

**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):**  
**Current Revision Date:**  
**Approved By:** Patricia L. Rideout

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

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

**POLICY & PROCEDURES**

Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Personnel who transport children/youth will 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 demands it, are able to 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 required to transport children/youth maintain a valid driver's license and 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. Employees who are required to transport are not on the job for more than sixteen (16) hours in a twenty-four (24) hour period. See *Agreement Between Cuyahoga County and AFSCME 1746, Article 14, Section 7.*
- G. 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.
- H. 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.
- I. 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 is 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.

- J. When transport 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.
- K. 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).

- L. 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.
  
- M. 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 report any concerns with a county vehicle through the service center immediately.
  
- B. Vehicle operators adhere to all state and local traffic laws and operate the vehicle in a safe, responsible manner.
  
- C. Employees 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 report the accident to their Supervisor and follow procedures outlined in County Policy 16.04 "Vehicle Accident Reporting Procedure".

#### **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 Personnel and Procedures Manual**

Policy 16.01 – Traveling on County Business

Policy 16.02 – Safety Belt Usage

Policy 16.03 – Driving on County Business / Use of County Fleet Vehicles

Policy 16.04 – Vehicle Accident Reporting Procedure

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

Policy 10.02.04 – Traveling in Pairs

##### **Agreement Between Cuyahoga County and AFSCME, Ohio Council 8, Local 1746, AF CIO, Article 14, Section 7**

#### **FORMS:**

[Request and Authorization Permitting Transportation of Non-Custody Child\(ren\)](#)