transition to adulthood (for example, assisting with decision making, including without limitation decisions regarding education, employment, and housing).
C. Receive the youth's board payment and assist the youth with budgeting the board payment.
D. Help to ensure the youth meets at least one (1) of the Extended Foster Care Program requirements or has a viable plan in place to meet one (1) of the Extended Foster Care Program requirements.
E. Maintain regular contact with the youth.

In addition, youth eighteen (18) years of age and older who are participating in the Extended Foster Care Program may live with their ILP Sponsors (even if the ILP Sponsor is not an approved resource home) as appropriate, provided that all of the following are met:

A. All required background checks, including State Police Criminal Record Check, Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check, and an FBI fingerprint criminal history checks, have been completed for all adults who reside in the home and meet eligibility requirements:
    1) Any criminal history or child maltreatment finding requiring review shall follow current waiver procedures as indicated in Internal Procedure: Alternate Compliance and Policy Waiver Protocol
    2) Offenses requiring review by the Child Welfare Agency Review Board are not eligible for approval as an ILP Sponsor
B. A visual inspection of the sponsor's home is conducted, and the home is deemed safe and appropriate for a young adult.
C. The Area Manager or designee and the youth's attorney ad litem approve the living arrangement with the sponsor.

D. A transitional team meeting is held to ensure the sponsor understands their role and that individualized guidelines and expectations are established for any youth who will reside with their sponsor including curfews and responsibility for assisting with costs of living, if applicable, via the youth's board payment.

An approved resource parent may serve as both a resource parent for children placed in their home and an ILP Sponsor for a youth in extended foster care but who is not residing in the resource home:

A. An 'ILP Sponsor' service will be opened for that individual.
B. Any resource parent who wishes to serve as a sponsor for a youth and who is set up under a master provider (such as Therapeutic Foster Care or Private Licensed Placement Agencies), must be set up with a new ILP Sponsor service with a new provider number.

If a youth experiencing foster care was placed in a resource home prior to turning eighteen (18) years of age and continues to stay in that resource home after turning eighteen (18) years of age (and while participating in the Extended Foster Care Program), the youth will remain keyed into the resource home as a regular placement rather than keying the resource parent as the sponsor for the youth.

1001.3 Youth as Their Own Monthly Board Payee

08/2025

For most of the youth experiencing Extended Foster Care, the preference is for a Independent Living Program (ILP) Sponsor to be identified for the youth. The role of the sponsor is to provide support and guidance to the youth as they transition to adulthood, as well as receive the board payment on the youth's behalf. The sponsor is then intended to assist the youth in managing the board payment according to their established budget developed by the youth and their transitional team.

However, there may be occasional situations in which a youth experiencing Extended Foster Care may be made their own payee for the monthly board payment. The following elements will be assessed by the youth's transitional team to determine if the youth may be made their own payee:

A. Efforts made to locate an appropriate sponsor for the youth and reasons for which an appropriate sponsor could not be identified for the youth.
B. Maturity level of the youth, particularly as it relates to youth's history of managing money responsibly.
C. Youth's history of consistent communication with Division staff.
D. Whether the youth is currently in compliance with the Extended Foster Care requirements or has a viable plan to come into compliance with said requirements.

If based on the assessment above, the youth's transitional team determines the youth should be their own payee:

A. The youth's origin county Specialist will submit the request via email to their Area Manager with their Supervisor carbon copied.
B. If the Area Manager approves, they will forward the request to the Assistant

Director of Field Operations or designee.

C. If the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee approves, they will forward the request to the DCFS Director or designee.
D. If the DCFS Director or designee approves, the approval notification will be communicated back to the origin county Specialist.
E. The Specialist will request the youth to complete a W-9 form to set the youth up as a vendor.
F. The Specialist will submit to their Area Financial Coordinator the completed W-9 along with the approval from the DCFS Director or designee to make the youth their own payee.
G. The Area Financial Coordinator will submit the request and associated documentation referenced above to their Budget Specialist in Central Office to establish the youth as a vendor in AASIS.
H. Once a vendor number has been established for the youth, the budget Specialist will notify the Area Financial Coordinator and origin county Specialist.
I. The origin county Specialist will request the local Resource Supervisor to open the youth as a provider in the Division information management system.
J. The Resource Supervisor will open the youth as a provider and make the youth "unavailable" as a placement option in the Division information management system.
K. The origin county Specialist or their Supervisor will key the youth into the placement and enter the board amount, as established by the youth's budget developed by the youth and their transitional team.
L. The youth's transitional team will monitor how the youth manages their monthly board payments by periodically requesting expense payment verification.
M. Finally, the youth's transitional team will also ensure the youth understands that, in the event they expend their board payment before paying all monthly expenses, the Division is not responsible for providing additional funding to the youth prior to the next board payment, unless the youth qualifies for any of the financial supports outlined on the TYS Support Table for youth in Extended Foster Care:
    1) The origin county Specialist will document this conversation in the Division information management system

1001.4 Youth Residing Out of State

08/2025

DCFS recognizes that youth experiencing Extended Foster Care may want to pursue opportunities outside the State of Arkansas. While the Division wishes to reasonably support youth in such endeavors and allow them to remain connected to DCFS staff in Arkansas, there are also challenges to providing a sufficient level of supervision and care to youth residing out of state. In addition, in some instances youth may qualify for more benefits in their current state of residence if they are not participating in the Arkansas Extended Foster Care Program.

As such, a youth living outside of Arkansas is only eligible to participate in the Arkansas Extended Foster Care Program if at least one (1) of the following requirements is met:

A. The youth has moved to another state to reside with family and is still enrolled in

high school:

1) The youth may continue to participate in the Extended Foster Care Program until they earn a high school diploma or GED

B. The youth has been placed by DCFS with an out-of-state placement provider.
C. The youth is attending college or another accredited post-secondary education or training program in another state supported by an Arkansas Education and Training Voucher (ETV).
D. The youth is serving in any branch of the military and attending basic training out of state or otherwise meeting service requirements out of state.
E. The youth does not meet any of the requirements above, but the youth's current state of residence agrees to provide supervision through a non-minor dependent (NMD) Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) request.

Beyond these basic eligibility requirements, the youth must also agree to:

A. Participate in monthly virtual contacts with the assigned origin county Specialist in Arkansas:
    1) When keying the virtual contacts, select the Face to Face (Other) as the "Type/Location" for the contact
B. Provide documentation to their origin county Specialist that verifies they are complying with the Arkansas Extended Foster Care Program requirements:
    1) For youth who move to another state under a non-minor dependent ICPC supervision agreement, this documentation must be provided by no later than sixty (60) days from the youth's arrival in the other state and may also be obtained by the assigned caseworker in the other state
C. Identify an eligible ILP Sponsor who has the ability to electronically transfer the board payment funds to the youth:
    1) This sponsor requirement is waived if the youth has been approved to serve as their own payee for monthly board payments

Prior to agreeing to allow the youth to reside outside of Arkansas while participating in the Arkansas Extended Foster Care Program, the origin county Specialist will contact the DCFS Eligibility Unit to determine the appropriate steps regarding the youth's Medicaid coverage.

When developing a budget for a youth who is eligible to participate in the Arkansas Extended Foster Care while residing in another state, the youth's specific circumstances will be considered. For example, for a youth serving in the military, the majority of their room and board needs will already be met through their respective branch of the military. However, a small budget provided by DCFS may still be reasonable to cover any expenses not covered by the military such as a cell phone bill.

1001.5 Hotel Stays

08/2025

Placing a youth who is participating in the Extended Foster Care Program in a hotel is a last resort. However, due to a variety of factors, DCFS must occasionally utilize this option to ensure a youth's

safety. Hotel stays are intended to be short-term options until a better long-term housing option can be secured for the youth.

Prior to making a hotel reservation for a youth, the youth must agree to abide by the following:

A. Contact the hotel if there is a delay in checking in as some hotels cancel reservations if the youth has not checked in by a specific time (for some hotels this is as early as 6:00 p.m.).
B. Only youth for whom the reservation is made can be in the room -- no other guests.
C. No smoking, drinking alcohol, or using any illegal substances or mis-using over-the-counter medications in the room.
D. Be mindful of noise levels. Keep the TV volume down. Do not play music loudly.
E. Do not damage the room and keep the hotel room reasonably clean (take trash out, do not leave food sitting outside the fridge, keep laundry in one place).
F. Allow hotel staff to clean the room once or twice weekly.
G. Do not make phone calls from the phone in the hotel room or charge anything else to the room. Fees may apply to movies and other extras.

If any of these agreements are violated or DCFS receives complaints from the hotel about the youth's behavior or condition of the room, the Division may cancel the reservation. Further, if the hotel asks the youth to leave, DCFS cannot guarantee that another room in a different hotel will be provided.

When a youth is placed in a hotel, the primary Specialist will key the youth into an extraordinary circumstance placement in the Division information management system.

To ensure that the hotel stay is a short tenure, the origin county Social Service Specialist for the youth staying in the hotel will set and facilitate weekly transitional team meetings to discuss with the youth and their transitional team (to include the TYS Program Manager or TYS Specialist):

A. Any safety issues or other concerns the youth may have encountered while at the hotel and, if there have been any incidents or concerns, how to address those.
B. Any needs the youth may have (such as food, medication, clothing) and how to meet those needs.
C. Other housing options and the steps that need to take place – by the youth and Transitional Team members -- to secure a long-term housing option.
D. The youth's progress in meeting the Extended Foster Care Program participation requirements.
E. Any of the youth's lifelong connections who could be possible supports.

In addition, the assigned county of origin Social Service Specialist is required to:

A. Conduct a face-to-face contact with the youth in the hotel room at least weekly.
B. If the county of origin Specialist is located in a different county than the hotel in which the youth is staying, the origin county Specialist is only required to make their monthly, face-to-face contact to the youth at the hotel:
    1) The assigned resident county Specialist or TYS Coordinator for the youth is required to contact the youth face-to-face in the hotel room at least once a week during the

weeks in which the origin county Specialist is not making their monthly contact

C. The goal of these contacts is to keep in frequent contact with the youth to ensure their safety and well-being, provide any case or service updates, and make sure the hotel room is reasonably clean:
    1) If the youth needs assistance in maintaining the cleanliness or orderliness of the room, the staff member will provide guidance or direct assistance, as appropriate for each individual youth and situation, in putting the room in order

If a youth is in a hotel for four (4) consecutive weeks the origin county Social Service Specialist will:

A. Submit a complex briefing to the DCFS Placement Team in central office. This will allow the DCFS Placement Team in central office:
    1) To meet on the case and determine if other options are available
B. However, there is nothing preventing the county of origin Specialist from submitting a complex briefing to the DCFS Placement Team prior to four (4) weeks of a hotel stay if circumstances warrant the briefing.

If alternate housing options are secured for the youth (such as Supervised Independent Living Programs, resource home, Transitional Youth Sponsor home, Foster Youth to Independence housing voucher, etc.), but the youth refuses the alternate housing option, DCFS maintains the right to suspend the hotel reservation for the youth:

A. To give the youth adequate time to prepare to make their own arrangements, the Division will provide the youth with thirty (30) days' notice.
B. The Division will continue paying for the hotel for up to an additional thirty (30) days assuming all hotel agreements listed above are followed and there have been no complaints by the hotel regarding the youth).
B. Staff, in coordination with the youth's PASSE Care Coordinator, are also expected to assist the youth in securing placement in a homeless shelter if, at the end of the thirty (30) days, the youth has not made other arrangements and continues to refuse the alternate housing options the Division may have previously arranged.
C. If alternate housing options cannot be located by the Division and there are not extenuating circumstances that prevent the youth from obtaining employment and saving enough money to secure their own housing -- with support of the monthly board payment -- staff will work closely with the youth to develop a plan for the youth to move out of the hotel or otherwise cease paying for the hotel stay.

Internal Procedure 1002: After Care Services and Support

01/2011

If the youth is still experiencing foster care, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Work with the youth requesting after care support. Request will be made via CFS-004: Request for After Care Support.
B. Send CFS-004: Request for After Care Support to the youth's TYSC.
C. Assign the TYSC as the primary Specialist.

If the youth has already left foster care, the Transitional Youth Service Coordinator will:

A. Work with the youth requesting after care support. Request will be made via CFS-004: Request for After Care Support.
B. Request their Supervisor to reopen the youth's closed child protective service case and assign the TYSC as the primary Specialist.

Once the Transitional Services Coordinator is assigned as primary Social Service Specialist, they will:

A. Select Transitional Youth Services Program as the case type on the Case Summary screen.
B. Complete the Contact screen for all contacts with youth and update as appropriate.
C. Complete Education and Employment screens and update as appropriate.
D. Update Client Contact Information as appropriate.
E. Document in the Client Contact Information screen, the type and extent of financial assistance to be provided.
F. Encourage and assist youth to develop a budget and a viable plan that includes participation in education, employment, or training
G. Assist the youth in selecting a residence that is appropriate for their immediate needs, if needed.
H. Complete a CFS-024: Residence Checklist for Youth to assure the residence and location are acceptable and document in the Document Tracking screen in the Division information management system.
I. Provide the youth with available alternatives for meeting their immediate housing needs, if appropriate.
J. Recommend and assist in arranging for personal or community support as requested.
K. Assist the youth in applying for assistance if they wishes to start or continue a post-secondary educational program.
L. Document purchase requests in the Document Tracking screen, and if approved, document in Client Contact Information Screen. Payment is not made directly to the youth, except for approved travel reimbursement.
M. Forward after care support requests to the Financial Support Unit at least two (2) weeks before payment is due.
N. Maintain monthly contact with the youth.
O. Assist the youth in participating in life skills classes, if applicable.
P. Assist youth with, or arrange other staff assistance with, transportation as staff capacity allows.

Internal Procedure 1003: Youth Obtaining a Driver's License

11/2025

DCFS is charged with assisting teenagers experiencing foster care to successfully transition to adulthood. A key component to functioning well in the adult world is the ability to drive. Further, the Division is required by state and federal law to ensure that all youth aging out of foster care at eighteen (18) or older have either 1) an Arkansas driver's license; or 2) a state ID. DCFS' preference

is for youth to obtain their driver's license since that is one (1) factor that can help set the youth up for future success.

This section addresses three (3) components related to obtaining a driver's license for youth experiencing foster care. These components are:

A. Foster Care Driving Program:
    1) Any youth under eighteen (18) years of age and in Division custody may apply for the Foster Care Driving Program once they are eligible for an instruction permit, learner's license, or intermediate license pursuant to Arkansas law
    2) Youth who are eighteen(18) years of age and older who are participating in the Extended Foster Care Program do not have to apply to the Foster Care Driving program to obtain their driver's permit or license:
        a) Both populations must be able to meet all state requirements listed in A.C.A. § 27-16-804 and any rules promulgated by the Department of Finance and Administration
    3) Any negligent or willful misconduct of a youth under eighteen (18) years of age in the Division custody shall not be imputed to an authorized employee or resource parent who signed the application for a permit or license
    4) The authorized employee or resource parent shall not be held liable for damages caused by the negligent or willful misconduct
    5) Completion of a driver's education course and participating in the Extended Foster Care Program are encouraged but not required

B. Car Insurance Reimbursement Program:
    1) Youth experiencing foster care, including youth in the Extended Foster Care Program, must be insured to drive a specific vehicle before they are allowed to operate that vehicle and they must be included as a driver on the insurance policy for that vehicle:
        a) The insurance must meet minimum Arkansas liability standards
        b) Any motor vehicle the youth operates must be owned by the resource parent or the youth
    2) The Division will reimburse the resource parents for the actual amount of the additional cost of adding a specific youth experiencing foster care as a driver on the insurance policy for a specific vehicle provided the resource parent submits all required documentation including documentation from the insurance company of the actual amount of the additional cost
    3) If the youth owns their own car, they must present documentation of the cost of the policy that insures them and the Division will reimburse them for the actual amount of the insurance policy
    4) A car insurance reimbursement payment to a resource provider or youth cannot be made without:
        a) Approval from the TYS Program Manager or designee, that the youth has been approved to participate in the DCFS Car Insurance Reimbursement Program:

i. Reimbursement will be made for either up to thirty (30) calendar days preceding the approval or for the amount paid from the date the youth was added to the insurance policy if that date is less than thirty (30) calendar days from the DCFS Central Office approval date

b) Legible copy of the insurance policy or premium notice that specifically lists the youth experiencing foster care as a designated driver for a particular car

c) Proof of payment of this amount

C. Use of State Vehicles for Youth Experiencing Foster Care to Complete Driving Skills Test:

1) DCFS collaborates with the Arkansas Insurance Department and Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration to help support eligible youth experiencing foster care ages sixteen through twenty-one (16-21) earn an Arkansas driver's license by allowing them to use state vehicles assigned to DCFS for the sole purpose of completing the driving skills test administered by the Arkansas State Police

2) To continue this collaboration, DCFS must request a waiver on an annual basis from the Arkansas Insurance Department to allow youth experiencing foster care ages sixteen through twenty-one (16-21) to be covered under the Arkansas Multi-Agency Insurance Trust (AMAIT) Fund Vehicle Insurance Policy as a named insured

3) The Division must also request a waiver each year from the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration for this population to be considered a named insured under the Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program

4) Driver education courses must be completed if the youth will use a state car to take the driving test

1003.1 Driving and Car Insurance Reimbursement Program

Youth participating in the Foster Care Driving Program must:

A. Complete the CFS-388: Application & Agreement to Participate in DCFS Foster Care Driver's License or Car Insurance Reimbursement Program.

B. Once the youth under eighteen has their permit or license:

1) Immediately report any traffic ticket received or motor vehicle accident in which they are volved in as a driver to their resource parent or other placement provider as applicable

2) The youth or placement provider must report any traffic ticket received by the youth or motor vehicle accident in which the youth was involved to the youth's assigned Specialist no later the twenty-four (24) hours following the incident and provide the Specialist a copy of the ticket

3) Participate in a meeting with their transition team to determine if any action needs to be taken following the ticket or at-fault accident (such as participating in a driver education course or restricting driving privileges)

Resource parents or other placement providers must:

A. Complete the applicable section of the CFS-388: Application & Agreement to Participate in DCFS Foster Care Driver's License or Car Insurance Reimbursement Program (see 903.2 below for additional information on the Car Insurance Reimbursement Program).

The Transitional Youth Service (TYS) Program Manager will consider the following when a youth under the age of eighteen (18) years of age who is experiencing foster care applies for the Foster Care Driving Program:

A. Behavior history and placement stability over the past six (6) months.
B. For youth still in high school, current grade point average (GPA) and summary statement on recent academic performance and progress in school:
    1) There is no required minimum GPA requirement, but if a youth is struggling in school, there may need to be a plan built around how to support the youth in school and ensuring that learning to drive or earning a license will not be a further distraction
C. Participation in Life Skills classes either through DCFS or another provider, or explanation of why the youth does not currently participate in Life Skills:
    1) Youth who are not actively participating in Life Skills are still eligible for the Foster Care Driving Program
D. Driving history and record of violations over the last twelve (12) months.
E. Other pertinent information.

The Division Director or designee may, after the review by the TYS Program manager:

A. Authorize an employee of the Division or the resource parent to sign the application of a youth under eighteen (18) for any of the following:
    1) Driver's license examination
    2) Instruction permit
    3) Learner's license
    4) Intermediate driver's license
    5) Motor-driven or motorcycle license

Division staff will:

A. Monitor the following items when a youth experiencing foster care has a driver's license:
    1) Youth's driving record
    2) Youth's behavior
    3) Youth's school performance
    4) Compliance with state law and DCFS requirements
B. Take possession of the permit or driver's license of a youth under eighteen (18) years of age who no longer meets all state and DCFS driving requirement and keep it until all requirements are again met.
C. Discontinue reimbursing the resource parents or youth for the costs of insuring the youth.

1003.2 Driver Education Course

A. To mitigate risks, youth must complete a driver's education course prior to scheduling their driving skills test with the Arkansas Department of Public Safety.
B. Once a driver's education course is successfully completed, the youth's county of origin Specialist or assigned Transitional Youth Services Coordinator must submit to the DCFS Transitional Youth Services (TYS) Program Manager or designee:
    1) Documentation verifying successful completion of a driver's education course
    2) CFS-388: Application and Agreement to Participate in the DCFS Foster Care Driving and Car Insurance Reimbursement Program
    3) A written assessment that the youth does not pose any safety issues that would make it imprudent for him or her to use a state car for this purpose. Examples of information to consider in this assessment include:
        a) Behavior and placement history over the last six (6) months
        b) Any recent changes in medication
C. Upon written approval from the TYS Program Manager or designee, the youth and their local team will collaborate to schedule an appointment for a driving skills test through the Department of Public Safety.
D. The DCFS staff person who will transport the youth to the scheduled driving skills test is responsible for reserving a state vehicle through TRIPS:
    1) That DCFS employee must drive the state vehicle to and from the driving skills test without exception
    2) The youth may only be a driver in a state vehicle during the driving skills test when a Department of Public Safety employee is also in the vehicle

Internal Procedure 1004: Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Youth

08/2025

DCFS is charged with helping young adults in out-of- home placements transition to adulthood. While the hope is that young adults in DCFS custody will delay pregnancy and fatherhood until adulthood, this will not always be the case. As such, part of helping these young adults transition to adulthood will include preparing them for parenthood.

1004.1 Securing Prenatal Resources

For a young woman experiencing foster care who is pregnant, the Social Service Specialist in collaboration with the Transitional Youth Services (TYS) Coordinator, will:

A. Ensure she applies for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits.
B. Search out a childbirth class as well as an infant CPR/First Aid class within close proximity to the youth's placement and enroll her in the classes preferably between twenty-four (24) and thirty-two (32) weeks of pregnancy.
C. If the youth is interested in doula services, the Division can also cover the costs of those services to a certified doula.

D. If the youth is interested in breastfeeding, the Specialist and TYS Coordinator will also try to locate a breastfeeding class in the area for the youth to attend. The Division will cover all costs for these classes.
E. Share and review safe sleep materials with the youth prior to the infant's arrival.

1004.2 Safety Baby Showers

The Transitional Youth Services (TYS) Unit in Central Office conducts Safety Baby Showers (using the Arkansas Children's Hospital Injury Prevention Center curriculum) for all females and males experiencing foster care prior to the arrival of the infant. The youth's Social Service Specialist or TYS Coordinator will:

A. Contact the TYS Unit when the pregnant youth is approximately six (6) to seven (7) months along in the pregnancy to schedule a Safety Baby Shower.
B. The TYS Unit will work with local staff to schedule a Safety Baby Shower for that youth in the youth's placement county.
C. The TYS Unit will facilitate the Safety Baby Shower and provide the decorations but will need assistance from local staff in finding a location in that community (preferably not the DCFS office) to hold the baby shower.
D. The TYS Unit will need assistance in purchasing the refreshments as well as working with the youth to identify invitees.
E. The father of the infant is encouraged to participate in the Safety Baby Showers unless there are documented safety concerns or other extraordinary circumstances. If the father of the child is the one who is experiencing foster care, a Safety Baby Shower can also be provided.

1004.3 Home Visiting Programs

Young women experiencing foster care who are pregnant are also highly encouraged to participate in a home visiting program if one is available in her county that meets her specific needs. The programs that are geared toward expectant mothers and continue to support mom and baby after the baby's arrival are the Nurse Family Partnership and Healthy Families America. More information about home visiting can be found on the Arkansas Home Contacting Network website (http://www.arhomecontacting.org/), but please note:

A. For Healthy Families America, enrollment may occur up to the age of twenty-four (24) months at time of intake if there is documentation to show the referral was made by DCFS, which is an exception for this population and not reflected on the website listed above.
B. In addition, if a home contacting program is not available to the youth and her child, the Triple P Program offered through MidSOUTH will accept referrals for mothers experiencing foster care and their infants and toddlers.

1004.4 Provision of Infant Supplies and Increased Board Payment

A. It is important to ensure that the youth is as prepared as possible for the arrival of her infant. In addition to providing the education resources listed above, the Division will also ensure the following items are purchased generally between twenty-four (24) to thirty-two (32) weeks of pregnancy and are provided to the youth (if they are not already

available in the youth's current placement). The Division recognizes that the specific needs may vary. The prices attached to individual items below are meant to serve as guidelines. As such, the amounts of the individual items purchased may be above or below the guidelines listed below if the overall amount spent for the preparation of the infant does not exceed $750 (to include taxes).

Car seat	$150.00
Pack n Play or Crib* (to include sheets)	$300.00
Large supply of diapers and wipes	$100.00
Set of bottles	$35.00
Infant clothes (to include pajamas, onesies, no scratch mittens, hat, & socks)	$75.00
Infant towels and wash cloths	$25.00
Infant bathtub	$25.00
Burp cloths	$15.00
Outlet covers and cabinet locks	$15.00
Pacifiers	$10.00
Total Not to Exceed	$750.00

*Consider current placement of mother and impending future plans. If the mother experiencing foster care is placed with her infant in a resource home, the resource home should already be equipped with a crib and that crib shall have current certification of compliance with Consumer Product Safety Guidelines. However, if the resource home has not previously had infants or other young children placed in the home but is willing to accept the young mother and her baby to keep them placed together, a crib may still be purchased (and shall meet Consumer Product Safety Guidelines) with the understanding that the crib will follow the mother and baby, if a placement change occurs. If it is likely a mother and her child may change placements frequently, a pack n' play may allow for that mobility while still ensuring a safe sleep environment.

B. All of these items may be requested on the same requisition form and will be coded to Chafee.
C. The youth's Specialist or TYS Coordinator will assist her in working with her local Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) office to provide access to a free breast pump or formula, as applicable, once her infant arrives.
D. Once the infant is born, if the mother and baby are placed together in a resource home, the teen mother's board rate may be increased by an additional $45.00 to provide additional financial support to help meet the infant's ongoing needs:
    1) The special board justification reason of "minor parent" will be selected when increasing the board amount for this reason
    2) If for whatever reason the infant comes into the custody of the Division, then at that point the infant would receive their own board payment
E. If the mother resides in her own apartment or home, her board rate may also be increased by up to an additional $45.00 (special board rate justification: minor parent), but if she has other income from a job, her additional income may also be taken into consideration when determining the special minor parent board rate and revising her TYS budget.

1004.5 Safe Sleep

A. After the arrival of the infant, if the mother and infant are placed together, the Specialist will check to make sure the infant's sleeping environment meets all safe sleep requirements at each contact with the youth in her placement. The Specialist will also review safe sleep protocols with the young mother at each contact for at least the first six (6) months after the infant's birth.
B. If the youth has opted to breastfeed, the Specialist or TYS Coordinator will:
    1) Ensure the mother has been provided with the Arkansas WIC Breastfeeding Helpline at 1-800-445-6175 and Baptist Health Breastfeeding Warm Line at (501) 202-7378 both of which answer calls from across the state 24/7 (the youth may need to leave a voice mail, but calls are generally returned within one (1) hour)
    2) Help the youth research information about local breastfeeding supports such as Breastfeeding Peer Counselors through the local WIC Program or La Leche League if the youth is interested
    3) DCFS will assist with transportation as available and appropriate

1004.6 Parenting Classes

After the arrival of the baby, the Specialist or TYS Coordinator will determine if there are parenting classes or home visiting programs available that are geared toward the care of infants and toddlers and strengthening caregiver-child bond and enroll the youth and her baby as appropriate. See references above to the Arkansas Home Contacting Network and Triple P referrals for mothers experiencing foster care and their children.

1004.7 Childcare

The Division will also help the mother access daycare vouchers as appropriate for her infant or other young children:

A. Daycare vouchers may be keyed for the infant or young child of a mother experiencing foster care by unselecting the "participating as child" button on the mother's Client Information screen in the Division information management system, keying the daycare vouchers for her child, and then re-selecting the "participating as child" button on the mother's Client Information screen in the Division information management system immediately after the daycare vouchers have been keyed.

Internal Procedure 1005: Subsidized Guardianship

09/2024

1005.1 Initial Subsidized Guardianship Program Determination

01/2020

If a goal of guardianship with kin has been determined to be in the child's best interest, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Gather and review all relevant documentation to determine the child's eligibility for the Subsidized Guardianship Program.
B. Complete CFS-435-A: Subsidized Guardianship Program Application and Checklist with the child (if age appropriate), prospective kinship guardians, and child's biological caregivers (if appropriate) to make the initial determination that the child and kinship guardians meet all subsidized guardianship eligibility requirements.
C. Update the Family Case Plan to reflect the guardianship goal and other required program information.
D. Submit the completed CFS-435-A to the Supervisor for review and approval and attach any other documentation that would be important to the child's case (financial information, Special Board Rate Justification), but at minimum the following to complete the referral packet:
    1) Case history memorandum detailing the specifics of the child's overall situation (biological caregiver information, special needs, connection to the proposed guardian, how reunification and adoption have been ruled out, whether child is IV-E eligible, length of time placed in the approved kinship resource home)
    2) Final SAFE Home Study Report Update, as applicable
    3) Most recent Resource Home Approval Letter
    4) Court orders (documenting reasonable efforts, ruling out reunification and adoption, and establishing a goal of guardianship)
    5) Notarized statement from kin verifying discussion of all permanency options available and understanding of those options as well as their decision to elect guardianship and apply for a subsidy
E. If the Supervisor:
    1) Denies moving forward with the subsidized guardianship arrangement, proceed to Internal Procedure Denial of Subsidized Guardianship Arrangement
    2) Approves moving forward with the subsidized guardianship arrangement:
        a) Update the child's Family Case Plan in the Division information management system to describe the ways in which the child meets the eligibility requirements for a subsidized guardianship arrangement to include:
            i. Steps the Division has taken to determine that it is not appropriate for the child to be returned home or adopted
            ii. Reasons for any separation of siblings during placement; the efforts made to place currently separated siblings together, the

efforts made to provide frequent sibling family time or other ongoing interaction between siblings not placed together; and efforts to reunify separated siblings in the same home

iii. Reasons why a permanent placement with appropriate kin through a Subsidized Guardianship arrangement is in the child's best interest

iv. Efforts that the Division has made to discuss adoption by the child's kinship resource parent as a more permanent alternative to legal guardianship and, in the case of a kinship resource parent who has chosen not to pursue adoption, documentation of those reasons

v. Efforts made by the Division to discuss with the child's caregivers subsidized guardianship arrangement, or the reasons why the efforts were not made

vi. Process in place to allow for a successor guardian if the kinship guardian of the child dies or is no longer able to care for the child

vii. Any appropriate transitional youth services for those youth who exit foster care at or after the age of sixteen (16)

b) Notify the child's biological caregivers (if appropriate), attorney ad litem, OCC representative, parent counsel (if applicable), and DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee that the child and prospective kinship guardians would like to proceed with the subsidized guardianship arrangement

F. If the DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee determines that:

1) All initial eligibility and case plan criteria have been met:

a) Notify the Specialist to proceed with subsidized guardianship determination family team meeting arrangements to discuss the Subsidized Guardianship Program

2) All eligibility and case plan criteria have not been met:

a) Discuss with the DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee how to meet said criteria or other possible permanency options or proceed to Internal Procedure Denial of Subsidized Guardianship arrangement, as applicable

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist as to the appropriateness of a guardianship arrangement supported by a subsidy for the child with the prospective kinship guardians.

B. Review the completed CFS-435-A: Subsidized Guardianship Application and Checklist and other required referral packet documentation.

C. Notify the Specialist of approval or denial to move forward with the subsidized guardianship arrangement.

D. Notify the Area Manager of any approval or denial to move forward with a subsidized guardianship arrangement.

The DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee will:

A. Review each submitted CFS-435-A: Subsidized Guardianship Program Application and Checklist and other supporting documentation to determine if the family meets the initial eligibility and Family Case Plan criteria to further pursue a subsidized guardianship arrangement.
B. Make the determination as to whether it is appropriate to continue pursuing the subsidized guardianship arrangement and either:
    1) Notify the Specialist, Supervisor, and Area Manager the subsidized guardianship arrangement is appropriate
    2) Notify the Specialist, Supervisor, and Area Manager that a subsidized guardianship arrangement is not currently appropriate and:
        a) Discuss how to meet needed criteria
        b) Discuss other possible permanency options
    3) Instruct Specialist to deny the Subsidized Guardianship Arrangement

1005.2 Denial of Subsidized Guardianship Arrangement

01/2020

If at any point in time it is determined in consultation with the Supervisor and DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee that a legal guardianship supported by a subsidy is not appropriate for the child or kinship guardian applicant, the DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator will:

A. Complete and provide to the kinship guardian applicant CFS-435-B: Notification of Subsidized Guardianship Program Denial.
B. Keep a copy of CFS-435-B: Notification of Subsidized Guardianship Program Denial in the DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee's file.
C. Notify the Specialist and Supervisor of the decision.
D. Note the reason for subsidized guardianship denial in the Division information management Contact screen.
E. Work with the family and county office, as appropriate, to determine the permanency goal that is in the child's best interest or how the child or kinship guardian applicant may become eligible for a legal guardianship supported by a subsidy if appropriate.

1005.3 Subsidized Guardianship Determination Meeting

01/2020

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Coordinate the subsidized guardianship determination meeting to discuss the potential subsidized guardianship arrangement and agreement within fourteen (14) days of receiving notification from the Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee to move forward with pursuing a Subsidized Guardianship arrangement.
B. Arrange a date for the following participants to attend the family team with a preference of at least seven (7) days' notice before the meeting date (though the meeting may take place earlier if all participants agree to an earlier date):

1) Child, if age appropriate
2) Prospective kinship guardians
3) Child's biological caregivers, if appropriate
4) Any grandparent who is entitled to notice
5) Child's Specialist
6) Supervisor
7) Adoption Specialist (if Adoption Specialist did not participate in permanency planning family team meeting)
8) DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee
9) The following shall be invited to the meeting but attendance is not required:
    a) Area Manager or designee
    b) Child's attorney ad litem
    c) Child's CASA (if applicable)
    d) OCC representative
    e) Parent counsel (if applicable)

C. If it is determined during the meeting that it is not appropriate for the family to move forward with the legal guardianship supported by a guardianship subsidy, see Internal Procedure Denial of Subsidized Guardianship Arrangement.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist as needed.
B. Participate in the subsidized guardianship determination meeting.
C. Inform the Area Manager of issues related to pursuing the subsidized guardianship arrangement for the child.

The DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee will:

A. Facilitate the subsidized guardianship determination family team meeting.
B. Provide an overview of subsidized guardianship to ensure that all participants have a thorough understanding of the intent and requirements of the program.
C. Discuss the subsidy rate with the prospective kinship guardians. The subsidy rate should not exceed the child's current foster care board payment.
D. If the prospective kinship guardians inquire about a special subsidy rate (more than the child's current foster care board payment) due to special circumstances related to the child's care, ask them to complete CFS-435-C: Subsidized Guardianship Special Subsidy Request and to provide the Division with a written statement from the child's physician or treatment professional that provides:
    1) Child's diagnosis
    2) Child's prognosis
    3) Identification of any current treatment being provided
    4) Reasoning as to why the preceding information would warrant a special subsidy rate
E. Inform the prospective kinship guardians that any approved guardianship subsidy will be paid according to the terms outlined in the CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement (which will not be effective until the court enters an order of guardianship) and may be

modified at the annual review based on changes in Policy or significant changes in the child's circumstances.

F. If determined during the subsidized guardianship determination meeting that it is appropriate for the family to move forward with the legal guardianship supported by a guardianship subsidy:
    1) Submit all related forms and supporting documentation to the committee within forty-eight (48) hours of the family team meeting of the family's intent to move forward

1005.5 Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Finalization

01/2020

The DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee will:

A. Complete the CFS-435-D: Recommendation for Finalization of Guardianship and submit to the appropriate OCC attorney who will use the information on the form to prepare the guardianship petition.
B. Draft and complete the CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement with the prospective guardians and Specialist prior to the guardianship hearing.
C. Submit the CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement to the Adoption's Manager or designee for review and approval.
D. Sign the CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement.

The Adoption Manager or designee will:

A. Review the CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement and approve or deny as appropriate.
B. Inform the Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee of approval or denial.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Assist the DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee in completing the CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement with the prospective guardian(s) prior to the guardianship hearing.
B. Ensure all signatures required on the CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement are obtained.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist regarding decisions related to and preparation for the finalization of the subsidized guardianship agreement.
B. Inform the Area Manager of issues related to pursuing the subsidized guardianship arrangement for the child.

1005.6 Guardianship Hearing for Subsidized Guardianship

01/2020

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Receive the confirmed guardianship hearing court date from the OCC attorney (if guardianship hearing date was not previously set).
B. Provide notice to the participants (resource parents, other relatives, etc.) at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the guardianship hearing. OCC will provide notice to parties to the legal case.
C. If siblings will not be placed in the subsidized guardianship arrangement, make a recommendation to the court to allow family time between siblings and with other relatives (if in the best interest of the children). Document the recommendation in the court report.
D. Complete court report for the guardianship hearing and submit to Supervisor for review:
    1) Submit the Court Report to the OCC Attorney within fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the hearing
    2) Document distribution of court reports to all parties or their attorneys and CASA, if applicable via the CFS-423: Certificate of Service
E. Attend the hearing with the case file and be prepared to provide testimony regarding services offered or provided, progress, and recommendations to the court:
    1) Present the completed CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement to the court
F. Once the court finalizes legal guardianship and the subsidized guardianship agreement with the kinship guardians:
    1) Discuss the court orders with the family
G. File the CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement in the provider record.
H. Provide a copy of the CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement to the kinship guardians. Once the court enters an order granting guardianship, the subsidized guardianship agreement will remain in effect without regard to the state residency of the kinship guardian as long as the guardianship remains in effect or has not been terminated.
I. For IV-E eligible children, provide the DCFS Eligibility Unit a copy of the finalized court decree indicating the legal guardianship and a copy of the finalized CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement to continue Medicaid coverage for the child.
J. For non-IV-E eligible children, instruct the kinship guardians to apply for health care coverage at their local DHS county office.
K. Exit the child out of foster care and into a subsidized guardianship arrangement supported by a guardianship subsidy in the Division information management system.
L. Notify the kinship guardian Resource Specialist that legal guardianship has been granted.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Conference with the Specialist as needed.
B. Review and approve the Court Report.
C. Attend the guardianship hearing.
D. Inform the Area Manager of issues related to the subsidized guardianship arrangement for the child.

The Resource Social Service Specialist will:

A. End date the Foster Family Service on the Provider Service tab selecting the appropriate Reason for End Date in the Division information management system noting in the

comment box on the Provider Services tab that home was closed due to kin assuming legal guardianship of the child supported by guardianship subsidy.

The DCFS Eligibility Unit will:

A. Process the copy of the child's court decree and copy of the finalized CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement to ensure continued Medicaid coverage for IV-E eligible children.
B. Close any trust accounts when any child exits foster care.

1005.7 Annual Subsidized Guardianship Review

01/2020

The DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee will:

A. Mail the kinship guardians the CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review at least sixty (60) calendar days before the anniversary date of the finalization of the family's Subsidized Guardianship Agreement with instructions to return in the provided envelope addressed to the Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee:
    1) The completed CFS-435-G
    2) Required documentation:
        a) For non-school-age children, documentation must include:
            i. Up-to-date immunization records
            ii. A typed statement on letterhead from the child's Early Intervention Services provider indicating the child's participation and progress, if applicable
            iii. A typed statement on letterhead from the child's daycare provider confirming enrollment, if applicable
        b) For school-age children, documentation must include:
            i. Up-to-date immunization records
            ii. A written confirmation on letterhead from the child's Arkansas Department of Education accredited school or home school program verifying enrollment and regular attendance
        c) For children ages eighteen (18) up to the age of twenty-one (21), documentation must include:
            i. A current transcript from the child's secondary education, post-secondary, or vocational education program, as applicable
            ii. A typed statement on letterhead from the person responsible for managing the child's program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment confirming the child's enrollment and participation
            iii. The most recent pay stubs from the child's employer indicating that the child is working at least eighty (80) hours per month for that employer

iv. A typed statement on letterhead from the child's medical professional stating the reason for which the child is incapable of meeting the education or employment requirements listed above

B. Document in the Division information management system date the CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review is mailed to the relative guardians.

C. If the family has not returned the completed CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review and required documentation within thirty (30) calendar days from the date the form was mailed, contact the family by phone to ensure that said documents will be delivered to the DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee within two (2) weeks.

D. Review the completed CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review and related supporting documentation prior to the anniversary date of finalization of the family's subsidized guardianship agreement:

1) If the supporting documentation shows that the child's condition has not changed:
    a) Send completed copy of CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review with DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee's signature to the family noting that the subsidized guardianship agreement will continue unchanged for the forthcoming year
    b) Send the original CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review with signatures to the appropriate court for filing
    c) Maintain a copy of the completed CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review with signatures in guardian record
    d) Enter appropriate Division information management system updates
2) If the supporting documentation shows that the child's condition or status within the home has changed and the changes warrant a revision of the subsidized guardianship agreement or termination of the agreement:
    a) Schedule a meeting with the kinship guardians and Adoption Manager or designee to discuss needed revisions or termination including any requests for special subsidy rates
    b) If a request for a special subsidy rate has been made, the subsidy will remain the same until the special subsidy is approved. Approval is not guaranteed
    c) Revise CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement if appropriate and complete CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review
    d) Provide copy of completed CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review and new CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement to family
    e) Provide original CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review with signatures to the appropriate court for filing

f) Maintain a copy of completed CFS-435-F: Subsidized Guardianship Agreement and CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review in the guardian record
g) Enter appropriate Division information management system updates.

3) If kinship guardians do not submit CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review or requested documentation within the required timeframe:
   a) Complete CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review and CFS-435-H: Notice of Modification or Termination to Subsidized Guardianship Agreement
   b) Send the family a copy of the completed CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review and CFS-435-H: Notice of Modification or Termination to Subsidized Guardianship Agreement indicating termination of the agreement and associated payments and benefits
   c) File the original CFS-435-G: Annual Progress Report and Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Review and CFS-435-H: Notice of Modification or Termination to Subsidized Guardianship Agreement in the guardian record
   d) Enter appropriate Division information management system updates including termination of subsidized guardianship payments

The Adoption Manager or designee will:

A. Conference with the Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee as needed regarding decisions related to annual reviews of subsidized guardianship arrangements.
B. Participate in meetings with the kinship guardians and DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee when discussing revisions to a subsidized guardianship agreement.
C. Submit any requests for an increase in a guardianship subsidy to the DCFS Director or designee for review.

The DCFS Director will:

A. Review requests for increases in subsidized guardianship payments and approve or deny as appropriate.

1005.8 Placement with Successor Guardian

01/2020

The information below does not apply to situations in which the initial guardian dies or is otherwise incapacitated.

If a child whose kin are receiving a guardianship subsidy on their behalf re-enters DHS custody, the Area Manager or designee will:

A. Notify the DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator that the child has re-entered care.

B. Consult with the DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee and appropriate Specialist's Supervisor as to whether:
    1) It is appropriate for the child to work toward reunification with the initial kinship guardians
    2) If guardianship with the successor guardian is in the child's best interest and, if so, if the identified successor guardian and child meet requirements the eligibility criteria for the Subsidized Guardianship Program
    3) If another permanency option is more appropriate
C. If a subsidized guardianship arrangement with the successor guardian is determined to be appropriate, assign the appropriate Resource Specialist to open the successor guardian's home as a provisional resource home.
D. If the successor guardian is determined not be an appropriate placement at that point in time, have the assigned Specialist find an appropriate approved or licensed placement for the child per A.C.A. § 9-28-402.

The Resource Specialist will:

A. If notified by the Area Manager or designee, open the successor guardian's home as a provisional resource home.
B. Collaborate with the Specialist to evaluate:
    1) How the other children and adults in the home will affect the successful development of the child
    2) How the child will impact the other members of the home
C. Support kin throughout the process of becoming a provisional and regular DCFS resource home.
D. If legal guardianship is granted to the successor guardian, end date the Foster Family Service on the Provider Service tab selecting the appropriate Reason for End Date in the Division information management system noting in the comment box on the Provider Services tab that home was closed due to kin assuming legal guardianship of the child supported by a guardianship subsidy.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Consult with the Specialist, Area Manager, and DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator as to whether a subsidized guardianship arrangement with the initial kinship guardians (reunification) or with the successor guardian is in the child's best interest or if another permanency option is more appropriate.
B. Conference with the Specialist on decisions regarding the child.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Consult with the Supervisor, Area Manager and DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator as to whether a subsidized guardianship arrangement with the initial kinship guardians (reunification) or the successor guardian is in the child's best interest or if another permanency option is more appropriate.

B. If appropriate, request that the OCC attorney petition the court for a permanency planning hearing to review the child's Family Case Plan goal of legal guardianship supported by a guardianship subsidy with the successor guardian.

The DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee will:

A. Consult with the Specialist, Supervisor, and Area Manager as to whether a subsidized guardianship arrangement with the initial kinship guardians (reunification) or the successor guardian is in the child's best interest or if another permanency option is more appropriate.
B. Follow, as appropriate:
    1) Internal Procedure Subsidized Guardianship Agreement Finalization
    2) Internal Procedure Guardianship Hearing for Subsidized Guardianship
    3) Internal Procedure Annual Subsidized Guardianship Program Review

1005.9 Appeals

01/2020

If the family wishes to appeal a decision regarding their subsidized guardianship agreement, the DCFS Subsidized Guardianship Coordinator or designee will:

A. Direct the family to DHS Policy 1098 for information on administrative hearings if questions from the family are received (instructions regarding how to request an administrative hearing are included on CFS-435-H: Notice of Modification or Termination to Subsidized Guardianship Agreement).
B. Keep the family and Adoption Manager or designee informed of any further proceedings related to the appeal request.

Internal Procedure 1006: Subsidized Guardianship for Resource Parents

08/2025

The DCFS believes in achieving permanency for children and youth who must enter foster care swiftly and safely. Guardianship is one permanency option to consider for youth who cannot be placed with a fit caregiver or returned to the caregiver from whom they removed. A guardianship may be supported by a subsidy if all subsidized guardianship requirements are met, which include that reunification and adoption have been ruled out and that the guardian is kin (including fictive kin) to the child.

Fictive kin means a person selected by the Division who is not related to a child by blood, marriage, or adoption; and has a strong, positive, and emotional tie or role in the either the child's life or child's parent's life if the child is an infant. The DCFS Director or designee must approve a fictive kin for an infant.

Under the above definition of fictive kin, traditional resource parents do not meet the definition as there is not already a strong, positive, and emotional tie or role in the child's life at the time the child enters foster care. However, there are two (2) exceptions to this rule that may result in a traditional resource home being considered fictive kin:

A. A traditional resource parent who fostered a child who then returned home, but the child later re-enters foster care and is placed with the same traditional resource parent with

whom they resided during the previous foster care episode may be defined as fictive kin:

1) In these situations:
    a) A provisional fictive kin service may be opened at the time of child's subsequent entry into foster care if the traditional resource parents have closed their foster family home service during the time the child was not in foster care and all provisional resource home requirements are met
    b) A fictive kin foster family service may be opened at the time of the child's subsequent entry into foster care if the traditional resource parents have a current open and available foster family home service

B. A traditional resource parent who has fostered a child who is now sixteen (16) years of age or older for at least one (1) consecutive year may also be defined as fictive kin when:
    1) Reunification and adoption have been ruled out and the reasons for which reunification and adoption have been ruled out are clearly documented in the child's Family Case Plan
    2) The youth considers the traditional resource parents as having a strong, positive, and emotional tie or role in their life
    3) Efforts to identify kin for the child have been clearly documented throughout the life of a case (as documented on the CFS-305: Kinship Efforts Log) and those efforts have not been successful in identifying safe and appropriate kin who are willing to take placement of the child

Traditional resource parents who may be defined as fictive kin under the exceptions above may also be considered as the potential guardians for the child or youth when guardianship is determined to be in the best interest of the child or youth. Further, these traditional resource parents who subsequently qualify as fictive kin may also be eligible for a guardianship subsidy if all other subsidized guardianship requirements are met.

However, the DCFS Director or designee must approve these subsidized guardianship requests prior to the subsidized guardianship agreement being signed. The DCFS Director or designee must approve the request for a traditional resource parent to be considered a fictive kin resource parent for the purposes of subsidized guardianship prior to the discussion occurring with the court team.

The routing of these initial requests for approval will be as follows:

A. The child's origin county Specialist will send the request prior to preparing the full subsidized guardianship packet through their chain of command.
B. The applicable Area Manager will review the request within three (3) business days and, if approved, forward it to the DCFS Assistant Director of Placement Supports and Community Outreach or designee.
C. The DCFS Assistant Director of Placement Supports and Community Outreach or designee will review the request within three (3) business days and, if they approves, forward it to the DCFS Director or designee.
D. The DCFS Director or designee will review the request within five (5) business days and relay their decision to the team involved.

If the DCFS Director approves the request and the home does not already have an open fictive kin foster family home service, the origin county Social Service Specialist will collaborate with the local Resource Social Service Supervisor to open a fictive kin foster family home service for the home previously classified as a foster family home in the Division information management system.

Internal Procedure 1007: Resumption of Services

01/2020

1007.1 Resumption of Services Post-Termination

04/2018

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Determine if the juvenile qualifies for a motion for resumption of services based on the criteria for initial eligibility identified in Policy.
B. Contact the caregiver who is the subject of the motion for resumption of services and determine if the caregiver is fit by:
    1) Conducting a walk-through of the family home and identifying any safety threats or risk concerns
    2) Discussing the motion for resumption of services and determining if the caregiver is willing to participate in the resumption of services:
        a) Detail for the caregiver the financial and logistical implications for the caregiver if the caregiver agrees to a motion for resumption of services
    3) Identifying any evidence that the caregiver engaged in conduct that interfered with the child's ability to achieve permanency
    4) Identifying any barriers to placement of the juvenile in the caregiver's home and determining if the barriers may be remedied with limited assistance from the Division
    5) Determining whether the caregiver has remedied the conditions that existed at the time of the termination of their parental rights
C. Consult with County Manager staff and Area Manager to obtain DCFS position on appropriateness of resumption of services based on information gathered:
    1) Area Manager approval must be obtained in writing prior to moving forward with a petition for resumption of services
D. Complete a home study on the caregiver who is the subject of the motion for resumption of services.
E. Provide the completed home study to OCC and request that the attorney take action to file a motion for resumption of services.
F. Upon receipt of a written order to resume services to the caregiver:
    1) Update the family assessment with input from the family, parties to the case, and other stakeholders
    2) Develop a Family Case Plan with input from the family, parties to the case, and other stakeholders
    3) Hold a family team meeting within thirty (30) days of the date on which the order granting a motion for resumption of services is entered to review the family assessment and Family Case Plan and discuss other relevant information related to the resumption of services

4) Complete contacts to the caregiver's home until parental rights have been re-established or the resumption of services has been dismissed by the court and the juvenile has returned to a licensed out-of-home placement
5) Complete a court report and provide to all parties seven (7) business days prior to each hearing
6) Attend review hearings every ninety (90) days until the court has closed the court case
7) Monitor the case for a minimum of six (6) months prior to recommending reinstatement of parental rights

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Participate in internal staffing with Specialist and Area Manager to determine if a motion to resume services is in the juvenile's best interest based on information presented during the staffing.
B. Ensure all DCFS court reports demonstrate best interest for the juvenile.

The Area Manager will:

A. Participate in internal meeting with Specialist and Supervisor to determine if a motion to resume services is in the juvenile's best interest based on information presented during the meeting.
B. Provide a best interest determination in writing upon conclusion of the meeting.

1007.2 Reinstatement of Parental Rights

04/2018

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Seven (7) business days prior to any hearing on the motion, provide the caregiver, caregiver's counsel, attorney ad litem, court-appointed special advocate, and any other party to the petition with a written report that includes:
    1) The efforts made by the Division to achieve adoption or another permanent placement for the child, including any barriers to the adoption or permanent placement of the child
    2) The extent to which the caregiver who is the subject of the petition has complied with the Family Case Plan and order of the court as of the date on which services were ordered to be resumed
    3) The impact of the resumed services on the caregiver and on the health, safety, and well-being of the child
    4) Recommendations of the Division
B. Monitor the family for at least six (6) months after a reinstatement of parental rights has been granted to ensure successful reunification.

The Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Ensure DCFS maintains consistent contact with the family while the juvenile is placed in the caregiver's home.
B. Ensure all DCFS court reports are provided to the parties timely and demonstrate best

interest for the juvenile.

Internal Procedure 1008: Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

08/2013

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is used to move children in need of placement or in need of timely reunification with caregivers across state lines. DCFS will ensure that all potential out-of-state kin are given the same opportunity as in-state kin to become resource homes.

Children placed out-of-state go through the ICPC for the following types of placements:

A. Foster care placements.
B. Pre-adoptive placements.
C. Adoptive placements.
D. Caregiver, other kin, or other-agency guardianship placements.

DCFS Social Service Specialist should direct communications related to out-of-state placement to the ICPC liaison in their area. Do not directly contact the ICPC offices in other states.

1008.1 Placing Children in Another State and Requesting Home Studies

08/2010

The following are procedures to use when requesting an out-of-state home study for an Arkansas child, including placement into residential treatment facilities. Always use the child's name on the correspondence:

A. The sending party (county office, etc.) will follow CFS-6092: ICPC Home Study Request Check List and compile an Interstate Compact Placement Packet consisting of THREE (3) copies of each of the following (include Five (5) copies of ICPC-100A):
    1) Cover Letter (CFS-6092: Cover Letter) to explain the placement plans
    2) ICPC-100A: ICPC Request; (Retain one (1) copy and include five (5) completed, signed, and dated copies with the packet)
    3) Court order (most recent) showing that the Division has custody or the court has jurisdiction of the child (adjudication order, recent review order)
    4) Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) for an adoptive home study
    5) ICPC-101: Priority Home Study Request
    6) Current Family Case Plan
    7) Social Summary (CFS-6092: Social Summary) or an Adoption Summary if requesting a pre-adoptive placement
    8) Medical Records and Reports (PACE evaluation, if available), including Immunization Record
    9) School reports and records from the past three (3) years, if applicable
    10) Psychological evaluations and reports and counseling reports, if applicable
    11) CFS-592: Financial-Medical Plan Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. The form must indicate that DCFS is the sending party and will retain financial and

planning responsibility for the child

12) IV-E Eligibility form (print screen of foster care determination window):
    a) Financial arrangements should always be discussed with the prospective placement resource before the home study is requested
    b) If a board payment is needed, a resource home study must be requested
13) Proof of Citizenship—U.S. Birth Certificate or other birth records. If birth records are not available, you can ask if the client has any other citizenship-related documents such as those listed in Sections 6700, 6703, & 6705 of the following link: http://www.arkansas.gov/dhs/webpolicy/Medical%20Services/MS%206700.htm
14) Proof of Identity—A Social Security Card, completed application for a duplicate card, or school ID with photo (Per DCFS Eligibility Unit, federal authority will determine other acceptable documents of a child's identity "at a later date.")
15) Photo of children (this is not required but is strongly encouraged)

D. Send packet to ICPC Central Office, Donaghey Plaza South, 700 Main Street, P.O. Box 1437, Slot S567, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-1437.

The Arkansas ICPC Central Office will:

A. Review the packet to determine whether it is complete and ready to forward to the receiving state's ICPC office.
B. Coordinate with the sending party if changes in the packet are needed.
C. Send packet to receiving state's compact office.
D. Notify sending party of disposition.

The Social Service Specialist or area ICPC Liaison will:

A. Complete and route the ICPC-100B to the ICPC office if the out-of-state placement is approved and made. Show the date of the placement or of the withdrawal of the request.
B. Close the Arkansas Medicaid so that Medicaid services can be pursued in the receiving state.
C. Code the CFS-6013: Application for Emergency Services to show ICPC service using the child's name.
D. Key the case type in the Division information management system as "ICPC" for the child placed by the Division in another state.
E. Notify the Adoption Services Unit of a proposed adoptive placement, if appropriate.
F. Coordinate the travel plans with the Specialist if placement is approved (placement must be made within six (6) months of placement approval).

Communication between states regarding approval of placements, progress reports, case closures, and disruptions must go through the Arkansas ICPC Central Office.

1008.2 Completion of Home Study Packet

The area ICPC Liaison will:

A. Ensure the completion of a home study packet which includes:
    1) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check

2) CFS-342: Arkansas State Police Criminal Record Check
3) FBI Criminal Background Check (An FBI check is only required for resource or adoption home studies. Caregivers and relatives do not need to complete an FBI check)
4) SAFE Home Study (SAFE Home Studies will be used for all ICPC placements except for parental home studies)
5) Three (3) positive, confidential references

B. Obtain the Supervisor or Area Manager recommendation for or against placement.
C. Obtain the Adoption Manager signature for recommendation in an adoption home study.
D. Send signed recommendation regarding placement within sixty (60) calendar days of a request.
E. If the criminal record checks have not been received, a copy of the application/request must be included in the packet and the results sent when received.
F. Notify the ICPC Central Office in writing if there is to be a delay.
G. Send the home study packet to the ICPC Central Office, not directly to the other state.

No child shall be placed in the home of a resource parent where a records check reveals a felony conviction for child abuse or neglect, for spousal abuse or domestic battery, for a crime against children (including child pornography), or a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault or homicide. No child shall be placed in the home of a resource parent if the record check reveals a criminal conviction for physical assault, battery, or a drug related offense, if the offense was committed within the past five (5) years.

Any state agency that administers or supervises the administration of a state program operated under such an approved state plan will not be restricted from contracting with a private agency to conduct home studies.

Designated DCFS Staff will:

A. Make a recommendation for or against placement based on the information contained in the home study packet.

The Adoption Manager will:

A. Sign and date the recommendation in an adoption home study.

1008.3 Routing of Home Study Packet

ICPC approved home study packets are valid for six (6) months from the date the ICPC Central Office signed the ICPC-100A. The child must be placed within that six (6)-month period.

The Arkansas ICPC Central Office (Receiving State) will:

A. Review the home study packet to determine whether it is complete. If the home study packet is complete, forward to the sending state's ICPC office.
B. If Arkansas receives an approved home study from another state:
    1) Forward the approved home study and the ICPC-100B to the appropriate ICPC liaison

2) Within seventy-two (72) hours of the county office making placement, forward ICPC-100B to the appropriate state

C. If the home study is denied:
   1) Process the denied home study request by forwarding a copy of the following to the appropriate ICPC liaison, to include:
      a) The denied home study
      b) ICPC-100A which indicates, in Section IV, "placement shall not be made"
   2) If an appeal of a denied home study is received, forward it to the appropriate state along with a request for reconsideration of the denied home study

The ICPC liaison will:

A. For home studies received from and approved for placement by another state:
   1) Forward approved home study and ICPC-100A to the assigned Specialist
   2) Within seventy-two (72) hours of the local county office making placement, forward ICPC-100B to ICPC Central Office

B. For home studies received from and denied for placement by another state:
   1) Forward the denied study and ICPC-100A to the assigned Specialist or Supervisor
   2) If an appeal of the denial is received, forward it to ICPC Central Office

The assigned Social Service Specialist or Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Upon receipt of a home study from another State approving placement:
   1) With the court's concurrence, make a determination as to whether placement will be made
   2) When the determination has been made, prepare and forward an ICPC-100B to the ICPC liaison

B. Upon receipt of a home study from another State denying placement:
   1) File the denied home study and ICPC-100A in the appropriate case file and close the case, or
   2) Appeal the receiving state's denial of the home study by:
      a) Preparing a formal request with available supporting documentation to justify why the home study denial should be appealed
      b) Forward to the immediate Supervisor for approval
      c) If approved, forward to the Area Manager for approval
      d) If approved, forward to the ICPC Central Office
   3) If an appeal is returned denied, wait a minimum of six (6) months before re-initiating the home study

1008.4 Follow-up, Routing, and Monitoring

The Social Service Specialist in Arkansas will:

A. Provide monthly supervision of the child. Supervision must include:
   1) Face-to-face contacts with the child at least once each month:
      a) Beginning no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the child is placed
      b) Thirty (30) days from the date on which the receiving state is notified of the

child's placement, if notification occurs after placement

c) A majority of contacts must occur in the child's home

B. Complete a written supervision report:
   1) Using ICPC-90
   2) At least once every ninety (90) days following the date of the receipt of the ICPC-100-B
   3) Send to the ICPC Liaison every ninety (90) days, or as requested on the ICPC-100-A
C. Notify the ICPC Central Office, immediately, if:
   1) Problems or changes with placement occur
   2) Significant issues of concern are identified during a face-to-face contact or at any time during a child's placement
D. Key the case type in the Division information management system as "ICPC" for the child placed in Arkansas from another state.

The ICPC liaison will:

A. Forward written supervision reports to ICPC Central Office within two (2) business days of receipt.

1008.5 Travel Procedures

When an Arkansas child experiencing foster care has been approved to move into or out of Arkansas for placement, or for reunification with caregivers, the Social Service Specialist or Area ICPC liaison will:

A. Complete and submit DHS-1010: Application for Out-of-State Travel to ICPC Central Office no less than two (2) weeks in advance of proposed travel dates. ICPC Central Office will be responsible for obtaining approvals for the travel.
B. Upon receipt of approval to travel, make necessary travel arrangements through DCFStravelrequests@dhs.arkansas.gov .
C. Submit ICPC-100B to the ICPC Central Office for forwarding to the receiving state after the child is placed in the receiving state.
D. When an escort (state employee or non-state employee) is needed to assist with transporting an Arkansas child experiencing foster care to or from an out-of-state placement, the Specialist or area ICPC liaison will submit a DHS-1010 to accompany the child. No travel shall commence until the DHS-1010s are signed.

1008.6 Travel Not Related to the Placement of Children

05/2022

For non-ICPC travel of a child in DCFS custody, the Social Service Specialist will:

A. Ensure that all parties to the case are made aware of and have input regarding the child experiencing foster care traveling out of state (to attend a funeral, go on vacation with a resource parent, attend camp, etc.).
B. Request prior approval by submitting the DHS-1010 for the child and an escort, as appropriate, to the Supervisor who, if approved, will continue to request approval and associated signatures through the following chain of command:

1) Area Manager or designee
2) Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee
3) DCFS Director or designee

C. Direct requests and questions to the Foster Care Unit.

Internal Procedure 1009: Border Agreements

03/2026

When a child enters foster care, timely placement with safe, familiar caregivers is critical to reducing trauma and promoting stability. For children who live near state borders, relatives or kin may reside across the state line, making geographic proximity possible, but placement complicated by jurisdictional processes.

Border Agreements (BAs) are collaborative arrangements with a written agreement between two or more neighboring states that allow for short term placement of children experiencing foster care across state lines under specific conditions, while ensuring all safety, background, and approval requirements are met. These agreements serve as a temporary solution during the initial placement period and help maintain important family connections.

The use of a BA does not replace the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), but rather provides a pathway to allow for immediate, appropriate placement while the ICPC process is underway.

This Internal Procedure outlines the requirements, steps, and safeguards for utilizing a Border Agreement to place children across state lines within participating jurisdictions.

Key Definitions

- Border Agreement (BA) Home Assessment: The preliminary assessment of the proposed caregiver and placement home
- Receiving State: The state where the child will be placed.
- Sending State: The state with legal custody of the child.

Border Agreement Components

- Arkansas DCFS has an approved Border Agreement with Tennessee
- Not all Border Agreements are the same
- Placements must comply with:
    - The terms of the agreement
    - The designated policy of each state
    - ICPC provisions for placement and approval

Requesting a Border Agreement (BA) Home Assessment

If, during the first thirty (30) calendar days after a child enters foster care or after an unexpected disruption of a custodial placement, a kinship placement resource in the other state (Tennessee) is identified, the Social Services Specialist will:

A. Consider the feasibility and practicality of a temporary placement of the custodial child with the identified kin in the other state.
B. If it is in the best interest of the child to request a BA:
    1) Contact the receiving state, request a Priority 1 BA Home Assessment, referencing the AR/TN Border Agreement:
        a) 1-877-237-0004 (M-F)
           1-877-237-0034 (weekends)
        b) Provide all necessary contact information for the kin, Social Services Specialist, and Social Services Supervisor:
            i. Telephone numbers
            ii. Email addresses
            iii. Physical address
            iv. Other contact information, as requested or necessary
        c) Within four (4) business hours, email the receiving state case manager and copy dcfs.icpcborderagr@dhs.arkansas.gov:
            i. All available documents needed for the BA home assessment request
            ii. All information provided by telephone
C. Upon approval of BA home assessment approval:
    1) Immediately contact approved kin to:
        a) Determine placement logistics (date, time, travel arrangements)
        b) Confirm a plan for the duration of the kinship placement to obtain customary and necessary:
            i. Educational services
            ii. Medical services (must address vaccinations)
            iii. Mental/behavioral health services
            iv. Social services for the children
            v. Arrangements for family time with caregivers and siblings not placed jointly
    2) Immediately contact the case manager for the border state and provide notification of the decision to utilize the approved placement and details regarding the child's placement in the kinship home under the BA
    3) Provide notification of placement change via CFS-300 and CFS-300-A, as appropriate to:
        a) Child
        b) Child's siblings, when not being placed as a sibling group
        c) Child's biological caregivers
        d) Resource parents
        e) Attorney Ad Litem
        f) CASA
        g) Attorneys who are legal parties to the case
    4) Make arrangements for travel to place the child with the approved kin
    5) Within twenty-four (24) business hours of placement occurring:

a) Key the child's placement in the Division information management system with a placement reason of 'BA kinship placement'
b) Provide the receiving state case manager a copy of the medical passport for the child via email
c) Schedule a Family Team Meeting:
    i. Invite and include the BA state case manager
    ii. Develop or review the permanency plan for the case, clarify terms and conditions, and discuss any need for immediate services and next steps
    iii. Document the Family Team Meeting in the Division information management system
    iv. Provide a copy of any planning documentation (Family Case Plan, Immediate Safety Plan, etc.) to the pertinent parties and the BA state case manager

6) Within fifteen (15) business days of an approved BA placement submit an ICPC Placement Home Assessment Request, following all ICPC Policy and Internal Procedures, to the receiving state's ICPC office:
    a) Include Form 100B indicating placement made
    b) Include a notation that the kinship caregiver is acting as a BA placement:
        i. If ICPC Request for Placement has not been submitted within fifteen (15) business days of initial placement in the BA kinship home, remove the child from the BA kinship placement and return the children to an approved placement in AR within five (5) business days
        ii. If ICPC Request for Placement is pending determination by the receiving state at fifteen (15) days, contact the receiving state case manager and:
            1. Develop and document an agreement to extend the child's placement in the BA kinship home; or
            2. Immediately make travel arrangements to have the child returned to an approved placement in AR within 5 business days
            3. Document the reasons for inability to extend in the Division information management system
    c) If ICPC placement is not approved within sixty (60) calendar days contact the receiving state case manager and:
        i. Develop and document an agreement to extend the child's placement in the BA kinship home; or
        ii. Immediately make travel arrangements to have the child returned to an approved placement in AR within five (5) business days:
            1. Document the reasons for inability to extend in the Division information management system
            2. Use 'BA Kinship placement expired' as the exit reason
    d) If at any point a child must be removed from a BA kinship placement:

i. Within one (1) business day:
    1. Provide written notification of change in placement via CFS-300 and 300-A to the family and court parties, as appropriate
    2. Key the placement changes for the child in the Division information management system

7) Provide updated information regarding the case to the BA state case manager as soon as is practical to include:
    a) Family Team Meeting notices
    b) Family Case Plans
    c) Notices regarding changes or updates to the family time schedule
    d) Court dates and links to participate virtually in court hearings, as available
    e) Court reports

D. If BA home assessment is denied for placement:
    1) Consider measures to appeal the denial, as appropriate
    2) Do not place any child in the BA kinship home unless the decision is appealed and subsequent approval is obtained through the BA
    3) Within one (1) business day provide written notification to the family and court parties of the denial

Receiving a Border Agreement (BA) Home Assessment
Upon receipt of a Border Agreement (BA) home assessment request the Crimes Against Children Division (CACD) Hotline staff to:

A. Verify that a Border Agreement exists between Arkansas and the requesting state
B. Verify this is a custodial placement request
C. Collect all necessary contact information for the kin, sending state case manager, and case supervisor:
    1) Telephone numbers
    2) Email addresses
    3) Physical address
    4) Other contact information, as requested or necessary
D. Determine appropriate office for referral assignment and call to initiate the Border Agreement request:
    1) During business hours, the local County Supervisor
    2) During non-business hours, the local On Call Supervisor
E. Email all collected information to dcfs.icpcborderagr@dhs.arkansas.gov

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Within two (2) hours contact the sending state case manager by telephone to confirm receipt of the request and specify an estimated time for completion of the BA home assessment:
    1) Communicate with the sending state case manager:
        a) Request all available documentation regarding the child's needs and the proposed kinship placement

b) Provide an email address for receipt of documentation
c) Agree upon a timeframe for the home assessment to be completed

2) Immediately follow up the conversation with an email to the sending case manager recapping the conversation and time frames agreed upon:
a) Copy the area ICPC liaison on this email

B. Make arrangements with the proposed kinship placement to conduct the BA home assessment

C. Complete the assessment of the proposed kinship caregivers and the home environment using the following minimum components:
1) A home assessment according to DCFS Policy 9 CAR § 40-708: Consideration of Relatives and Fictive Kin for Children in Foster Care
2) Verification of the proposed caregiver's agreement to care for the children and understanding of the terms of the BA placement, including what each party state will do to support the placement
3) Narrative report detailing:
a) A written summary of the background checks, registry checks, and database search results
b) Pertinent information regarding the proposed kinship caregivers and the home environment
c) Determination regarding the appropriateness of the kinship placement and the impact on the safety and well-being of the children
d) Reasons for denial or approval, including any terms or conditions for the decision:
i. If denied, include a statement that no child may be placed in the kinship home along with instructions for appealing the decision to include:
1. Social Service Supervisor's name, phone number, and email address
e) Appropriate authorizing signatures from:
i. Social Service Specialist
ii. Social Service Supervisor
iii. Social Service Area Manager

D. Within thirty (30) minutes of the decision:
1) Communicate the approval decision to the sending state case manager by telephone

E. By no later than the next business day:
1) Complete and provide to the sending state case manager, case supervisor, and area ICPC liaison:
a) CFS-446: In Home Consultation Report including attachments and appropriately dated signature authorizations
2) Document all results of the BA home assessment in the Division information management system in provider screens and take all steps necessary to indicate the provider is approved or has been denied:

a) If home assessment is denied document the closure of the resource home as 'BA home assessment denied'

F. Upon notification from BA state case manager of intent to place a child in AR:
   1) Within three (3) business days following placement, conduct a face-to-face contact with the children in the BA kinship home
   2) Conduct one (1) face-to-face contact with the children in the BA kinship home monthly for the duration of the placement
   3) Provide written documentation of each contact to the BA kinship home to the sending state's case manager:
      a) Documentation will include a brief summary of the children's status and well-being and any noted concerns
      b) Within two (2) business days of completion of visit, document each BA kinship home contact in the Division information management system

BORDER AGREEMENT PLACEMENT DENIAL

The decision to approve or deny placement under the BA Home Assessment is the responsibility of the receiving state agency and must meet the receiving state agency's current policies and procedures.

When the receiving state chooses to deny the BA request, the denial communication will include the name and phone number of an accessible supervisor should the sending state wish to discuss the reason for the denial, request reconsideration, or discuss any alternative measures that would allow for approval of the placement.

Unless approved upon reconsideration, no placement will be made with the proposed relative or kin caregiver in the receiving state.

Border Agreements fall under Interstate Compacts and placements must comply with the terms of the agreement, designated policy of each state, and ICPC provisions for placement. Unless otherwise disrupted, the children may remain in the approved BA placement pending the ICPC Home Assessment.

Internal Procedure 1010: ICPC Home Studies

01/2011

Upon receipt of a request for a home study, the Social Service Supervisor will:

A. Assign the case to a Specialist or, if it is a request to conduct a non-relative independent adoption study, forward the request to the Adoption Unit, Slot S565 for assignment to an Adoption Specialist.
B. Contact OCC if an in-state court ordered home study request is received on a private litigation case that does not contain indigent language indicating the responsible party is unable to pay.

The Social Service Specialist will:

A. Contact the family by letter to advise of the request to conduct a home study. Enclose with the letter the appropriate forms to be completed by the family. The family will be advised to return the following completed forms to the Specialist within seven (7) business days:
    1) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
    2) CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check
    3) Three positive, confidential references
    4) Home study report
B. Contact the family a second time if the family has not returned the completed forms within the seven-day period. Advise the family that the completed forms must be returned within five (5) business days. If the family does not respond to the second request, the Specialist will send a letter to the requesting party advising that the family has not responded to efforts to conduct the home study. Completion of the home study should not proceed if the information forms are not completed. Any assistance in completion of the forms should be provided or arranged by the Specialist in situations of physical or mental disability or illiteracy.
C. Contact the family to schedule a home interview upon receipt of the completed forms.
D. Interview the family. Follow the guidelines for completing a home study. The home study is to be completed within thirty (30) business days of receipt of the request. Notify the requesting party if additional time will be required to complete the home study.
E. Forward the completed home study with a cover letter to the court and the requesting party if different. A copy of the home study will be retained in the county office case file.
F. In the Division information management system:
    1) Enter the family as a Resource by completing the General Information screen, Status screen, and Homes screens
    2) Close the family as a Resource on the General Information screen upon completion of the home study

The Social Service Specialist or Adoption Social Service Specialist will:

A. Document services delivered and activities conducted on the Services Provided to Resource screen in Resource in the Division information management system.
B. Maintain a file containing the court order, correspondence, narrative and any forms.

CHILD NEAR FATALITIES AND FATALITIES

Internal Procedure 1100: Child Near Fatalities and Fatalities

07/2018

1100.1 Near Fatality of Child

07/2018

In the case of a child near-fatality the county office will:

A. Report maltreatment or any suspected maltreatment to the Child Abuse Hotline immediately if it has not already been called into the Child Abuse Hotline.
B. Notify the Area Manager of the near fatality of the child immediately.

The Area Manager will:

A. Schedule and hold the internal review of the near fatality within fourteen (14) calendar days (or earlier upon the DCFS Director's request) with DCFS staff to ascertain information involving facts surrounding the near fatality. The meeting will include:
    1) Specialist
    2) County Manager or investigative Supervisor
    3) Area Manager
    4) Child Protective Services (CPS) Manager
    5) Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee
    6) Other appropriate staff as needed

    The individuals above may participate in the meeting by phone as appropriate.
B. Immediately (within twenty-four (24) hours or as required by the Director) prepare CFS-307: Near Fatality/Fatality Disclosure Case Briefing Summary and the CFS-309: Children and Family Services Internal Review of Child Near Fatality/Death and email it to the CPS Manager.
C. Ensure the completion of CFS-306: Documentation of Child's Medical Episode Related to Near Fatality by the child's attending physician or other attending medical personnel who treated the child during the child's medical episode.

The CPS Manager will:

A. Review the completed CFS-307: Near Fatality/Fatality Disclosure Case Briefing Summary and forward it to:
    1) Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee
    2) Assistant Director of Prevention and Reunification or designee
    3) Quality Assurance Unit Manager or designee
B. Request updated information from the counties as needed.
C. Review the CFS-306: Documentation of Child's Medical Episode Related to Near Fatality.
D. Work with the chair of the External Child Near Fatality and Fatality Review Team as appropriate in coordinating logistics and necessary reports for the quarterly External Child Near Fatality and Fatality Review Team.
E. Prepare the list of all certified near fatalities as well as all records related to the child and

send the information to the members of the External Child Near Fatality and Fatality Review Team at least fourteen calendar days prior to a scheduled committee meeting:

1) This information may be sent as hard copies or electronically

The Quality Assurance Unit will:

A. Enter information regarding near fatalities related to maltreatment on the Child Fatality /Near Fatality Disclosure Log.

1100.2 Child Fatality Notification

07/2018

The Crimes Against Children Division will:

A. Investigate child maltreatment allegations according to established procedures.
B. If safety concerns are identified, immediately contact DCFS to conduct the remaining components of the Safety and Risk Assessments as appropriate:
    1) DCFS will then be assigned as the secondary Investigator on that investigation
C. Coordinate with law enforcement and relinquish their case to them if the possibility of criminal charges is involved and law enforcement prefers to assume responsibility.
D. Initiate needed affidavits for legal action.
E. Keep the county office advised of the status of the investigation, including initial notification when appropriate.
F. Share all information with the caregivers, offender, and victim, as appropriate.

The Social Service Specialist assigned as secondary to the investigation will:

A. If CACD contacted DCFS to conduct the remaining components of the Safety and Risk Assessments (Immediate Safety Planning and investigation Risk Assessment), immediately ascertain the safety of other children remaining under the care of the alleged offender and develop an Immediate Safety Plan or pursue protective custody, as appropriate.
B. Provide any services to the family as needed.
C. Enter all contacts with the family into the Division information management system.
D. Share all information about prior contacts with the family with agency staff and law enforcement who are investigating the case.

In the case of a fatality of a child the county office will:

A. Immediately notify the Area Manager by phone.
B. Report maltreatment or any suspected maltreatment to the Child Abuse Hotline immediately if it has not already been called into the Child Abuse Hotline.
C. Immediately (within twenty-four (24) hours or as required by the DCFS Director) complete CFS-307: Child Near Fatality/Fatality Disclosure Case Briefing Summary and CFS-308: Child Fatality Review Packet Checklist and forward the CFS-307 and CFS-308 and all required documents listed on CFS-308 to the CPS Manager.
D. Place copies of CFS-307 and CFS-308 in the child's record.
E. If the child fatality is a result of a prior near fatality event and the fatality occurred more than twenty-four (24) hours after the near fatality, ensure the completion of CFS-306-A:

Documentation of Near Fatality Subsequently Resulting in Fatality by the child's attending physician or other attending medical personnel who treated the child during the child's medical episode.

F. Email the completed CFS-306-A: Documentation of Original Near Fatality Subsequently Resulting in Fatality to the CPS Manager within seventy-two (72) hours of the fatality, if applicable.
G. Place a copy of the CFS-306-A in the child's record, if applicable.

The Area Manager or designee will:

A. Notify the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee immediately by phone.
B. Ensure employee immediately (within twenty-four (24) hours or as required by DCFS Director) completes and forwards completed CFS-307: Child Near Fatality/Fatality Disclosure Case Briefing Summary and forward the CFS-307 to the CPS Manager.
C. Complete the CFS-308: Child Fatality Review Packet Checklist within seven (7) calendar days of the fatality and email both forms along with all required documents listed on the CFS-308 to the CPS Manager:
    1) Schedule and hold an Internal Fatality Review meeting with DCFS staff within fourteen (14) calendar days of the fatality to ascertain the facts surrounding the child's death. The meeting will include:
        a) Specialist
        b) CACD Investigator
        c) County Manager or Investigative Supervisor
        d) CACD Supervisor
        e) Area Manager
        f) CPS Manager
        g) Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee
        h) Assistant Director of Prevention and Reunification or designee
        i) Any other needed staff as appropriate
D. Expeditiously provide all other information requested by CPS Manager.

The Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee will:

A. Notify the DHS Director of Communications by phone within one (1) hour of occurrence if the incident is expected to receive media attention.
B. Discuss relevant details of the case with the DHS Director of Communications to determine the type of information that will be released to the media. Pertinent information that can be released will include disclosable information as provided by the DHS Disclosure Policy (DHS Policy Group 4009):
    1) Any information concerning siblings or attorney-client communications will not be released
C. Remain in direct contact with appropriate field personnel to develop a clear understanding of the circumstances surrounding the incident.

The CPS Manager will:

A. Review CFS-307: Child Near Fatality/Fatality Disclosure Case Briefing Summary.

B. Forward the CFS-307: Child Near Fatality/Fatality Disclosure Case Briefing Summary to:
    1) Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee
    2) Assistant Director of Prevention and Reunification or designee
    3) DCFS Director
    4) DHS Director of Communications
    5) DHS Deputy Director over DCFS
C. Review the CFS-308: Child Fatality Review Packet Checklist and all required documents listed on CFS-308.
D. Enter information regarding the fatality on the Child Death Log and Child Death Public Disclosure Log.
E. Serve as the point of contact for follow-up and subsequent briefings of the Assistant Directors, Division Deputy Director, and DHS Deputy Director.
F. Work with the chair of the External Child Near Fatality and Fatality Review Team as appropriate in coordinating logistics and necessary reports for the quarterly External Child Near Fatality and Fatality Review Team.
G. Prepare the list of all child deaths as well as all records related to the child and send the information to the members of the External Child Near Fatality and Fatality Review Team at least fourteen calendar days prior to a scheduled committee meeting:
    1) This information may be sent as hard copies or electronically

The Quality Assurance Unit will:

A. Enter information regarding fatalities related to maltreatment on the Child Fatality/Near Fatality Disclosure Log.

1100.3 Critical Incident Review

09/2026

The goal of Critical Incident Reviews is to evaluate and discuss cases involving the death or near death of a child, with the aim of supporting staff, identifying areas for system improvement, and preventing future fatalities. This process includes exploring trends, reviewing quality of practice, and providing training opportunities to strengthen investigation standards. Reviews also help field staff understand what occurred, how and why it happened, and what could be done differently in the future.

To accomplish this, the Critical Incident Manager (CIM), or designee is responsible for initiating this review process.

A mapping of a timeline of interactions with a family will be developed. Completing the mapping of a timeline helps demonstrate accountability for action steps taken and allows for observation of what worked well and what worries exist.

Through engagement with field staff and use of the Safe Systems Improvement Tool (SSIT), reviews should flow smoothly, cultivate a learning experience, and promote positive outcomes for Division staff and families served by the Division.

The Safe Systems Improvement Tool (SSIT) will be used to:

- Support detailed reporting and analysis of contributing factors.
- Identify strengths and barriers in practice and systems.
- Capture staff feedback and lived experience during the case.
- Provide recommendations to prevent future child fatalities.
- Track action steps, progress, and systemic changes.

Once a referral is made to the hotline regarding a critical incident, the Critical Incident Unit will:

A. Conduct a historical search for related information within twenty-four (24) months of the referral in the Division information management system.
B. Complete a thorough briefing regarding the critical incident:
    1) Submit the initial briefing within twenty-four (24) hours to:
        a) Division Deputy Director
        b) Assistant Director of Prevention and Reunification
    2) Once the briefing has been reviewed for completeness and accuracy, submit the finalized briefing to:
        a) Area Manager
        b) Assistant Director of Field Operations
        c) Division Director
C. If needed, provide Rapid Response (quick phone call or zoom meeting to get information quickly within forty-eight (48) hours, including weekends):
    1) Help staff make immediate safety decisions for surviving siblings
    2) Assess potential for media inquiry or other scrutiny
    3) Bring all relevant internal parties to the table to support one (1) another and communicate
    4) Request primary specialist to complete CFS-307: Child Fatality Disclosure Case Briefing Summary and follow DCFS Policy 9 CAR § 40-1011: Child near fatalities and fatalities
    5) Complete form 309 (if additional information is needed to update the CFS-307)
D. Meet with field staff for mapping session in regard to the incident:
    1) If there is an open CACD investigation or CACD prior history, invite CACD
E. Based upon information obtained during the mapping session:
    1) Complete applicable portions of the SSIT
    2) Obtain feedback and specifics on associated cases and investigations from the field staff that worked on them or were involved with the family
    3) Meet with the Area Manager or designee to:
        a) Complete the remainder of the SSIT
F. Arrange for mental health counseling for local office staff as necessary due to the critical incident.
G. Maintain a spreadsheet of all child deaths and near deaths to include:
    1) Review details:
        a) Date
        b) Time
        c) Participants

d) Outcomes
2) Action steps taken
3) Recommendations
4) Follow up necessary and performed

H. Enter all information in RED CAP:
1) Within seven (7) days of critical incident
2) Update as needed
3) Update after review is complete, as necessary

I. Schedule the system and practice review:
1) Invite field staff that have had history with the family to ensure all information is available for the discussion in the review. Include:
a) Area Manager or designee
b) All Social Service Specialists that have worked the case or investigation
c) All Supervisors that have supervised decision making for associated cases or investigations
d) Complete the SSIT during this meeting

J. Facilitate the system and practice review:
1) Complete a timeline of the family's history with the Division:
a) This would be conducted for any family with:
i. A substantial amount of history
ii. Recent history within six (6) months
iii. As requested by the Division Director, or designee
2) Complete or review Genograms to ensure all family members are included
3) Identify action steps as necessary:
a) Set timelines and procedures for each action step developed
4) Identify systems recommendations resulting from this internal meeting and follow up with the Assistant Director on these recommendations

K. Schedule Group Debriefing:
1) Go over SSIT results
2) Have staff complete Red Cap survey individually:
a) If staff request a separate meeting, schedule a time to do so

L. Ensure each action step is completed:
1) Follow up with field staff regarding each action step until all action steps are completed
2) Update the Child Fatality and Near Fatality Spreadsheet accordingly
3) Provide the Division Director and Division Deputy Director with a status update within thirty (30) days following the system and practice review and every thirty (30) days thereafter until all action steps are completed.
4) Immediately elevate to the Division Director and Division Deputy Director any significant concern, barrier, or identified risk that requires executive level action or decision making

The Assistant Director of Prevention and Reunification will:

A. Review recommendations and identified trends resulting from Critical Incident Reviews with the Division Director and Division Deputy Director.

B. Discuss whether findings indicate a need for division level or systemic changes, including changes to policy, procedure, training, supervision, practice guidance, resources, or other operational processes.

CHILD MALTREATMENT CENTRAL REGISTRY

Internal Procedure 1200: Child Maltreatment Central Registry

09/2026

1200.1 Preliminary Placement on the Child Maltreatment Central Registry

09/2026

When a true finding is documented and approved by a Supervisor in the Division information management system, the finding is not immediately placed on the Child Maltreatment Central Registry. Individuals identified as alleged offenders are entitled to administrative due process before placement on the registry. The Division shall provide notice of the investigative determination and information regarding the individual's right to request an administrative hearing through the Department of Human Services Office of Appeals and Hearings.

Preliminary placement may occur only when all of the following conditions are met:

- The Division made diligent efforts to notify the alleged offender of the investigative determination.
- A process server was unable to locate the alleged offender.
- Preliminary placement is necessary to protect a vulnerable population pending administrative due process.

The Area Manager will:

A. Follow Division Policy 9 CAR § 40-1007 regarding preliminary administrative hearings.
B. If the alleged offender cannot be notified of the investigation determination:
    1) Complete form CFS 232-T PH requesting preliminary placement on the Child Maltreatment Central Registry
    2) Determine whether the request should be submitted to the Department of Human Services Office of Appeals and Hearings
C. Before requesting a preliminary hearing, ensure documentation demonstrates:
    1) Diligent efforts were made to locate and notify the alleged offender
    2) A process server was unsuccessful in locating the alleged offender
    3) Preliminary placement is necessary to protect a child, an elderly person, person with a disability, or individual with mental illness from risk of maltreatment
D. Notify the Administrative Law Judge of any pending criminal action related to the Investigation.
E. Maintain documentation supporting the preliminary placement decision.

1200.2 Placement of Name in the Child Maltreatment Central Registry

09/2026

Placement of an individual's name on the Child Maltreatment Central Registry may be provisional or permanent depending on the outcome of administrative due process. Certain findings may later be removed from the registry in accordance with Division Policy

and applicable law.

Central registry staff will:

A. Provisionally place and individual's name on the Central Registry upon notification from an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) that a prima facie determination was made at a preliminary administrative hearing:
    1) Ensure Division information management system records clearly identify the placement as provisional:
        a) Go to the Investigation 'Finding' tab
        b) Under 'Appeal Information' select 'Provisionally Placed' as the Appeal Status:
            i. Enter the date the ALJ made a prima facie determination under 'Status Date'
            ii. In the 'Comments' box, document information from the prima facie order received from the ALJ
B. Permanently place and individual's name on the Central Registry upon receipt of a notification from the Administrative Office of Appeals that the true finding has been upheld:
    1) Update the Division information management system to reflect the provisional placement:
        a) Go to the investigation 'Finding' tab
        b) Under 'Appeal Information':
            i. Select 'Upheld' as the Appeal Status
            ii. Enter the date of the ALJ determination in the 'Status Date' field
            iii. Document information from the final order in the 'Comments' box
C. Remove an individual's name from the Child Maltreatment Central Registry if a full administrative hearing determines that the true finding is not supported:
    1) Update the Division information management system to reflect the true finding was overturned:
        a) Go to the investigation 'Finding' tab
        b) Under 'Appeal Information':
            i. Complete the Appeal Status by selecting 'Overturned'
            ii. Enter the date the ALJ made the determination under 'Status Date'
            iii. In the 'Comments' box, enter information regarding the court order received from the ALJ

1200.3 Automatic Name Removal from the Central Registry

09/2026

An offender's name shall be automatically removed from the Child Maltreatment Central Registry when the requirements of 9 CAR § 40-1303 are met.

The Division information management system shall automatically remove an offender's name from the Child Maltreatment Central Registry when each of the following conditions

are met:

A. More than one (1) year has passed since the offender's name was placed on the Child Maltreatment Central Registry.
B. Placement on the Child Maltreatment Central Registry was based on one (1) or more of the following findings:
    1) Educational neglect
    2) Failure to provide care, maintenance or support
    3) Failure to provide essential needs
    4) Failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment
C. The offender has not had a subsequent true finding for child maltreatment within one (1) year following placement on the Child Maltreatment Central Registry.
D. The offender was not placed on the Child Maltreatment Central Registry for a report involving a child fatality or near fatality.

The Division information management system shall document the date of removal and maintain historical information regarding the prior placement.

1200.4 Central Registry Review Team Removal Process

09/2026

The Central Registry Review Team will review requests for removal from the Child Maltreatment Central Registry when authorized by Division policy and regulation, when the offender's name is not eligible to be automatically removed from the Child Maltreatment Central Registry as described in 9 CAR § 40-1303. The Child Maltreatment Central Registry Review Team shall operate as follows:

A. The Director of the Division of Children and Family Services shall appoint members to serve on the Child Maltreatment Central Registry Review Team:
    1) The Review Team will be made up of:
        a) Division of Children and Family Services Central Office staff
        b) Division of Children and Family Services field staff
        c) Crimes Against Children Division staff
        d) There will be five (5) members with alternates in case of scheduling conflicts
        e) A representative of the Office of Chief Counsel may provide legal advice and assistance to the team but will not be a member of the Child Maltreatment Central Registry Review Team
B. The Review Team will select an alternating chairperson for each quarter.
C. The Review Team will determine a regular meeting schedule for the review of any requests that meet all criteria but shall meet at least quarterly.
D. Review requests must be received sixty (60) days in advance of the review meeting, and all Review Team members will be provided with the case information fifteen (15) days prior to the review team meeting.
E. All decisions will be by a majority vote of the team members.
F. All team decisions will be sent in writing by the Central Registry Manager or designee:
    1) Denials will be sent to the applicants by certified mail within fifteen (15) days of the review team meeting

2) Approvals will be sent to the applicants by regular mail within fifteen (15) days of the review team meeting

The Review Team may consider individual circumstances surrounding the maltreatment finding to determine whether continued placement on the registry serves the purpose of protecting vulnerable populations. In determining whether or not to remove an offender from the Child Maltreatment Central Registry the Central Registry Review Team shall consider any relevant evidence which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

A. The circumstances surrounding the maltreatment.
B. The seriousness of the harm caused by the maltreatment to the children.
C. The probability of the offender engaging in future maltreatment.
D. Evidence of the offender's completion of training, rehabilitation, and efforts to learn effective strategies to care for children.
E. Records from the Office of Hearings and Appeals.
F. Any other information that is relevant to the specific offense.

Central Registry Manager or designee will:

A. Receive and screen requests for review.
B. Obtain all required records necessary for review including:
    1) Records from the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA), if applicable
    2) Child Maltreatment Investigations records
    3) Central Registry history
    4) Criminal background checks
    5) Any supporting documentation submitted by the requestor
C. Conduct registry and criminal background checks on behalf of the requestor.
D. Submit all documentation to the Central Registry Review Team via email.
E. Document the Review Team's final determination in the Division information management system Investigation screen.
F. Provide notifications of review outcomes to offenders within fifteen (15) days of the Review Team meeting.

Central Registry Review Team will:

A. Review the circumstances of the original maltreatment finding.
B. Consider:
    1) Records from the Office of Hearings and Appeals, as applicable
    2) Subsequent child welfare history
    3) Criminal history and registry results
    4) Evidence of rehabilitation and protective factors
    5) Whether the original investigation contains sufficient information to support continued placement on the Central Registry:
        a) The Central Registry Removal Team may recommend removal of a name from the Child Maltreatment Central Registry when the team determines that available information indicates the original investigation may have been insufficient to support continued placement on the registry
        b) Any such determination shall be documented with the specific basis

for the decision

6) Individual circumstances and conditions associated with lower risk findings, including inadequate supervision findings involving children less than six (6) years of age
7) Determine whether removal from the Central Registry is appropriate If a decision cannot be finalized:
    a) OCC will forward the packet via email to the Division Director or designee for a determination

The Program Administrator for the Administrative Services Unit will:

A. Document:
    1) The date of review
    2) Team members participating

The OCC attorney will:

A. Participate in the Central Registry Review Team as a legal advisor only.
B. Within seven (7) days post committee meeting:
    1) Document outcomes of each individual review in writing to include:
        a) Information reviewed
        b) Determination made
        c) Rationale supporting the determination
    2) Email the written documentation to the Program Manager for the Central Registry Unit
C. When a decision cannot be finalized:
    1) Within seven (7) days post committee meeting document outcomes of each individual review in writing to include:
        a) Information reviewed
        b) That a determination was not made
        c) Rationale supporting the lack of determination
    2) Forward to the Division Director or designee

The Division Director or designee will:

A. Within five (5) business days issue a final determination regarding the requested removal from the Child Maltreatment Central Registry:
    1) Email the final decision to the Program Manager for the Central Registry Unit