



State of South Carolina Department of Social Services

Department of Social Services Policies and Procedures

Child Welfare Policies and Procedures: Chapter 5

Subject:	510.2.4 Non-Kin Family Foster Home Placement
Authority:	S.C. Code Sections 63-7-10; 63-7-640; 63-7-650; 63-7-680; 63-7-690; 63-7-730; 63-7-735; 63-7-1680; 63-7-2320; 63-7-2330; Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-89); Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351); and Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-123)
Standards:	South Carolina Practice Model: Guiding Principles and Standards (GPS)
Application:	All Child Welfare Staff
Purpose:	To explain policies and procedures that support placing children who are in the custody of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) in foster family homes.
Policy Statement:	When a child cannot safely remain in the home of a parent or guardian and the child needs foster care placement, the SCDSS places the child in a foster family home. Note: Case managers must also make concerted efforts to place siblings together in a foster family home. SCDSS prohibits placing any child who needs foster care in a motel, hotel, or other commercial placement that is not a foster family home. Case managers must give priority to placing the child in the foster family home of a kinship caregiver and therefore, must make concerted efforts to identify a kinship caregiver for placement when a child enters foster care (and when removal to foster care is anticipated). Before placing a child with a kinship caregiver, case managers must inform all prospective kinship caregivers, both orally and in writing, of the procedures to become licensed and must provide prompt assistance to prospective kinship caregivers who want to become licensed caregivers in the completion of the licensing process. Case managers may place a child in a non-kinship foster family home when such placement receives approval and in accordance with procedures outlined in this section; however, case managers must continue to make concerted efforts to identify a kinship caregiver for placement for as long as placement with a kinship caregiver is consistent with the family permanency plan. Case managers must conduct ongoing assessments of child safety and well-being, promptly respond to the needs of the child, family, and caregivers, and shall pursue timely placement in a permanent, stable home for any child served by SCDSS.
Policy Administration:	The Office of Permanency Management is the owner of this policy. The Director of Permanency Management, or Director's designee, will review this policy within one

year of publication in the Child Welfare Policy Manual and will make any necessary amendments to improve its effectiveness.

Glossary:

Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM): a family-centered, culturally responsive, goal-oriented and problem-solving process that brings together the child and family team to make decisions about safety, permanency, and well-being of their child(ren) in the development of an individualized family permanency plan

Child Placing Agency (CPA): any agency operating under a license to place children, youth, or young adults in foster homes for temporary care or in prospective adoptive homes for adoption

Concerted Efforts: comprehensive activities to gather contact information for known and unknown parents, maternal and paternal relatives, fictive kin, and any other significant adult connections who may provide support to both the child, youth, young adult, and family

Congregate Care (also known as group home): a residential organization including residential institutions and childcare institutions, licensed by SCDSS to provide temporary or long-term residential care for children on a year-round basis. The term also includes beyond those associated with school programs are not congregate care settings and specified congregate care settings

Emergency Placement: a short-term placement that is only utilized after all efforts have been made to identify a permanent long-term placement and those efforts were unsuccessful

Family Permanency Plan (also known as Treatment Plan/Placement Plan/Case Plan): the sole plan for a family that is developed collaboratively with the child or youth and family team to describe the reasons for agency involvement, the actions, and services required to change behaviors and reduce safety concerns and risks, and promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child or youth and family

Foster Family Home: the home of an individual or family that is licensed by SCDSS; in which a child in foster care has been placed in the care of an individual who resides with the child and who provides 24- hour substitute care for the child; that SCDSS deems the individual capable of adhering to the [Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard](#); and that provides foster care for no more than 5 children, subject to the following exceptions:

- a. to keep a sibling group together
- b. to keep a child in the child's home community
- c. to return a child to a home in which the child was previously placed
- d. to comply with a court order
- e. if it is in the best interests of the child as determined by the court

Kinship Caregiver: a licensed or unlicensed caretaker, protector, and nurturer of a child, youth, or young adult who is temporarily unable to live with their parent. Includes an adult who is related to a child or youth by blood, marriage, or adoption,

as well as an adult who is not related by blood, marriage, or adoption, but who has a relationship with the child, youth, or young adult, or their family (fictive kin)

Note: For Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) purposes, kinship caregiver is alternatively defined as family members who are related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption only. Refer to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) policy for guidance.

Legal Custody: the right to the physical custody, care, and control of a child, the right to determine where the child shall live, the right and duty to provide protection, food, clothing, shelter, ordinary medical care, education, supervision, and discipline for a child and in an emergency, to authorize surgery or other extraordinary care. Unless otherwise provided by court order, the parent or guardian retains the right to make decisions of substantial legal significance affecting the child, including consent to marriage, enlistment in the armed forces, and major nonemergency medical and surgical treatment, the obligation to provide financial support or other funds for the care of the child, and other residual rights or obligations as may be provided by order of the court

Overnight Stay: a minimum four-hour period in a DSS office, hotel, motel, or other commercial non-foster care establishment between the hours of 10:00pm and 6:00am

Physical Custody: the lawful, actual possession and control of a child, but does not include legal custody unless stated in a court order. Refer to SC Code Ann. Section 63-7-20 (19)

Placement Coordinator: a member of the Foster Family Licensing and Support Unit who is principally responsible for identifying placement for a child who is in foster care

Sibling: a child who shares a common biological parent or adoptive parent with a child in foster care. The term also includes a child who would share a common biological parent or adoptive parent with a child in foster care, but for the termination of parental rights or death of the biological or adoptive parent

Procedures:

A. Referral and Placement Process-Non-Kin Foster Family Home Placements

1. When despite concerted efforts to do so, it is not possible to place a child with a kinship caregiver, case managers must obtain approval from their supervisor and county director to place the child in a non-kin foster family home.
2. The case manager submits a request for placement to the Regional Foster Home Licensing Support Placement Unit by providing [DSS Form 37507: Placement Exception Request](#) the completed Universal Application (UA), and either the FAST (new entry into foster care) or CANS (child currently in foster care).
3. The placement coordinator will review [DSS Form 37507: Placement Exception Request](#) and the Universal Application to ensure the documents are completed and provide the needed information. If upon the review the

	required documents are not completed accurately or have enough information the placement coordinator returns the document(s) to the case manager to complete and resubmit. 4. If the all the required documentation is complete and there are no concerns regarding level of care the placement coordinator will seek placement in a foster family home. a. If the child is regular foster care the placement coordinator will search for non-therapeutic foster homes that are case managed by SCDSS or Child Placing Agencies (CPA). b. If the child is therapeutic the placement coordinator will search for a therapeutic foster family home with one of the CPA's. c. All placements sought should prioritize the following: i. the individualized needs of the child, ii. home community, iii. school, iv. connections with siblings, v. the county of origin, vi. bordering counties (in and out of the region) Note: The placement coordinator may only search for placement outside the child's region after making concerted efforts to secure a placement that contemplates the above items. 5. If the placement coordinator or supervisor determines that the child may need a higher level of care (if they are therapeutic child), it's a placement change request on a therapeutic child, a regular foster care child may need a therapeutic level of care, or the placement has been unable to identify a placement for any child, the placement coordinator will email the UA and either the FAST or CANS to the Therapeutic Service Coordinator (TSC) for review. a. The TSC will complete the following: i. Review the UA and FAST or Cans for clarification and needed revisions by engage the case manager, supervisor, or program coordinator. ii. Will work with the case manager to make any necessary adjustments to the UA. iii. If the child is not approved for therapeutic services, will decide if a temporary approval for therapeutic care should be granted. If temporary approval is granted, the TSC will advise the case manager to complete the therapeutic application in CAPSS and assist, if needed.
--	---

	b. The TSC will work to get the UA and FAST or CANS reviewed and updated within four hours (desired time frame) but could take up to one business day. The TSC will email the Placement Unit if they are unable to complete the reviews and updates within the four-hour desired time frame. c. The TSC will email the placement unit of the reviewed UA and recommended level of care (LOC). d. The Placement Unit will review the updated and revised UA to ensure that nothing of significance has been left out or needs further clarification. e. The Placement Unit will search for placement as recommended by TSC. f. The Placement Unit will add the TSC to the confirmation email when placement is identified. g. If placement is not identified the TSC will review the UA again to identify if any updates need to be made and consult on any barriers. 6. The placement coordinator will complete DSS Form 37509: Diligent Efforts to Provide Foster Home Placement on all requests for placement. 7. The placement supervisor will uplink the DSS Form 37509: Diligent Efforts to Provide Foster Home Placement within two business day of placement being secured. 8. Upon securing placement, the placement coordinator will notify all providers, who were contacted for placement, to let them know they no longer need to continue with their search within 15 minutes of placement being identified. 9. Upon identification of a long-term placement, the placement coordinator will complete the following: a. For therapeutic foster care placements: emails the case manager with the name, address, contact information of the identified placement. 10. Upon receiving the placement information for the child, if age
--	--

	and developmentally appropriate, the case manager reviews with the child the Foster Child Bill of Rights and a printed card with a telephone number the child can use to contact SCDSS. The case manager provides the child with a copy of the Foster Child Bill of Rights and printed card. Additionally, the case manager informs the child that the child can call that number if the child is experiencing a problem that the case manager cannot resolve. 12. If age and developmentally appropriate, the case manager shall obtain from the child the child's signature stating the child received, reviewed, and understands the Foster Child Bill of Rights and printed card. The case manager places signed copies of these documents in the child's case file. Note: The SCDSS cannot place a child in any foster family home that has children under the age of 18 in the home if the agency has actual knowledge that the child has been adjudicated delinquent for or has pled guilty or nolo contendere to, or has been convicted of a sex offense, unless the placement is in a therapeutic foster family home or unless the child is the only child in the foster family home at the time of placement and for the duration of the child's placement in the foster family home. a. Notwithstanding this provision, the SCDSS may petition the court for an order allowing the child or youth to be placed in a foster family home, other than a therapeutic foster family home, if good cause is shown. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, a case objective to place the child with a sibling.
B. After-Hours Placement	1. If a child needs placement in a non-kinship foster family home outside of traditional working hours, e.g. Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. or weekends, the case manager contacts the Regional Foster Home and Licensing Unit on-call worker. 2. The case manager completes the Universal Application and DSS Form 37507: Placement Exception Request Form and sends the form to the designated Regional Foster Home Licensing and Support Office via email.

	3. The Regional Foster Home and Licensing Unit on-call worker reviews all information provided for the child who needs placement. 4. If the child needs placement in a non-therapeutic foster family home, the placement coordinator will seek placement with families licensed by SCDSS and CPAs until placement is found. 5. If it is determined by the placement coordinator that the child may need therapeutic foster care placement or may be medically fragile, the Regional Foster Home Licensing and Support Unit on-call worker contacts the on-call worker with the Office of Child Health and Well-Being for approval. The on-call worker with the Office of Child Health and Well-Being will make the final decision if the child should receive temporary therapeutic approval. 6. If the on-call worker with the Office of Child Health and Well-Being gives approval, the Regional Foster Home Licensing and Support Unit on-call worker emails to the case manager the information shared with the on-call worker with the Office of Child Health and Well-Being and the level of care approved. 7. The case manager completes the request for ISCEDC/special needs approval in CAPSS the next business day. 8. If the child needs placement in a qualified residential treatment program, psychiatric residential treatment program, or congregate care, follow policy and procedure as outlined in the Congregate Care Placement policy.
C. Emergency Placement	1. The placement coordinator makes concerted efforts to exhaust long-term options for placement before using an emergency placement for a child. 2. If a long-term/full-time placement is unable to be located for a youth, placing the youth at risk of an overnight DSS office stay, the placement coordinator will seek an emergency placement. 3. If an emergency placement must be utilized, the placement coordinator will make concerted efforts to seek options that do not constitute “overnight” emergency placements. 4. Any emergency placement that must be confirmed on a daily basis with a placement provider is considered an overnight

	emergency placement. 5. If a youth must be placed into an overnight emergency placement the following escalating review and approval process must occur. During these timeframes, all other established policies and practices for teaming around the youth's needs will continue. a. The Regional Placement Team Coordinator may approve up to 3 consecutive nights of overnight emergency placement b. If the youth continues to require additional overnight emergency placements, the Regional Director must be consulted and may approve up to an additional 3 nights of overnight EP c. If a youth has remained in overnight emergency placements for 6 nights, and continues to require an overnight emergency placement, the Placement Services Director must be consulted, and may approve up to an additional 3 nights of overnight EP d. If the youth has remained in overnight emergency placements for 9 nights, and continues to require an overnight emergency placement, the Assistant Operations Director must be consulted, and may approve up to an additional 3 nights of overnight EP e. If the youth has remained in overnight emergency placements for 12 nights, and continues to require an overnight emergency placement, the Director of Permanency Management and the Director of Operations must be consulted simultaneously. Either Director may approve up to an additional 3 nights of overnight EP f. If the youth has remained in overnight emergency placements for 15 nights, and continues to require an overnight emergency placement, the Deputy Director of Child Welfare must be consulted to provide additional approval and will continue to be consulted every 3 days that ongoing overnight placement is needed. 6. Documentation of escalated approvals will be recorded on the DE form by the Placement Coordinator.
--	---

	7. PCFTMs or CFTMs will be completed at a minimum of every 7th day that a youth consecutively remains in overnight emergency placements, or the next working day following the 7th consecutive emergency overnight placement if the 7th overnight placement falls on a weekend.
D. Overnight Office Stays	A child's overnight stay in a county/regional office or hotel is prohibited because it is not in their best interest and are only to be used as a last resort when all placement resource options have been exhausted, to include kin and fictive kin. 1. To maintain the safety and well-being of both staff and children experiencing overnight office stays and to have consistent practice across the state, the County or Regional Office must follow the Overnight Guidance Procedure . 2. The case manager or supervisor must complete DSS Form 37200: Overnight Stay Notification per the instructions (DSS Form 37200-A) and email it to OvernightStays@dss.sc.gov immediately after the period ends or by no later than 12:00pm following the period. 3. The case manager must send the Regional Kinship Care Coordinator DSS Form 37507: Placement Exception Request and the Universal Application of any child that has experienced an overnight stay by the close of business the next day. 4. The Regional Kinship Care Coordinator will conduct a 3rd degree CLEAR Search, conduct a virtual interview with the child and parents, and attend the Placement CFTM.

E. Temporary Placements	Refer to Temporary Placements and Events and Respite Policies
F. Documentation	1. The State Office Foster Home Licensing and Support Unit enters placement information into CAPSS that is identified on DSS Form 37508: Placement Notification Form for all non-therapeutic foster family homes. 2. The case manager uploads the DSS Form 37507: Placement Exception Request into the child's foster care case in CAPSS within three (3) business days of receiving the county director's written approval. 3. The placement coordinator supervisors uploads the DSS Form 37509: Diligent Efforts into the child's foster care case in CAPSS within two (2) days of placement. 4. The case manager enters dictation regarding the placement of the child into the child's case in CAPSS within two (2) business days of any initial placement, a placement change, or a temporary placement or event. 5. If placement is not with a kinship caregiver, the case manager enters documentation of the case manager's concerted efforts to identify a kinship caregiver, barriers encountered, and ongoing concerted efforts to identify a kinship caregiver for placement. 6. If siblings are separated in foster care placement, the case manager documents the reason why the siblings were separated, concerted efforts to place them together, and ongoing concerted efforts to reunite them.
Forms	DSS Form 37507: Placement Exception Request Form DSS Form 37508: Foster Care Placement Notification Form DSS Form 37509: Diligent Efforts to Provide Foster Home Placement DSS Form 37200: Overnight Stay Notification DSS Form 37200-A

Resources	Overnight Guidance Form Change Orders 2 and 5
Related Management Reports	CCF 100-R01: Foster Care Placement Moves from Congregate Care to a Family Placement Staffing SES 100-R003: Foster Care Sibling Staffing Status Overnight Stay Report