

<b>1641 TRANSITIONS</b>	
Chapter: <b>Out-of-Home Placements</b>	Section: <b>Transitions</b>
	New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual Policy Directive: <b>96-08</b> Approved: Effective Date: <b>April 8, 1996</b> Scheduled Review Date: _____ DCYF Director
	Related Statute(s): <a href="#">RSA 169-B</a> , <a href="#">RSA 169-C</a> , and <a href="#">RSA 169-D</a> , Related Admin Rule(s): _____ Related Federal Regulation(s): _____

**Purpose**

Families experience transitions and changes in their households, family compositions, roles and relationships when children are placed in out-of-home care. When transitions must be made from the family to other caregivers, children are often developmentally unable to understand the reason for these changes and moves. It is important for the parents, caregivers, and staff to infuse their work with the value of maintaining connections for children in out-of-home care with their families and communities.

**Policy**

- I. Transitions are the physical, social, and emotional changes experienced by children and families who are part of the foster care system. Children and families need additional help and support to understand their rights and responsibilities while in their original placement and in subsequent movement to other placement options during the child's stay in care.
- II. Transitions for children and youth may include:
  - A. Physically moving from one home, foster home, or residential facility to another, including returning home;
  - B. A change in service provider or school system;
  - C. A change from foster child to adoptive child; or
  - D. A change from foster parent to adoptive parent.
- III. Transitions are made more acceptable when individuals involved in the change are advised in advance of the change. Parents and children who are developmentally able to participate need to be involved in the planning for change.
- IV. The "Family-Centered Services Plan" (Form 2240) must be the primary method to prescribe change as it involves all the interested individuals in decision-making for the placement and changes in placement.
- V. A transition team may be formed to assist the child, family, and caregivers with the change. The members of the team include:
  - A. Parents;

- B. Child, if the child is age-appropriate;
- C. Family members;
- D. CPSW/JSO;
- E. Foster parents and other caregivers;
- F. Service providers; and
- G. Any other involved individuals, such as: teachers, therapist, clergy, child care provider, guardian ad litem, and attorneys.

#### VI. Planned Transitions

- A. At any time, DCYF staff may determine that the best interests of the child might better be served through a change in placement for the child in custody and may move the child to another out-of-home setting.
- B. DCYF staff must notify the parents and the caregivers in writing at least 2 weeks in advance of the planned move in order to prepare the child and the foster family for the move.
- C. The CPSW/JSO must notify the child in an age-appropriate way of the impending move. It is important to consider the developmental stage and age of the child when discussing this move and to prepare the child to lessen the possible negative impact of moving. The parents and the foster parents may share in discussing the move with the child or youth.
- D. Foster parents who request the removal of a child must give at least 2 weeks' notice to DCYF to allow for a transition team to meet and plan an alternative placement.
- E. If the foster parents disagree with the proposed removal of a child who has lived with them for more than 6 months, they may request a fair hearing. (See Item 604, DCYF Manual.) Exceptions to this policy include when:
  - 1. A report of abuse/neglect has been made and the findings indicate:
    - (a) Sexual abuse;
    - (b) Physical/emotional abuse/neglect; or
    - (c) Allegations of abuse/neglect that are or could be life threatening;
  - 2. Removal is to a less restrictive setting, or when reunification is the plan's goal, to a placement closer to the home of the birth parents;
  - 3. Removal is requested by the birth parents or child and the request is supported by the CPSW/JSO;
  - 4. Removal is court initiated;
  - 5. The child is returning to the physical custody of the birth parent; or
  - 6. Removal results from a licensing action.

- VII. Unplanned or emergency moves may occur when:
- A. The child's behavior has caused a crisis that cannot be resolved by the caregivers;
  - B. The caregivers have had a crisis that prevents them from providing care for the child;
  - C. DCYF has received a report of abuse/neglect and the child's safety in the home cannot be assured; or
  - D. The court requests immediate removal of the child.
- VIII. Other transitions may include:
- A. Independent living preparation (See [DCYF Policy 1685](#), DCYF Manual); and
  - B. Adoption.
- IX. Post-Transition Contact
- 1. Whether foster parents or other caregivers may contact the child or youth after leaving their care must be addressed in the "Family-Centered Services Plan" and its updates. The plan needs to specify if, when, and how contact will occur, e.g., mail, phone calls, photos, visits.

### **Procedures**

- I. The CPSW/JSO must:
- A. Notify the parents and the caregivers of the planned transition;
  - B. Arrange or assist in getting the child's clothes, bicycle, and other possessions from one home to another;
  - C. Verbally notify the licensing CPSW within 48 hours of the planned transition and follow up with a copy of Form 5C and new Form 5A;
  - D. Update the "Family-Centered Services Plan" (Form 2240);
  - E. Notify the previous caregivers of contact arrangements;
  - F. Complete the "Service Authorization Change" (Form 5C);
  - G. Notify the foster parents of their right to a fair hearing; and
  - H. Notify the case technician of address changes.
- II. The Licensing CPSW must:
- A. Assist the CPSW/JSO in explaining the need for a placement change with the foster parents; and
  - B. Update foster home records.