

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services  
(CCDCFS)  
Policy Statement**

**Policy Chapter:** Security Measures  
**Policy Number:** 10.02.03  
**Policy Name:** Transportation of Children/Youth

**Original Effective Date:** 01/01/2015  
**Revision Date(s):** 06/01/2018  
**Current Revision Date:** 06/01/2021  
**Approved By:** Cynthia G. Weiskittel

**PURPOSE:** To ensure safe transport of children by providing administrative guidance requirements for employees who transport children/youth.

**SCOPE:** All Division of Children and Family Services Employees who transport children/youth.

**PROCEDURES**

Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Personnel who transport children/youth shall transport children safely and securely and comply with applicable state, federal and other child restraint and seat belt and laws, rules and regulations. Any DCFS employee transporting children/youth maintains a valid driver's license and adequate automobile insurance coverage as required by law.

**I. Responsibilities for Transportation of Children/Youth**

- A. All DCFS employees, whose job requires it, shall transport children/youth as the need arises.
- B. Employees are expected to carry their agency issued cell phone at all times when transporting children/youth. Cell phone is expected to be turned on and charged when transporting.
- C. County vehicles are available to transport children/youth upon request. If a county vehicle is not requested or available, employees are required to transport in their personal vehicle.
- D. Employees who are responsible for transporting children/youth maintain a valid driver's license, possess adequate automobile insurance coverage, and vehicle registration when transporting in their personal vehicles as required by law, at their own expense.

- E. Employees who are responsible for transporting children/youth adhere to all child restraint and seat belt laws. All children/youth are transported in a child passenger restraint system, a belt positioning booster seat system, or a seat belt as age appropriate by law.
- F. Children/youth are not placed in any additional or mechanical restraint system. When further restraint is necessary for safety purposes, a supervisor is notified and an alternative form of transportation is used.
- G. When transporting four (4) or more children/youth in one vehicle, the driver is accompanied by an additional employee unless permitted at the discretion/approval of the supervisor.
- H. The employee transporting children/youth is accompanied by a second employee in the vehicle under the following circumstances:
  - 1. When the child presents a safety risk to themselves or others;
  - 2. When the child poses an imminent risk of running away;
  - 3. When the child has a history of false reporting to the extent that it may pose a risk of harm to the person transporting;
  - 4. When the child's mental health is unstable and he / she is at risk of or has history of disruptive behaviors, self-harm, suicidal, or homicidal ideations; and
  - 5. When it's in the best interest of the child for safety reasons.

Employees must notify their supervisor and senior supervisor when a child / youth they are transporting meet any of the above criteria and request a second employee.

- I. When transporting involves a new placement or change of placement, it is the transporting employee's responsibility to be aware of and transport any medications a child / youth is taking with them.
- J. When transporting involves a new placement or a change in placement for the child/youth, the transporting employee ensures that all applicable and necessary documents required for placement, referrals, and appointments are completed prior to providing transportation. The documents listed below are **required** to accompany the child/youth being transported:
  - 1. Court order stating that a removal has occurred and DCFS has the legal authority to transport; and
  - 2. Authorization of Routine Health Care (AP 144a).

- K. When transporting involves a child/youth **not in the custody of DCFS**, the transporting employee ensures that the child's parent / custodian / or legal guardian has authorized the transport by completing and signing a Request and Authorization Permitting Transportation of Non-Custody Child(ren) (a copy of this form accompanies the child/youth being transported).
  - 1. Children/youth not in the custody of DCFS are only transported by DCFS after alternative age appropriate forms of transportation (e.g., bus tickets) have been considered and the appointment / event are necessary for the child's well-being.
  - 2. Supervisory approval is obtained prior to the transportation of a child/youth not in the custody of DCFS.
  
- L. If the transporting employee is concerned that the child/youth's behavior or history is deemed to present a threat to the safe operation of a vehicle or a threat to the safety of the child or employee, the employee presents their concerns to their chain of command. The need and / or request to search a child/youth prior to transport is discussed with chain of command prior to any search.

## **II. Operator Responsibilities in County and Personal Vehicles**

- A. All vehicles used to transport a child/youth are functionally and mechanically safe.
  - 1. Workers are responsible for their own vehicle.
  - 2. Workers must report, immediately, any concerns with a County vehicle via [Cuyhhs-operations\\_service-requests@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Cuyhhs-operations_service-requests@jfs.ohio.gov)
  
- B. Vehicle operators adhere to all state and local traffic laws and operate the vehicle in a safe, responsible manner.
  
- C. Employees must report any traffic violations that occur while transporting a child/youth to their supervisor within 24 hours of the violation.

## **III. Emergency Situations During Transporting**

- A. If during transportation a child/youth attempts to run away, the safe operation of the vehicle takes precedence over preventing a runaway.
  
- B. If a child/youth becomes seriously ill or is injured in an accident, he/she is transported to the nearest medical facility. The transporting employee immediately notifies their supervisor.
  
- C. If an equipment malfunction interrupts transportation of the child/youth, the transporting employee notifies his/her immediate supervisor to obtain assistance.

- D. Employees involved in an accident while transporting a child/youth immediately must report the accident to their Supervisor and follow procedures outlined in the Cuyahoga County Travel Policy and Employee Handbook.

#### **IV. Prohibitions Regarding Transportation of Child/Youth**

- A. Employee actions that are PROHIBITED when transporting a child/youth include, but are not limited to:
1. Leaving a child/youth unattended in a vehicle;
  2. Mechanically restraining a child/youth in a vehicle;
  3. Transporting a child or infant without a child passenger restraint system, a belt positioning booster seat system, or a seat belt, as age appropriate and as required by law;
  4. Transporting a child/youth under the age of twelve (12) in the front seat of a vehicle;
  5. Talking or texting on a cell phone in a vehicle that is not parked;
  6. Smoking in the vehicle; and
  7. Having weapons of any kind in the vehicle.

#### **SEE ALSO:**

##### **Cuyahoga County Travel Policy**

###### Section 6 – Use of Vehicle

- Safety Belt Usage
- Driving on County Business
- Vehicle Accident Report
- Use of County Fleet Vehicles
- Department Vehicles
- Personal Vehicles

##### **Cuyahoga County Employee Handbook**

###### Section 12.08 – Travel Policy

##### **DCFS Policies and Procedures Manual**

###### Policy 10.02.04 – Traveling in Pairs

#### **FORM:**

Request and Authorization Permitting Transportation of Non-Custody Child(ren)