



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

DCYF Standard Operating Procedure

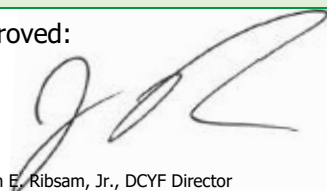
1600.1 DETERMINING MOST APPROPRIATE PLACEMENT

Policy Directive: **21-34**

Approved:

Effective Date: **October 2021**

Implements Policy: **1600**


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This SOP defines DCYF practice of considering the most appropriate placement for children placed through the Court in a CPS or JJS 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. When determining the most appropriate placement for a child, consideration is given to the needs of the child (safety, permanency, and well-being) and the least restrictive placement that can meet those needs. This is done on a continual basis until permanency is achieved.
- II. CPSWs/JPOs consider the child's needs relative to:
 - A. Safety (mitigating risk to physical/emotional safety);
 - B. Medical necessity (standard medical care, significant medical needs, specialized medical care requirements, handicap accessibility, etc.);
 - C. Mental health (emotional support, counseling, or in-patient psychiatric care);
 - D. Educational stability (remaining in their school district);
 - E. Supervision (based on age/developmental level or unsafe behaviors);
 - F. Permanency (taking into account both the permanency and concurrent goals);
 - G. A sense of normalcy (engaging in peer groups, extracurricular activities, employment, etc.) based on their age and developmental level;
 - H. Family and community connection (including to be placed with family when appropriate);
 - I. A permanent home/connection (as indicated by the concurrent goal); and
 - J. Adult living preparation (as appropriate).
- III. Consideration is also given to:

- A. The availability of a relative placement;
 - B. The availability of a fictive kin (child-specific) placement;
 - C. Sibling connections (as applicable);
 - D. Non-federal tribal affiliations (as applicable);
 - E. Community connections (ability to maintain engagement in pre-existing community programs/activities, including the child's linguistic, ethnic, religious, spiritual, and cultural connections);
 - F. Proximity to their school district;
 - G. Proximity to parents/guardians (as it relates to maintaining the connection and reunification efforts);
 - H. Proximity to the child's community;
 - I. The wishes of the child (as developmentally appropriate); and
 - J. The wishes of the parents/guardians.
- IV. Once the child's needs have been determined, consideration will be given to placement options (outlined in SOP 1600.2 Placement Options), starting with the least restrictive, and based on a determination made of the placement's ability to:
- A. Meet the child's needs (with or without paid services, as appropriate); and
 - B. Support both the permanency and concurrent goals.
- V. All efforts to identify the most appropriate placement to meet the child's needs are documented in the DCYF electronic information system and the case file. This includes:
- A. Conversations with parents/guardians and children about their needs and wishes regarding placement;
 - B. Exploration of needs and potential placement with collaterals;
 - C. Referrals for services to support child-specific placement; and
 - D. Other efforts to identify the least restrictive/most appropriate placement through:
 - 1. Court reports and proposed orders;
 - 2. CANS report;
 - 3. CAT report;

4. Treatment team meeting notes;
5. Roadmap to Reunification notes; and
6. Permanency Planning Team (PPT) meeting notes.

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

PD	Modification Made	Approved	Date