



NH Department of Health & Human Services  
Division for Children, Youth & Families

## DCYF Standard Operating Procedure

### 1501.1 ENGAGING CHILDREN-CPS CASE

Policy Directive: **22-29**

Effective Date: **April 2022**

Implements Policy: **1501**

Approved:

Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr., DCYF Director

This SOP defines procedures for engaging children during a Child Protective Services (CPS) case.

#### Procedure

*The following information is to support the implementation of the above referenced policy. This document shall not preclude staff from using their professional judgement based on individual circumstances, consistent with the requirements of the policy.*

- I. The CPSW identifies and sees all minor children who reside in or frequent the home at least once a calendar month, in their residence, or more often when indicated by prevention/case plan or case needs.
  - A. Any sibling who resides in the home at least part-time will be indicated as residing in the home and they will be identified as siblings under the correct relationship tab in the DCYF electronic information system. This includes full, half, and step siblings.
- II. When circumstances warrant an alternative plan to monthly face-to-face contact, or if the CPSW is not able to see all children within the home, alternative means of contact must be used to assess for safety and well-being. This may include:
  - A. Seeing the child in an alternative setting;
  - B. Videoconferencing/telephone contact (as age/developmentally appropriate and with parental/guardian consent as needed);
  - C. Utilizing collateral resources to physically see the child and assess safety; or
  - D. Contacting collateral resources to obtain information as to the child's safety and well-being needs.
- III. Barriers to seeing a child are to be discussed with the CPSW's Supervisor and documented in the DCYF electronic information system.
- IV. When an identified child is placed out-of-state through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), the CPSW will:
  - A. Arrange for the child to be visited at least once during each calendar month by the receiving state agency;

- B. Visit the child in residential placement monthly when the child is within a reasonable distance (as determined in consultation with the Supervisor);
  - C. Teleconference/telephone the child (as age/developmentally appropriate) each month when unable to see them face-to-face; and
  - D. Obtain monthly documentation from the out-of-state agency that addresses' the child's safety and well-being, as well as any permanency considerations.
- V. Children placed in New Hampshire through an ICPC will be seen and assessed following the same procedures as NH children.
- VI. If an identified child cannot be seen because they have run away, this information is documented in the DCYF electronic information system, along with efforts being made to find the child pursuant to policy 1558 Missing Child/Youth.
- VII. The CPSW must immediately notify their Supervisor of any situation where a child reported to be in the home or known to have previously resided in the home cannot be located.
- A. If a child is reported to have moved to the custody or care of another parent or adult, the CPSW must obtain confirmation as to the child's whereabouts from the current caregiver or a third-party such as the child's school, law enforcement, or another state's child welfare agency.
  - B. If the child is an alleged victim or new information emerges that indicates the child may be a victim of or witness to abuse or neglect, the CPSW must make arrangements to ensure a timely safety assessment with child welfare services where the child is located.
- VIII. Monthly contact should include ongoing assessment of each child's:
- A. Overall safety;
  - B. Well-being needs:
    - 1. Physical and mental health (including a review of psychotropic medications with developmentally appropriate children in placement);
    - 2. Social/emotional development;
    - 3. Education;
    - 4. Supports and connections; and
    - 5. Adult Living Preparation (as applicable);

- C. Permanency needs (when in placement); and
  - D. Progress toward achieving case plan goals (when applicable).
- VIII. The assigned CPSW should attend the monthly visits whenever possible for consistency. If this is not possible in a given month, their Supervisor or another CPSW should complete the monthly visitation.
- A. In the instance of joint Child Protective Services (CPS) and Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) cases, the CPSW may ask the JPPO to see a child as appropriate, but should also see the child in the following month.
    - 1. The contact is entered in the DCYF electronic information system in both the JJS and CPS cases.
- IX. The details of all contacts should be entered into the DCYF electronic information system no later than the next business day.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q1. If a child resides with their other parent or a guardian, but visits the home, do I have to see them in their primary residence?**

- A** Ideally, the child will be seen in both the primary and secondary residence, in accordance with the parenting plan/schedule. This allow the CPSW to assess the child’s safety and well-being in both households. However, the decision as to where to see the child should be based on the concerns (if any) for that child, in consultation with a Supervisor.

**Q2. How do I talk to a child about their missing/non-custodial parent?**

- A** Ask them directly about their missing/non-custodial parent, including their name, where they think they might live, their contact information, when they last saw/spoke with them, and any additional family they may have through this parent; and
- A** Engage them in conversation around their feelings about their missing/non-custodial parent, with a focus on the positives they may feel about this parent, as well as exploration of any concerns or fears they may have about this parent being located/contacted.

**Q3. When should I plan my first visit when a child enters placement?**

- A** The CPSW should visit the child within 24 hours or on the next business day.
- A** A visit must be completed in the calendar month the child entered placement.

**Q4. If a provider is visiting a child, can I document their face-to-face visit with the child as meeting the required monthly visit?**

- A** Face-to-face visits must be completed by a staff of the Division assigned to the case, unless another party has been designated as responsible. This designation must mean that the other responsible party has full responsibility for case planning and case management. This designation cannot be applied to an agency that is providing a service to the family while the Division maintains decision-making and case management responsibility for the child.

**Q5. Is there any circumstance when I should not visit a child?**

- A In rare circumstances when visitation is not in the child’s best interest because the child’s emotional health and well-being may be harmed, the minimum number of visits is not required. The CPSW must document in the DCYF electronic information system clear and specific reasons why the minimum number of visits will not be made and the Supervisor or Field Administrator must approve the plan.

**Q6. What should I do to prepare for a visit with a child?**

- A When preparing for child visits, the CPSW should:
  - i. Review the child’s prevention/case plan goals;
  - ii. Follow-up with providers/collaterals on the child’s identified needs;
  - iii. Determine what permanency information can be shared with the child (as appropriate); and
  - iv. Consider the best developmentally-appropriate strategy for engaging the child on the subjects to be discussed.

**Glossary and Document Specific Definitions**

A - B    C - D    E - F    G - I    J - L    M - N    O - Q    R - S    T - V    W - Z

**Document Change Log**

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