



State of South Carolina

Department of Social Services

Policies and Procedures: Foster Care

Subject:	510.2 Placement Changes
Authority:	Multi-Ethnic Placement Act & Interethnic Adoption Provisions 42 U.S.C.A. § 671(a)(18): general mandates 42 U.S.C.A. § 622(b)(7): diligent recruitment 42 U.S.C.A. § 674 & 45 C.F.R. § 1355.38: enforcement 42 U.S.C.A. § 1996b: Title VI violations 42 U.S.C.A. § 2000a et seq.: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act SC Code of Regulations 114-140 SC Code of Regulations 114-150
Standards:	Guiding Principles and Standards (GPS) Practice Model
Application:	All DSS CWS Staff
Purpose:	The agency shall promote foster children's safety and wellbeing through placing children in the least restrictive, most appropriate, and most stable placements available. The following section lays out the policies and procedures relating to making and monitoring placement decisions for children in foster care.
Policy Statement:	The following shall provide guidance and standards related to the evaluation, decision, and monitoring of foster care placement decisions.
Policy Administration:	The Child Welfare Services Permanency Division is the owner of this policy. The Director of the Child Welfare Services Permanency Division, or their designee, will review this policy at a minimum of annually or as needed due to changes in practice, law, statute.
Policy Guidelines:	
A. Placement Changes	- Procedures for removal of a child from a placement vary depending on the circumstances of the move. - If the placement believes a non-emergency removal is necessary: - The Child Placing Agency or foster family must provide a written 10 business day request for removal. - Upon receipt of the written request for the child to be moved, a Placement Child and Family Team Meeting must be requested to discuss if the placement could be maintained with support services in place; - If it is not possible to maintain the placement the case manager will contact the Regional Placement Unit to start their process for seeking placement for the child

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	D. The worker shall provide written confirmation to the placement, including that the removal is based on the placement's request and that the placement does not have the right to appeal. 3. If DSS believes a non-emergency removal is necessary: A. The case manager will request a Placement CFTM to discuss the removal of the child and develop a transition plan for the move. B. If a court order specifically approved the placement, the worker shall include the DSS attorney in the case consultation; C. The worker shall provide advance written notice to the placement, and if the child has been in a foster home placement for 120 days or longer, this notice shall be delivered to the foster parents at minimum 10 days prior to the planned removal and shall inform the foster parents of their right to appeal; and/or i. If the foster parent appeals, the child must remain in the home pending outcome of the appeal unless: a. The court has issued an order that provides for the removal; or b. The foster parents failed to supply necessary information to complete an adoption home study within 90 days of receipt of notice that adoption is the plan for the child D. If the placement has had the child less than 120 days, the case manager must provide the placement with a written notice that the child will be removed from their home at minimum 2 business days in advance. This written notification must also inform the placement that they do not have the right to appeal the removal. 4. If an emergency removal is necessary: A. If possible, prior to the removal, the worker shall arrange a case consultation to determine if the child's health and safety is threatened by the child's continued placement in the home. The case consultation should include the child, if age and developmentally appropriate, any other members of the child's treatment team, and, as appropriate, OHAN; i. When there is an adoptive or pre-adoptive placement and an emergency removal is necessary, the adoption specialist must contact the Office of General Counsel representative assigned to their Regional Adoption Office for consultation on the proper actions to take. Note: When adoptive agreements are signed (both pre and post adoptive), the family is given physical custody of the child in question. Physical removals can only occur by the adoptive family signing a disruption statement, the child being placed in Emergency Protective Custody, or via an Emergency Removal court order.
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	B. If the particular placement has been court ordered, the worker shall consult with the DSS attorney to determine appropriate action; C. The worker shall provide foster parents with written notice of the reason for removal at the time of the removal, and if the child has been in a foster home placement for 120 days or longer, the notice shall inform the foster parents of their right to appeal; D. If DSS is seeking a court-approved change in placement; i. The worker shall prepare a supplemental report for the court, including justification for the proposed change in placement; ii. The worker shall provide foster parents with advanced written notice of the proposed change in placement and their right to be heard at any hearing concerning the proposed change in placement; and/or iii. If the court approves the change in placement, the worker shall notify the foster parent of the date that the child will be moved. 5. The worker shall seek to minimize the traumatic impact to the child resulting from any change in placement by: A. The worker shall assist in preparing the child and caregivers for the move, to the extent possible. This may include, but shall not be limited to, transition meetings, transitional visits, and the formulation of a transition plan with the child and any important individuals in his or her life; B. The worker shall coordinate with the child's treatment providers, school, new and former placements, and kin to promote a smooth transition for the child and a trauma-sensitive approach to the child in all areas of the child's life; C. The worker shall, in an appropriate but honest manner, discuss with the child the details of the move and the implication for their daily life. Such conversations shall occur on an ongoing basis while the child transitions to the new placement. At a minimum, the worker shall provide the child with the following information and shall provide the child with an opportunity to ask any questions they may have: i. Information about the transition into foster care, as set forth in Section 510.1 Entry into Foster Care; ii. How the child's basic needs will be met and who is responsible for making sure that such needs are met; iii. What individuals and, if applicable, animals will be present in the home; iv. The household rules of the placement; v. The ability for the child to "personalize" their living space and/or the practices in the placement; vi. Whether the child will (or may) share a bedroom;
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	vii. How the placement will or will not maintain the child's connections and/or interest; viii. What access the child will have to their personal belongings; and ix. If and/or how the child's education will be impacted by foster placement.
B. Special Considerations	1. Individualized Consideration of Race, Color, or National Origin (RCNO) A. If it appears that consideration of RCNO is necessary to advance the child's best interests, the worker shall document the rationale for this consideration, including all factors weighed. B. The worker shall locate a qualified licensed professional to conduct an individualized assessment of the child's particular needs. The worker shall provide the professional with all relevant background information concerning the child's needs, all relevant psychological evaluations if available, and information in MEPA/Title VI (via DSS Form 2533: MEPA Educational Materials); C. Licensed professional must acknowledge receipt of this information by signing DSS Form 2534: Licensed Professional's Statement; D. If the assessment concludes that RCNO should be considered in placement, the assessment must detail how such placement is in the child's best interests, and why it is the only way to achieve the best interests of the child; E. The worker shall forward this assessment to the State MEPA Coordinator, who submits it to OCR/ACF within seven business days for review and comment; and F. Even if consideration of RCNO is approved, it must not be weighed more heavily than other factors relevant to the child's best interests. 2. For information related to placing a child out of state, refer to 550.5 The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children: The Sending State. 3. For placement of children who are a member of or who are eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe, refer to Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

Forms:	DSS Form 2533: MEPA Educational Materials DSS Form 2534: Licensed Professional's Statement
Related Management Reports:	N/A

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Glossary:
N/A