

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

Policy Chapter: Substitute Care
Policy Number: 6.01.01
Policy Name: Discharge Policy

Original Effective Date: 10/26/2009
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Approved By: Cynthia G. Weiskittel

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for the discharge of a child in custody from a relative and/or foster caregiver's home. This policy is written in accordance with Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-5-13 (A) (28).

SCOPE: This policy applies to any child removed from his/her home by Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) and placed in the home of a caregiver. The policy will be adhered to by all foster parents, relative caregivers, and agency staff members.

POLICY

To ensure the safe and appropriate discharge of all children from agency licensed foster care and approved caregiver placements.

PROCEDURES

- A. For all non-emergency discharges a staffing is held prior to the actual physical discharge of the child. This staffing is held to discuss the appropriateness of the discharge and to plan for the child's move. The substitute caregiver, resource manager and any other pertinent parties are contacted to participate in the staffing. All invitees are notified of the staffing, as soon as possible, after it is scheduled.
- B. For all emergency discharges a staffing is held prior to the actual physical removal of the child, whenever possible (and when doing so does not endanger the safety of any child or caregiver). The Worker of Record (WOR) schedules a disruption staffing immediately if it can be scheduled during business hours. If the staffing cannot be held prior to the physical removal of the child, it is held as soon as possible after the removal. The substitute caregiver, resource manager and any other pertinent parties are contacted to participate in the staffing. All invitees are notified of the staffing as soon as possible after it is scheduled.

C. The private provider may schedule the staffing after contacting the WOR, substitute caregiver, resource manager and any other pertinent parties to determine availability.

D. CCDCFS initiated discharge:

Foster parents and relative placements are given **immediate and ample** notice that a child's placement will be ended by the agency. Policy on notification regarding ending a placement is as follows:

1.) For a **NON-EMERGENCY** discharge, the agency gives the caregiver at least five calendar days advance notice. The reasons for a non-emergency discharge may include:

- a. Reunification;
- b. Adoption; or
- c. Placement with a relative or significant other.

2.) For an **EMERGENCY** discharge, advance notice is NOT required. Reasons for emergency discharge may include:

- a. the imminent risk of harm to the foster/relative child;
- b. the imminent risk of harm to the caregiver;
- c. the imminent risk of harm to a household member; or
- d. caregiver can no longer meet the specific and immediate needs of the child.

E. Caregiver initiated discharge:

1.) For a **NON-EMERGENCY** discharge, the request is processed as follows:

The foster parent or relative gives the agency at least **30 days advanced notice**. There are numerous reasons a foster parent or relative may request the discharge of a child, including a change in caregiver circumstances.

Change in caregivers' circumstances may include:

- a. Illness
- b. Death
- c. Divorce
- d. Family related matters
- e. Finances
- f. Moving
- g. Marriage
- h. Child Birth
- i. Caregiver unable to meet the child's specific needs

The request for discharge is provided in writing to the Resource Manager (RM) or Assigned Worker of Record (WOR).

The 30 days' timeframe will begin upon receipt of the written notification by the RM or WOR.

- 2.) For an **EMERGENCY** discharge, the request (initiated by the caregiver) is processed as follows:

If the child's removal is an emergency, **NO ADVANCE NOTICE** is required. An emergency discharge is conducted for the following reasons:

- a. The imminent risk of harm to the foster/relative child;
- b. The imminent risk of harm caregiver;
- c. The imminent risk of harm to a household member; or
- d. Caregiver can no longer meet the specific and immediate needs of the child.

- F. The caregiver is expected to pack and send all of the child's belongings with the child. The clothing must be age appropriate, clean, the correct size and season appropriate.

This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- a. All clothing
- b. School items
- c. Shoes
- d. Toys
- e. Personal items
- f. Medications
- g. Medical card
- h. Life book and associated materials

Note: **Caregivers are asked to please be respectful of the child and their belongings and to refrain from packing items in garbage bags for transport. **

SEE ALSO:

Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-5-13

Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services Policies and Procedure Manual

- Policy 5.02.01 Team Decision Making/Staffings Policy
- Policy 6.01.03 Placement Into Out of Home Care Setting
- Policy 6.02.01 Foster and Adoptive Recruitment