


**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
Revision Date(s): 02/01/2013
Current Revision Date: 09/01/2014
Approved By: Patricia L. Rideout 

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 will be held prior to the actual physical discharge of the child. This staffing will be held to discuss the appropriateness of the discharge and to plan for the child's move. The foster parents, resource manager and any other pertinent parties will be invited to participate in the staffing. All invitees will be notified of the staffing as soon as possible after it is scheduled. A senior supervisor, not in the chain of command, will be scheduled by the case review department to attend any discharge (reunification) staffings with parents. This senior supervisor will participate in the staffing process to ensure the decision made is in the best interest of the child and all safety concerns have been resolved. (Please refer to Policy 5.02.01 Team Decision Making/Staffings)
- B. For all emergency discharges a staffing will be held prior to the actual physical removal of the child, whenever possible (and when doing so will not endanger the

child or caregivers safety). In emergencies, the Worker of Record (WOR) should attempt to schedule a disruption staffing immediately if it can be scheduled during business hours. If the staffing can not be held prior to the physical removal of the child it will be held as soon as possible after the removal. The foster parents, resource manager and any other pertinent parties will be invited to participate in the staffing. All invitees will be notified of the staffing as soon as possible after it is scheduled. (Please refer to Policy 5.02.01- Team Decision Making/Staffings)

C. ALL EMERGENCY and NON-EMERGENCY removals must have the approval of the supervisor of record. If there is a difference of opinion regarding the need to discharge/ remove the child, the senior manager of record must be advised of the concerns and will make the decision regarding the discharge/removal. (Please refer to Policy 5.02.01- Team Decision Making/Staffings)

D. CCDCFS initiated discharge:

Foster parents and relative placements should be 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 will give 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 shall be processed as follows:

The foster parent or relative shall give the agency at least **14 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 must be provided in writing to the Resource Manager (RM) or Assigned Worker of Record (WOR).

The 14 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) shall be 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
- d. Caregiver can not 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 should be age appropriate, clean, the correct size and season appropriate.

This should include, 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

Related County Policies

Policy 6.01.03 Out-of-Home Care

Policy 6.02.01 Foster & Adoptive Family Recruitment

Policy 5.02.01 Team Decision Making/Staffings