

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

Policy Chapter: Intake & Investigations
Policy Number: 2.06.01
Policy Name: Family / Child Case Transfers

Original Effective Date: 12/10/2001
Revision Date(s): 03/01/2013
Current Revision Date: 11/01/2015
Approved By: Thomas D. Pristow

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for continuity of case management for families and children with cases requiring transfer / reassignment from one primary worker to another. To ensure all available information regarding the family / child is shared.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all CCDCFS staff responsible for the primary assignment of family / child cases.

POLICY

- A. Family cases are sometimes transferred to a new worker to provide the best possible service to the family. Continuity of case management is an important factor for positive child and family outcomes. CCDCFS strives to minimize any delay in transferring a family / child case with a timely and planned transfer procedure.
- B. When family case transfers arise, CCDCFS maintains engagement with the family through information sharing and joint visits whenever possible.
- C. A family and / or child may need a new worker when:
 - 1. the case requires the attention of a worker specialized in an area to meet the family's needs, for example an ongoing worker to provide longer term services, adoption worker, or other specialized worker;
 - 2. the family's primary worker has been promoted, left the agency or transferred to an area where they can no longer provide service to the family;
 - 3. the primary worker is on an extended leave for more than 30 days excluding vacation time (ongoing family cases are co-assigned up to 12 weeks before they are transferred to a new primary worker);
 - 4. a conflict of interest exists between the primary worker and a family member.

- D. The transfer process begins as soon as it is determined by the current worker and their supervisor that a family / child case will require a new primary worker.
- E. A Joint Transfer Conference (JTC) is held to share all information regarding families when their case is being transferred / reassigned from one worker to another.
- F. CCDCFs provides continuous service to families throughout the transfer of a case. There are no lapses in service provision or face to face contact requirements. Supervisors ensure coverage of required case activities as needed.

PROCEDURES

I. Transferring / Reassignment of Family / Child Cases (Intake, Ongoing and Permanent Custody)

A. Assignment of Receiving Unit

1. Certain family / child ongoing case circumstances are best served if transferred to a new primary worker within the same supervisory unit. The decision is guided by what is best for families/children.
2. As soon as it is known¹ that a direct service case will require transfer (including ongoing reassignment) the sending supervisor contacts the receiving department's support staff to determine which supervisory unit will receive the case. (The support staff informs the sending supervisor if the receiving supervisor is unavailable that day and provides the name of the back-up supervisor.)
 - i. The sending supervisor e-mails the receiving supervisor to inform them a new case will be assigned to their unit.
 - ii. The sending supervisor assigns the receiving supervisor to the family case in SACWIS.
 - iii. The receiving supervisor assigns the receiving worker as the "primary worker" on the case in SACWIS.
 - iv. The supervisors and workers communicate to schedule the JTC.
3. When PC is granted², the ongoing supervisor contacts the adoption department support staff to determine which supervisory unit will

¹ Traditional intake cases are *known* to require transfer when a need for ongoing services is identified; or, often times, when a staffing is scheduled.

² *PC granted* is defined as the date of the journalized journal entry granting permanent custody.

receive the case. (The foster-to-adopt supervisor is contacted directly if already assigned.)

- i. Within two (2) working days of PC, the sending supervisor assigns the newly created child's adoption case to the receiving adoption supervisor in SACWIS.
- ii. The supervisors and workers communicate to schedule the JTC.

B. Joint Transfer Conference

1. Direct service JTCs occur within two (2) working days of receiving supervisor's assignment to the case.
2. Adoptions JTCs occur within 14 calendar days of PC being granted. The JTC occurs alongside the Pre-Adoptive Staffing (PAS). The direct service support staff assists with the scheduling of the JTC/PAS. (See also "Requirements for Permanent Custody (PC) Transfers".)
3. The purpose of the JTC is to share all available information regarding the family and / or child, including, but not limited to, current case status, court orders, case history, safety concerns, risk contributors, and recommendations for services. The receiving supervisor and worker assume primary responsibility for the family and / or child case at this time.
4. If there is no response from the receiving supervisor within the established time frames, the case responsibility still transfers. The sending supervisor brings the matter to the attention of the involved senior manager(s).
5. Any dispute over whether a case should be transferred is resolved within one business day by the involved senior manager(s).

C. Post Transfer Responsibilities

1. The sending worker completes any outstanding work unless mutually agreed upon by both supervisors. The sending worker and supervisor remain assigned to the case until all work is completed to the satisfaction of both supervisors. The sending supervisor monitors progress and timely completion of outstanding work. Either supervisor may engage the assistance of their senior manager if the parties are in disagreement.
2. If applicable, the 7-day placement visit and All About Me / Family Team Meeting is completed by the receiving worker and attended by the sending worker whenever possible.

3. The sending worker conducts any SAR / Case Review that is due within two (2) weeks of the JTC.
4. The sending worker attends a joint home visit and pre-adoptive staffing if requested to do so.

II. Geographic Assignments

- A. For voluntary services and protective supervision cases, the geographic / service address is the location where the adult providing primary care for the child resides.
 1. The mother remains the case reference person on the family case in SACWIS even if another adult is providing primary care. The geographic assignment is found by clicking on the address of the person receiving services. (See also practice memo: Case Reference Person.)
 2. If the legal custodian is homeless or living in temporary housing / shelter, the case is assigned to the geographic area of the family's choosing. If the family does not have a preference, the worker identifies the most relevant service area. If this is not possible, the case is routed to a department on a round robin rotation.
- B. For custody cases, the address of the custodian from whom the child was removed is used.
 1. If parental reunification is not an option and custody is recommended to another individual, that individual's address is used.
 2. If there are multiple siblings with various potential reunification addresses, the location of the child with the most needs/services is used. If the children have equal needs/services, the most realistic, earliest reunification address is used.
 3. If a case involves potential reunification with two caregivers at different addresses, a decision is made to the most realistic geographic/service address.
- C. Companion cases are assigned to the same supervisory unit.
- D. If there is doubt as to the correct service address, a decision is made by the involved senior managers. The senior managers make a determination within one day so the JTC can occur without delay.

III. Reassignments of Assessment / Investigations

- A. Reassignments of assessments / investigations will be re-assigned and credited through the hotline department on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
- B. The sending senior manager e-mails their peers to notify them of the need to reassign family cases.
- C. The sending supervisor identifies two (2) family cases to be reassigned within the unit per worker. Cases with families in crisis or complex needs must be reassigned within the unit. The supervisor then selects the oldest assessment/investigations to reassign within the unit.
- D. The sending supervisor e-mails the list of reassignments to their senior manager, hotline senior manager and the hotline clerical group. The following information is provided: each case name, case ID, geographic area and whether the case is being kept in the sending supervisor's unit or needs reassignment to another unit.
- E. Upon receiving a reassigned intake case, the receiving worker completes an activity log indicating the date they received the case as a reassignment. The receiving worker reviews the case record and any available information in preparation for their work with the family.
- F. The newly assigned worker responds to the reassigned case with urgency. Assessment/Investigations are expected to be completed by established mandated timeframes. If the assessment/investigation is already past due, the assigned worker and supervisor determine a prudent timeframe for completion.