



# **Community-Based Care Region 4 Piney Woods Stage I Joint Operations Manual**

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# Introduction

This operations manual provides the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and 4Kids4Families staff an in-depth look at the protocols for case actions in Child Protective Services (CPS) cases involving paid foster care placements and services that are affected by Community-Based Care (CBC) in Region 4, Piney Woods.

## What is Community-Based Care (CBC)?

### [Community-Based Care \(Internal Webpage\) and Community-Based Care \(Public Webpage\)](#)

Community-Based Care is a new way of providing foster care and case management services. It is a community-based approach to meeting the individual and unique needs of children, youth, and families. Within a geographic designated community area (DCA), a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) is responsible for finding foster homes or other living arrangements for children or youth in state care and providing them a full continuum of services.

DFPS began expanding the community's role to meet the challenges of serving children and youth in foster care under Foster Care Redesign. Under Foster Care Redesign, the SSCC was responsible for:

- Developing foster care capacity.
- Building a network of providers.
- Engaging the community to help.
- Foster care placement services.
- Coordinating and delivering services to children and youth in foster care and their families.

In 2017, the Texas Legislature directed DFPS to expand this model to include both foster care and relative or "kinship" placements and give the SSCC sole responsibility for case management rather than sharing that responsibility with DFPS.

As CBC takes shape statewide, DFPS' focus will shift to ensuring quality oversight of foster care and services for children, youth, and families. The SSCC will be responsible for case management and services that move children and youth from foster care or kinship care into permanent homes.

## Community-Based Care (CBC) Guiding Principles:

- Children are safe in their placements.

- Children are placed in their home communities.
- Children are appropriately served in the least restrictive environment that supports minimal moves for the child.
- Connections to family and others important to the child are maintained.
- Children are placed with siblings.
- Children remain in their school of origin.
- Services respect the child's culture.
- To be fully prepared for successful adulthood, children and youth are provided opportunities, experiences, and activities like those experienced by their non-foster care peers.
- Children and youth are provided opportunities to participate in decisions that impact their lives.
- Reunification of children with the biological parents of the children.
- Promotion of the placement of children with relative or kinship caregivers.

CBC is intended to allow the SSCC and the community more flexibility to innovate to meet the unique needs of the children, youth, and families in each DCA. This increased flexibility comes with greater responsibility and accountability for overall safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.

## **Region 4, Piney Woods SSCC: 4Kids4Families**

[4Kids4Families, Texas Region 4 SSCC \(arrow.org\)](https://www.4kids4families.org)

DFPS awarded the single source continuum contract to 4Kids4Families to begin on March 1, 2023. 4Kids4Families' home base is located in Tyler, Texas and serve the following counties: Anderson, Bowie, Camp, Cass, Cherokee, Delta, Franklin, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Hopkins, Lamar, Marion, Morris, Panola, Rains, Red River, Rusk, Smith, Titus, Upshur, Van Zandt, & Wood. To learn about 4Kids4Families, visit the 4Kids4Families website.

### **4Kids4Families Mission Statement:**

Helping Kids & Strengthening Families

### **4Kids4Families Vision Statement:**

Through collaborative efforts with the community and local stakeholders, 4Kids4Families will transform the child welfare system to create innovative solutions for children in need bringing hope and healing to children, families, and society overall.

# Operating Policies and Procedures

## CPS Handbook and Modified Final Order

The protocols detailed in this joint operation manual (JOM) are for children and youth legally from Piney Woods placed with and receiving services through 4Kids4Families as the SSCC. The CPS Handbook, as well as the as Modified Final Orders rendered by the Corpus Christi Division of the United States District Court, remain in effect unless expressly waived by DFPS.

## **Purpose**

This JOM identifies some actions that were previously completed by DFPS, now completed by 4Kids4Families, as well shared actions that require the coordination and partnership between DFPS and 4Kids4Families. The protocols outlined in this manual should always be in child's best interest. Any deviations or changes made to these protocols should be agreed upon by both DFPS and 4Kids4Families and at times may need waiver to CPS Handbook.

Additionally, since this operations manual identifies responsibilities for the SSCC that include access to sensitive information in the DFPS IMPACT system, the SSCC has adopted policies and procedures in the 4Kids4Families's Provider Manual, to minimize the risk of data breaches.

If you have questions about any information in this manual, please contact your supervisor, Program Director (PD), or the Region 4, Piney Woods Community-Based Care Administrator (CBCA), Michael Roberts at [michael.roberts2@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:michael.roberts2@dfps.texas.gov) or (936) 553-7262.

## **Legal Basis for DFPS and SSCC Relationship**

### CPS Handbook §1200 Legal Foundation for Child Protective Investigations and Child Protective Services.

Texas statute provides authority for the SSCC in the State of Texas either directly or through subcontractors, to assume the statutory duties of the DFPS in connection with the delivery of foster care services, relative and kinship caregiver services, and case management services in the SSCC's defined DCA.

## **Legal Basis for SSCC to Act on Behalf Of DFPS**

### Texas Family Code §264.151

In accordance with statute, the provision of case management services to a child for whom DFPS has been appointed Temporary Managing Conservator (TMC) or Permanent Managing Conservator (PMC) or to the child's family, a young adult in extended foster care, a relative or

kinship caregiver, or a child who has been placed in the DCA through Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), and includes, but is not limited to:

1. Caseworker visits with the child, family, and caregivers.
2. Convening and conducting permanency planning meetings.
3. Development and revision of child and family plans of service, including a permanency plan and goals for a child or young adult in care.
4. Coordination and monitoring of services required by the child and the child's family.
5. Assumption of court-related duties regarding the child.

Any other function or service that DFPS determines necessary to allow an SSCC to assume responsibility for case management.

### **Texas Government Code §552**

Under Texas statute, the Legislature required DFPS to contract with community-based nonprofit and local governmental entities to provide child welfare services. These statutes provide authority for the community-based entities, known as the SSCC, to either directly or through subcontractors, assume the statutory duties of DFPS to deliver foster care services and services for relative and kinship caregivers in the SSCC's defined DCA. Delivery of foster care services and services to relative and kinship caregivers can include, but is not limited to:

- An SSCC staff member's direct contact with a child/youth in DFPS Conservatorship who they are serving under the SSCC continuum of care.
- An SSCC staff member's ability to visit privately with a child/youth in DFPS Conservatorship at schools, foster, or kinship homes or any other meeting site.
- Entities providing confidential information to a SSCC staff member upon request about a child/youth in DFPS Conservatorship who is served under the SSCC continuum of care.

Under Texas statute, an SSCC in a contract with DFPS will, at a minimum:

1. Assume the statutory duties of DFPS in connection with the delivery of foster care services and services for relative and kinship caregivers in a defined DCA.
2. Provide or protect records as outlined in the Open Records Act found in Texas Government Code §552.
3. Be afforded protection of communication that may occur between the SSCC's employee, agent or representative when considered a client's representative of DFPS for purposes of attorney-client privilege.

Under Texas statute, DFPS will, at a minimum:

- Contract with community-based nonprofit and local governmental entities that can provide child welfare services.
- Develop and maintain a plan for implementing CBC.
- Develop a formal review process to assess the ability of a SSCC to satisfy the responsibilities and administrative requirements of delivering foster care services and services for relative and kinship caregivers.
- Expand community-based care.
- Review contractor's performance.
- Provide legal representation as provided for in the Texas Family Code.

In summary, the SSCCs, under contract with DFPS, assume the statutory duties of DFPS in connection with the delivery of child welfare conservatorship, kinship, and reunification services in a defined DCA. This does not include Statewide Intake (SWI), Child Protective Investigation (CPI), and Family Based Safety Services (FBSS). Vendors and other organizations should treat the SSCCs as an agent of DFPS as it relates to the child welfare services being delivered by the SSCCs.

# General Requirements for SSCC Placement Referrals

[CPS Handbook §4000 Placing Children in DFPS Conservatorship Care](#), [CPS Placement Process Resource Guide](#), and [CPS Sexual Incident Resource Guide](#)

DFPS will work directly with 4Kids4Families following the determination that a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship requires placement in a paid foster care setting. DFPS will follow CPS Handbook related to the assessment, consideration, and selection of the least restrictive placement for every child/youth's initial or subsequent placement (new placement or placement change) in substitute care.

4Kids4Families will be paid one blended foster care rate for all children or youth placed within 4Kids4Families network. Therefore, DFPS will no longer submit service level requests to Youth for Tomorrow (YFT). Regardless of the child/youth's needs or services to meet those needs, 4Kids4Families is responsible for providing a continuum of care to each child/youth placed within their provider network. CPS Handbook items related to requesting a service level for a child/youth, therefore, is waived.

## General Approval Needed to Request Placement

[Texas Family Code §700.1351](#), [Texas Family Code §262.0022](#), [Texas Family Code §262.011](#), and [Texas Family Code §264.018](#)

DFPS caseworker must obtain supervisor and PD level approval for all initial and subsequent requests for paid placement from 4Kids4Families. In situations where DFPS has identified that a child/youth is more than likely going to require a paid foster care placement, the PD can direct the DFPS caseworker to provide 4Kids4Families advance notification (if during normal business hours via email: [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org) or if after normal business hours will notify via phone: (855) 454-3367 of a need for possible paid foster care placement. Contractual timeframes will not apply in these circumstances. Within one hour, if paid placement is no longer needed, DFPS will notify 4Kids4Families via email: [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org) and by phone: (855) 454-3367.

If a court should order anything regarding the placement of a child/youth (i.e., a placement move or for a child/youth to remain in a particular foster home), DFPS will notify 4Kids4Families immediately and provide a copy of the court order as soon as possible. When possible, DFPS caseworker will notify 4Kids4Families of any anticipated court rulings that may affect the placement.

DFPS caseworker will notify 4Kids4Families immediately of any discharge from SSCC paid foster care placement (i.e., court order, kinship placement identified, family reunification, etc.). This communication will be provided to 4Kids4Families via email: [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org).

## **Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care**

[Texas Family Code §263.008](#), [CPS Handbook §6420 Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care](#), [Texas Family Code §749.1003](#), and [Modified Final Order A-6](#).

The Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care, also known as the Foster Children's Bill of Right, is a vital document that outlines the rights children/youth have when they are placed in foster care. It is required by federal and state law.

Anytime it is reviewed with the child/youth, the child/youth, the caseworker, and the caregiver must sign. Should a child/youth decline to sign provide a copy of their right to the child/youth and document in IMPACT.

The primary caseworker is responsible for reviewing the Bill of Rights with the child/youth and following CPS Handbook §6420 Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care. Though the CPS Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care contains content like what is in Child Care Licensing's Texas Administrative Code §749.1003 Minimum Standards for Child-Placing Agencies, the two publications are different. CPS provides certain rights that are not included in the minimum standards.

DFPS shall ensure that children in the General Class are apprised by their primary caseworkers of the appropriate point of contact for reporting issues, and appropriate methods of contact, to report abuse and neglect. This shall include a review of the Foster Care Bill of Rights and the number for the HHSC Ombudsman for Children and Youth currently in Foster Care (1-844-286-0769) and The DFPS Office of Internal Affairs (1-800-720-7777).

## **Child Sexual Aggression, Sexual Victimization, Sexual Behavior**

[Modified Final Order 28](#), [CPS Handbook §6419 Working with Children Who Are Sexually Aggressive, Have Sexual Behavior Problems, or Are Victims of Sexual Abuse](#), [CPS Sexual Incident Resource Guide](#), [CPS Working with a Child who has Experienced Sexual Abuse Resource Guide](#) and [CPS Placement Forms](#)

If a child/youth is determined to have sexually aggressive behavior, it must be indicated in the child/youth's case record by the CVS PA and reflected in the child/youth's application for

placement. The CVS PA is the designated individual responsible for determining if a child/youth's behavior meets the definition of sexually aggressive and has specific protocols and definitions that guide in that decision.

If the 4Kids4Families or their network provider suspects that a child/youth has sexually aggressive behavior and the child/youth has not already been given that designation, notification to the DFPS caseworker must be made immediately so the DFPS caseworker can notify their Supervisor, CVS PD, and CVS PA.

## **Sexually Aggressive Behavior Determined:**

If a child/youth is determined to have sexually aggressive behavior, the CVS PA includes the rationale for the decision and notifies the following:

- CVS PD
- CVS supervisor
- CVS caseworker
- 4Kids4Families staff assigned via email: [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org)

If the child/youth is determined to have sexually aggressive behavior at the time of removal and has not been placed, the removal caseworker updates the *Alternative Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (Form 2087ex)* in IMPACT before submitting to the 4Kids4Families for placement.

*Note: If there are any therapeutic needs that were not initially listed on the referral form that are identified before placement is selected and made, which will drastically change the placement search parameters, then a staffing will be held immediately upon learning new therapeutic needs. The staffing will be between 4Kids4Families and the DFPS caseworker, supervisor and PD to discuss current placement options, and if needed, establish next steps.*

If the child/youth has already been placed and the placement is not aware of the child/youth's behavior, the removal caseworker immediately notifies the 4Kids4Families staff and the placement about the child/youth's behavior and documents the notification in IMPACT.

If the child/youth is determined to have sexually aggressive behavior after placed in conservatorship and is pending a new placement, the CVS caseworker launches a new Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (Form 2087). The Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (Form 2087ex) will autofill with the information from the sexual aggression page in IMPACT.

If the child/youth is currently in placement, the CVS caseworker updates Child Plan of Service (CPOS) for the child/youth who was determined to have sexually aggressive behaviors and the child/youth who was the victim of child sexual aggression to include services and supports.

Within 24 hours of the child/youth being identified as being sexually aggressive, the CVS PA will send an e-mail to the CVS PD asking that they confirm that the DFPS caseworker has:

- Updated the Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (Form 2087) in IMPACT.
- Updated the CPOS.
- Notified the placement.
- Notify 4Kids4Families Care Management Department via email: Care@4kids4families.org

The CVS PD has 24 hours to respond to CVS PA confirming the above activities required of the CVS caseworker have been completed.

## **Notification for Child Sexual Aggression, Sexual Victimization, Sexual Behavior**

### **[Modified Final Order 25, 77, & 31](#)**

#### **Initial Placements:**

#### **[CPS Placement Forms](#)**

#### **[Attachment A Tip sheet](#)**

DFPS will:

- Complete the question under the sexual victimization tab in IMPACT and enter any episodes if marked yes.
- If sexual aggressive behavior is identified, DFPS will follow the child sexual aggression designation process above.
- If applicable, DFPS will complete the trafficking information in IMPACT prior to printing the Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) form.
- DFPS will print the Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) form.

#### ***For placements completed by DFPS, DFPS will:***

- Discuss the information in the Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) form with the receiving caregiver.

- Obtain signatures from all caregivers.
- Use their work phone to scan the signed Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) form to PDF and email to themselves.
- Upload the Placement Summary (Form 2279), Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A), and if applicable, Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information (Form 2279b) into OneCase in IMPACT within one (1) calendar day for access by 4Kids4Families. DFPS will notify 4Kids4Families once it is complete.
- Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information (Form 2279b) will be used when a child with a history of sexual victimization or behaviors of sexual aggression is under the care of an alternate, temporary, or GRO caregiver.

***For placements completed by 4Kids4Families:***

- DFPS will provide 4Kids4Families with a printed copy of the Placement Summary (Form 2279), Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A), and if applicable, Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information (Form 2279b).
- 4Kids4Families, or their designee, will be responsible for discussing information in the Placement Summary (Form 2279), Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A), and if applicable, Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information (Form 2279b) with the caregiver at the time of placement.
- Obtain the signature of the receiving caregiver on all required forms.
- 4Kids4Families will, within one (1) business day, upload the Placement Summary (Form 2279), Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A), and if applicable, Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information (Form 2279b) into OneCase in IMPACT. 4Kids4Families Intake Department will notify DFPS caseworker and supervisor via email when this is complete.

***Subsequent Placements:***

DFPS will update all information under the person detail page tabs prior to the placement change.

DFPS will provide 4Kids4Families with a printed copy of the Placement Summary (Form 2279), Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A), and if applicable, Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information (Form 2279b).

4Kids4Families, or their designee, will discuss information in the Placement Summary (Form 2279), Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A), and if applicable, Certification of Receipt of

Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information (Form 2279b) with the caregiver at the time of placement. Obtain the signature of the receiving caregiver.

4Kids4Families will, within one (1) calendar day, upload the Placement Summary (Form 2279), Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A), and if applicable, Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information (Form 2279b) into OneCase in IMPACT. 4Kids4Families Intake Department will notify DFPS caseworker and DFPS supervisor via email when this is complete.

*Note: Placement Summary Form (2279, Attachment A, and Medical Consenter form (2085b) must be uploaded by 7:00 pm the next calendar day following placement. If there are any missing signatures, those must be obtained within 72 hours and uploaded into OneCase.*

#### **Additional Notification Guidance:**

**[CPS Handbook §4121.2 Prepare the Current and New Caregivers for the Move,](#)**  
**[CPS Handbook §4121.3 Complete the Placement Summary Form,](#)**  
**[CPS Handbook §4133 Provide and Discuss the Placement Summary \(Form 2279\),](#)**  
**[CPS Handbook §4152.2 Meeting the Needs of a Child/youth without Placement,](#)**  
**[and CPS Handbook §4231.1 Notifying a Facility Regulated by Another State](#)**  
**[Agency of a Child's Sexual Victimization and Sexual Aggression History](#)**

DFPS and 4Kids4Families are required to provide all caregivers who care for children/youth in the conservatorship of DFPS with information regarding a child/youth's history of sexual victimization and sexual aggression. At initial and subsequent placements of a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship in any setting, staff must review the information contained in the Placement Summary Form (Form 2279) and the Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A), obtain signatures, and provide a copy of the documents in accordance with the guidance in this chart.

Type of Setting	Who must review and sign the 2279, Attachment A, and 2279b (if applicable)	Additional Guidance
Unverified Kinship Home	All adults in the home who have unsupervised access to the child.	If anyone is not present at the time that the information is presented, DFPS has three (3) business days to review the information and obtain signatures of the missing individuals. This may be done electronically.

Type of Setting	Who must review and sign the 2279, Attachment A, and 2279b (if applicable)	Additional Guidance
Foster Home	All foster parents	If all foster parents are not present at placement, DFPS/4Kids4Families has three (3) calendar days to review the information and obtain signatures of the missing individuals. This may be done electronically.
General Residential Operation (includes Emergency Shelters and any licensed facility that is not a foster family home)	Administrator Intake staff Case Manager	<p>Depending on the size of the operations, some of these roles may be held by the same individual. In those instances, notate that on the form.</p> <p>If anyone who is required to review and sign the documents is not present, DFPS/4Kids4Families has three (3) business days to review the information and obtain signatures of the missing individuals. This can be done electronically.</p>
Other Facilities. This includes Juvenile Detention Settings, Psychiatric Hospitals, State Supported Living Center, and Medical Hospitals	Individual responsible for admissions	Caseworkers must review the information with the staff who is admitting the child and make efforts to have them sign the documents. If they refuse to sign, document who the information was provided to, their title, date, and indicate their refusal to sign.

Type of Setting	Who must review and sign the 2279, Attachment A, and 2279b (if applicable)	Additional Guidance
		If the caregiver admits the child, staff must review the information and obtain signatures upon notification of the admission.

There are limited signature lines on the Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A), additional signatures can be captured anywhere on the document along with their printed name, title, and date.

## Evaluating a Possible Placement

### [CPS Handbook §4114 Required Factors to Consider When Evaluating a Possible Placement and CPS Placement Process Resource Guide](#)

The safety of the child/youth is the paramount consideration in any placement selection. When evaluating potential placements, 4Kids4Families must consider substitute caregiver's history of abuse and neglect allegations. For foster homes, this includes history of abuse and neglect allegations while verified with previous child placing agencies, if applicable, and substitute caregiver's licensing variances.

## IMPACT and CLASS History Checks

### [CPS Handbook §4151 Court-Ordered Placements in Unapproved Facilities, CPS Placement Process Resource Guide, Texas Family Code §700.1311\(c\), CPS Handbook §1800 Records Checks, and CPS Handbook §6612.1 Conducting and Evaluating DFPS History Checks](#)

The Placement Coordinator must complete an investigation history check of all potential placements using CLASS to consider the placement's compliance history with HHSC's Child Care Regulation (CCR). The 4Kids4Families Placement Coordinator also checks IMPACT for any pertinent abuse or neglect history (including prior Child Protective Services abuse or neglect history, Adult Protective Services abuse or neglect history, Provider Investigations abuse or neglect history and Child Care Investigations abuse or neglect history).

The 4Kids4Families Placement Coordinator must review the results of the history checks and confer with the caseworker or supervisor if the history checks return results such as:

- Pending Child Care Investigations (CCI) or CCR investigations.
- Investigations that were closed as reason to believe, validated, confirmed or unable to determine, or any patterns in the investigation history that cause concern.
- History of CCR violations.

If HHSC CCR places a general residential operation (GRO), residential treatment center (RTC), or child placing agency (CPA) on probation, 4Kids4Families must not place a child/youth in that operation unless the associate commissioner or deputy associate commissioner of DFPS approves the placement, or a court orders a child/youth placed there.

4Kids4Families will not place a child/youth in a foster home or straight adopt home with more than six (6) children, unless there is an accepted 24-hour awake supervision plan and the Sr. VP of CBC approves the placement in advance prior to offering it as a placement option to DFPS.

If a CPA places one of its foster home or foster group home's verification on inactive status, 4Kids4Families must not place a child/youth in that foster home or foster group home. 4Kids4Families cannot place a child/youth in an unrelated foster home when a caregiver in the home has a confirmed finding of abuse, neglect, or exploitation from an investigation. The RTB indicator box will be checked on the Resource Identification information page in IMPACT. This will indicate whether a caregiver associated with an unrelated foster home is a confirmed perpetrator of Abuse/Neglect/Exploitation. If placement entry is attempted in IMPACT, the caseworker will receive an error message and the placement will not be completed. State Office Placement Division will need to approve any child-specific exceptions for placements in these homes prior to placement. All requests for exceptions, and questions, should be sent to [DFPSDisallowances@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:DFPSDisallowances@dfps.texas.gov).

## **CLASS Variance Checks**

The 4Kids4Families Intake Coordinator must review all licensing variances, including variances pertaining to caregiver ratio, supervision, and training, when determining if the placement can meet the child/youth's individual needs. In Stage I, 4Kids4Families Intake Coordinator must review and confer with the DFPS caseworker or DFPS supervisor if the variance checks return results that may impact the placement's ability to meet the child/youth's individual needs. If 4Kids4Families and DFPS caseworker / DFPS supervisor disagree, regional staff must escalate to the CPS RD, or designee, for a placement decision. The CPS RD, or designee, will consult with 4Kids4Families Director of Placement.

## **Placement Providers on Heightened Monitoring**

[Modified Final Order 20](#) and [CPS Handbook §4211.6 Placements into Operations on Heightened Monitoring \(HM\)](#)

4Kids4Families will follow the CPS Handbook §4211.6 Placements into Operations on Heightened Monitoring (HM) when:

A child is already placed in a CPA, or a GRO, including an RTC, and the operation is placed on heightened monitoring **OR**

For prospective placements, if a GRO, RTC, or CPA is on heightened monitoring at the time of the placement search.

If the operation is also on probation (in addition to heightened monitoring), the approval of the CPS RD is required and is documented in IMPACT before placement. In the absence of the CPS RD, approval from the CPS Director of Field or the CPS Associate Commissioner is required in advance before placement. This request should be submitted at the same time.

## **Placement Providers on Probation**

If a GRO or a CPA is on probation, then the CPS Associate Commissioner must provide advanced approval prior to placement. 4Kids4Families Intake Staff must submit the placement request to the CPS Division Administrator for Placement. Once reviewed, the placement request is submitted to the CPS Associate Commissioner for final approval.

Follow the Heightened Monitoring request process stated in the section above.

## **When an Operation is Issued a Placement Hold**

A placement hold on an operation is issued by the CPS Director of Conservatorship Services or CPS Director of Heightened Monitoring and notifications typically come from [DFPSCPSPlacementNotification@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:DFPSCPSPlacementNotification@dfps.texas.gov). The CPS Director of Conservatorship Services will notify 4Kids4Families within 24 hours when a placement hold is issued. Once 4Kids4Families is notified, they must notify their placement staff immediately or within 24 hours.

If an operation is issued a placement hold, then no children may be placed into that operation.

## **Exceptional Care Rate**

[CPS Placement Process Resource Guide, CPS Exceptional Care Rate Request Help Resource Guide, and CPS Handbook §4114 Required Factors to Consider When Evaluating a Child/youth's Possible Placement](#)

The Exceptional Care Rate is used to secure placement for children and youth in the DCA with exceptional needs that cannot be met appropriately through use of the blended foster care rate. 4Kids4Families cannot charge DFPS for both the blended rate and the exceptional care rate for the same child/youth on the same day or use the exceptional care rate for SIL Youth under any

circumstances. DFPS will authorize use of exceptional care days of care using a validation process in instances when:

1. There is a Court Order that dictates a child specific placement or payment that exceeds the contemplated rate structure of the blended rate;
2. The child has extraordinary service needs that far exceed the traditional residential child-care settings (e.g., major eating disorders or severe medical/psychiatric needs); or
3. 4Kids4Families has performed an exhaustive search and placement cannot be located without the use of a child-specific contract whose rate exceeds the contemplated rate structure of the blended rate.

To initiate the request for the Exceptional Foster Care rate, the SSCC will collect the following documents as part of the request packet and send via email to the CPS Director of Placement, CPS Director of Conservatorship Services, Exceptional Care Quality Assurance Analyst and the CBCA. The request packet shall include:

- Child's Application for Placement (Form 2087 or 2087ex)
- Child's psychological evaluation
- Child's placement search log (foster home and RTC searches)
- Timeframes for exceptional foster care rate requested
  - Contracts with a negotiated rate between \$0 -\$999, must be for only a 6-month period
  - Contracts with a negotiated rate \$1000 or up, must be for 3 months
- Rates negotiated with the provider

All exceptional care contracts must be reviewed by the SSCC prior to contract termination date to assess continued need for services and if contracted needs to be extended – if contract is extended with the exceptional care rate, the process to request approval for the rate must be used.

4Kids4Families will electronically submit the request to seek approval of the exceptional care rate for all youth entering an exceptional care placement after the effective date. 4Kids4Families should expect a response from the Exceptional Care Quality Assurance Analyst for DFPS within one to two (1-2) business days of the submission. A third day may be required if the request is for a rate over \$1,000. If the request is denied, the Exceptional Care Quality Assurance Analyst for DFPS will submit a written response to 4Kids4Families detailing the denial and include a recommendation concerning placement for the subject child. In addition, should the subject child be denied an exceptional care rate, 4Kids4Families retains and reserves the right to have a contract-approved third-party vendor review the DFPS denial and issue a subsequent opinion

and recommendations with respect to placement. This review process shall occur within three (3) business days of 4Kids4Families receiving notice of the denial for exceptional care rate. This third-party recommendation shall be submitted to DFPS for re-consideration concerning the subject child.

*Note: The exceptional care rate cannot be paid until approval is given. If approved, the payment will be from the date the request was submitted. Approvals will not be backdated. If a placement took place prior to submitting for approval, those prior dates will not be considered for payment.*

## **SSCC Supervision vs Child Without Placement (CWOP)**

[CPS Handbook §4280 Temporary Absence from Paid Placement, Appendix L: CPU Workload Categories, Appendix M: DFPS CWOP/CPU List During Stage I Transition Process](#)

**SSCC (4Kids4Families) Supervision** is when the SSCC has possession of the child/youth prior to midnight the day of the child/youth needing paid placement, continued to care for the child after midnight, (i.e.: is unable to locate a placement within the seven (7) hour timeframe, or placement cannot be completed till the following day), and provided overnight supervision of the child/youth in an unlicensed placement (i.e. hotel, church, or other emergency setting) while placement is being secured.

*Note: In IMPACT this living arrangement is considered a child/youth under SSCC Supervision. Under no circumstances may the child/youth stay overnight in a DFPS / SSCC office.*

**Child without Placement (CWOP)** is when a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship who does not have a paid placement after the second night under SSCC Supervision.

*Note: Under no circumstances may the child/youth temporarily stay overnight in a DFPS office.*

## **Prior to Stage I Go-Live: Child Without Placement (CWOP) / Temporary Placements**

[Appendix M: DFPS CWOP/CPU List during Stage I Transition Process](#)

Children Without Placement (CWOP), before the start of Stage I go live, will remain under DFPS supervision. DFPS and SSCC will begin joint planning for the children at least 30 days before Stage I go-live. The DFPS CWOP list will close the day before SSCC begins Stage I, and both DFPS and the SSCC will agree on the final list. New paid placement requests will be referred to the SSCC starting with the onset of Stage I. During this time the SSCC will take primary responsibility for continuing the search for placement options, and DFPS will remain

responsible for supervision of children and youth in CWOP status. Weekly meetings will be held between DFPS CPU and SSCC Placement staff to coordinate placement searches for children in CWOP. For children/youth on the agreed upon list, use of the exceptional care rate is approved. The SSCC shall track and submit documentation to DFPS that demonstrates how/why the child meets the criteria for the exceptional foster care rate, and a high level summary of the services the child will be receiving that correlate to the negotiated rate. DFPS understands that children who have been in CWOP for an extended period may need additional supports and services. Once a paid placement is secured and placement occurs, the child/youth will enter the placement network of the SSCC. The DFPS clinical coordinators will continue the 90-day wraparound support process, conducting 30-60-90-day check-ins with child and caregiver/provider. DFPS and SSCC have a shared goal of eliminating DFPS supervision of CWOP as quickly as possible and will work collaboratively for resolution. The SSCC understands the urgency of eliminating DFPS supervision responsibilities, and the common goal for both DFPS and the SSCC is to secure safe and stable placements that are in children's best interests outside of CWOP. Therefore, the SSCC will diligently work to identify placement options for children who are difficult to supervise. As the SSCC assumes responsibility for placement in Stage I, the goal is for children/youth on the established DFPS CWOP to transition under the SSCC within the first 90 days but will be fully completed on the date that the SSCC begins Stage II.

## **SSCC Supervision Leading to SSCC Children Without Placement (CWOP)**

[CPS Handbook §4152.1 Plans for a Child/youth When Placement Is Unavailable and CPS Handbook §4152.2 Meeting the Needs of a Child/youth without Placement, Appendix L: CPU Workload Categories, Appendix M: DFPS CWOP/CPU List During Stage I Transition Process](#)

CWOP is not placement and should not be considered a placement. It is not in the best interest of children to be in DFPS/ 4Kids4Families Supervision situations. DFPS and 4Kids4Families will exhaust efforts to find the best and most appropriate placement that meets the children's best interests.

4Kids4Families will establish policies/procedures for safely caring for child /youth and meeting their needs while a placement is being located.

4Kids4Families will report children under 4Kids4Families supervision to DFPS no later than 9:00 am every day via email to the DFPS Placement team at [cwop@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:cwop@dfps.texas.gov), copying the CBCA and Contract Administration Manager (CAM). Please title the e-mail "SSCC Supervision for the evening of DATE" This is the date prior to midnight for the overnight supervision that occurred.

If there were children under 4Kids4Families Supervision, 4Kids4Families Single Point of Contact completes the *SSCC Supervision Daily Log* (using CoBRIS to generate the report) with information on all children supervised by 4Kids4Families overnight (as defined above). The naming convention for the log is “SSCC Supervision Log for DATE”. The date in the log is the date prior to midnight for the overnight supervision that occurred.

- The log is a record of all children supervised overnight on a single date. The log is completed every night a child remains under 4Kids4Families Supervision until a placement is found. Logs completed for Friday-Sunday nights are submitted Mondays by 9am following the naming convention for each night.
- If a child in 4Kids4Families supervision runs away, the incident must be reported to the DFPS placement team and the SSCC must verify that the runaway protocol was followed or will be followed. (This information is reported by the CPS placement team to the CPS Associate Commissioner.)
- Daily reporting to the placement team, CBCA and CAM is in addition to and does not take the place of communication between SSCC and regional DFPS staff about locating placements as outlined in the operations manual. Transparent communication is essential so that DFPS and 4Kids4Families can work together to meet the needs of the child.

If no children were under 4Kids4Families Supervision, 4Kids4Families reports to DFPS that there were NOT any children under 4Kids4Families Supervision.

*Note: Per an allowance of 4Kids4Families to deviate from CPS Handbook §4152.1 Plans for a Child/youth When Placement Is Unavailable, if a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship does not have a placement, the child/youth can be supervised by a qualified 4Kids4Families staff. The request will be granted to all 4Kids4Families employees as long as: (1) 4Kids4Families employees are in charge of the children, (2) those employees have appropriate background checks (both of which are required by the statute), and (3) have received all the required training.*

## **Significant Events or Issues**

### **CPS Handbook §4152.2 Meeting the Needs of a Child/youth without Placement and CPS Child Without Placement Procedures**

4Kids4Families will follow CPS policy. If a significant event or issue arises while supervising a child/youth, staff members and caregivers must notify their supervisor immediately. All significant events and serious incidents must be immediately escalated up the chain of command to the CPS RD, cc'ing CBCA and CAM.

*Note: Use the email subject line “4Kids4Families Supervision Incident.”*

# New Placement Referrals

After DFPS determines, with supervisor and PD approval, that the child/youth requires placement in a *paid* foster care setting, the DFPS caseworker must decide if the child/youth needs emergency or non-emergency placement.

Before any non-emergency placement change, the DFPS caseworker must contact the following people and ask for their recommendations on the subsequent placement:

Attorney ad litem (AAL),  
Guardian ad litem (GAL), and  
Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

If an emergency placement change does not allow time for the required consultations, the DFPS caseworker must notify the AAL, GAL, and CASA as soon as possible, but no more than three (3) business days after the change.

## Emergency Referral and Placement Process

### [Appendix B: Emergency Placement Process Flow Charts](#)

The emergency referral and placement process is used when DFPS makes a referral to 4Kids4Families for a child/youth who is in immediate need for paid foster care placement and services and is not currently served by 4Kids4Families.

For emergency removals, if DFPS does not have physical possession of the child/youth, the 4Kids4Families Director of Placement may give approval for the 4Kids4Families placement coordinator to begin searching for placement. The 4-hour period will only begin once 4Kids4Families has accepted the referral as complete and DFPS has physical possession or in a safe known location of the child/youth. If the 4-hour mark has passed, DFPS will need to transport the child/youth to the agreed upon location to complete the transfer to 4Kids4Families.

The section below reflects the specific steps a DFPS caseworker (CPI or CPS) must take to request and complete an emergency foster care placement into 4Kids4Families network.

## Notification and Referral

### [CPS Handbook §6151.3 Notification Requirements and Schedule](#) and [OCBCT IMPACT Functionality Guide](#)

DFPS will contact 4Kids4Families 24-hour Intake Hotline at 855-454-3367 and provide initial information on child(ren) in need of paid placement. 4Kids4Families will provide the intake worker to be assigned secondary.

DFPS caseworker must open the SUB care stage, create the SSCC referral and assign 4Kids4Families staff as secondary before completing the 2087 in IMPACT.

**Immediately but within one (1) hour** of contacting the 4Kids4Families 24-hour Intake Hotline, DFPS will send a follow-up email to [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org). The e-mail subject line will read: (last name, first name of oldest child) and include the following information:

- DFPS caseworker contact information.
- DFPS caseworker's supervisor and contact information.
- Any relevant information to assist with finding placement (i.e. removal affidavit, education, medical, up-to-date psychological, etc.).
- Notification regarding if the child/youth requires a 3-day medical exam (this will also be included in the form 2087ex in the physical health section).

*Note: If any additional information is needed, 4Kids4Families will call DFPS to request the additional information or staffing.*

**Immediately but within two (2) hour** of contacting the 4Kids4Families 24-hour Intake Hotline - (855) 454-3367, DFPS will complete all the following steps in IMPACT:

SSCC Child Referral on the Case Summary page

Note: When DFPS saves and assigns the SSCC Child Referral to the 4Kids4Families intake specialist, this automatically makes them secondary on the substitute care (SUB) stage in IMPACT.

Alternative Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (form 2087ex);  
or

Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (form 2087; excluding level of care information).

Based on the child/youth's needs, the DFPS caseworker will:

- Notify relevant regional DFPS subject matter experts (SME) (i.e. nurse, developmental disability specialist, well-being specialist, and education specialist).
- When possible, notify the developmental disability specialist prior to the child/youth's removal.
- Request a staffing with the relevant subject matter experts as needed.

See JOM sections: Placing Children Who Have Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and Primary Medical Needs (PMN) or Complex Medical Needs.

**4Kids4Families will have one (1) hour** to review the referral and information to determine if it is sufficient for the placement search. If the application for placement does not have sufficient information for the placement search, 4Kids4Families will call DFPS and send e-mail to DFPS caseworker/supervisor on any needed information to complete referral. The 4-hour timeframe starts once the referral is fully accepted by 4Kids4Families. 4Kids4Families will email DFPS caseworker/supervisor as to what time the referral was accepted to allow DFPS to coordinate plans for the child/youth.

*Note: The timeframes associated with placement must ALWAYS take into consideration the best interest of each child/youth. Although the timeframes will be followed in most instances, there may be times DFPS and 4Kids4Families staff will need to work together to ensure best interest of child/youth take precedence.*

*Note: If there are any therapeutic needs that were not initially listed on the referral form that are identified before placement is selected and made, which will drastically change the placement search parameters, then a staffing will be held immediately upon learning new therapeutic needs. The staffing will be between 4Kids4Families and the DFPS caseworker, supervisor and PD to discuss current placement options, and if needed, establish next steps.*

DFPS and 4Kids4Families may request an emergency staffing to ensure all information is being shared between parties. Please contact your CBCA to help coordinate these staffing's and ensure all needed parties from DFPS, 4Kids4Families, and other stakeholders are present.

## **4Kids4Families Placement Options and DFPS Approval**

### **4Kids4Families Placement Option**

#### **[CPS Handbook §4211.6 Placements into Operations on Heightened Monitoring \(HM\)](#)**

**Within seven (7) hours** from accepted referral for emergency placement, 4Kids4Families will provide DFPS caseworker with:

- Notification of a recommended placement(s) and medical consenters by phone and an e-mail to the DFPS caseworker/supervisor to include:
  - Placement name, address, phone and IMPACT resource identification number (RID), if known.
  - Provider name.
  - Medical Consenter name and IMPACT personal identification number (PID), if known.

- Information regarding other children or youth placed in the home, including if any have a child sexual aggression designation or a victim of child sexual aggression.
- Education Decision Maker name and PID.
- For placement options on Heightened Monitoring, 4Kids4Families will follow steps outlined in policy CPS Handbook §4211.6 Placements into Operations on Heightened Monitoring (HM).

## DFPS Placement Approval

- **Within one (1) hour of receiving notification** from 4Kids4Families, DFPS will evaluate and approve 4Kids4Families recommended placement option(s) and medical consent. DFPS will notify 4Kids4Families assigned Intake Coordinator via email and phone.

*Note: Approval of the placement will be considered approved if denial is not received within one (1) hour.*

- If there are concerns about the placement recommendation:
  - DFPS caseworker must obtain DFPS supervisor, PD, and PA approval to deny placement recommendation.
  - The DFPS PD/PA will contact 4Kids4Families Director of Placement and cc'ing 4Kids4Families Sr. VP of CBC with the decision and send email (utilizing referral e-mail chain) with the denial justification to 4Kids4Families, cc'ing CBCA.

*Note: Denial of a placement option may impact the ability of 4Kids4Families to secure the placement within seven (7) hours.*

**If after seven (7) hours** (approved referral for emergency placement) 4Kids4Families **has not** secured placement, 4Kids4Families will email DFPS caseworker/supervisor, cc'ing CBCA with status and planned strategy for securing placement.

## Placement of Child/Youth

### CPS Placement Forms and Community-Based Care Forms

**Within four (4) hours** (of approved referral for emergency placement) placement is secured, DFPS will:

- Transport the child/youth to the placement.
- At the time of placement complete, review with caregiver, and obtain all required signatures:
  - Placement Authorization (Form 2085FC)
  - Designation of Medical Consenter (Form 2085B)
  - Designation of Education Decision-Maker (Form 2085E)
  - Placement Summary Form 2279 and Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b (if applicable)
  - Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) from IMPACT

- Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care (Form K-908-2530) *Note: review with the child/youth, signed by the caseworker, child/youth and caregiver, provide a copy to the child/youth, document the date reviewed in the child's placement information page and DFPS will upload a signed copy into OneCase in IMPACT within 72 hours.*

*Note: All prescribed placement paperwork instructions located on each form will be followed and enforced. This includes DFPS ensuring placement documents are signed by all required parties and uploaded into OneCase in IMPACT within mandatory timeframes.*

**If after the four (4) hours** (of approved referral for emergency placement), placement **has not** been secured:

- DFPS and 4Kids4Families will coordinate a time and location for the physical exchange of child/youth, keeping in mind child/youth's best interest.
- DFPS will transport the child/youth at the agreed upon time to coordinated location.
- DFPS will provide the placement documents below, including the CBC 2085 series forms (see CBC Forms), to 4Kids4Families to be used when placement is secured. DFPS will not sign the documents, unless otherwise noted. Once placement is identified and secured, 4Kids4Families at the time of placement complete, review with caregiver, and obtain all required signatures:
  - Placement Authorization (Form 2085FC)
  - Designation of Medical Consenter (Form 2085B) – *Note: DFPS caseworker must sign if DFPS will remain medical consenter after placement is secured.*
  - Designation of Education Decision-Maker (Form 2085E)
  - Placement Summary Form 2279 and Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b (if applicable). *Note: for additional information see the Child Sexual Aggression, Sexual Victimization, and Sexual Behavior Notification section.*
  - Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) from IMPACT.
  - Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care (Form K-908-2530) – *4Kids4Families will review with the child/youth, obtain the child/youth's signature, and sign the form as the caseworker. 4Kids4Families will obtain the caregiver's signature, provide a copy to the child/youth, document the date reviewed in the child's placement information page and 4Kids4Families will upload a signed copy into OneCase in IMPACT within 72 hours. 4Kids4Families will notify DFPS when this is complete.*

*Note: All prescribed placement paperwork instructions located on each form will be followed and enforced. 4Kids4Families will upload all documents into OneCase and will notify DFPS once this is complete. Placement Summary Form (2279, Attachment A, and Medical Consenter form (2085b) must be uploaded by 7:00 pm the next calendar day following placement. If there are any missing signatures, those must be obtained within 72 hours and uploaded into OneCase.*

*DFPS will ensure placement documents are signed by all required parties and uploaded into OneCase in IMPACT within mandatory timeframes. DFPS will contact 4Kids4Families if they do not receive the paperwork timely.*

**Within twenty-four (24) hours** of completed placement, 4Kids4Families will complete all required placement documentation in the placement tab in IMPACT.

## **IMPACT Documentation**

### **CPS Handbook §4142 Enter the Placement Change Information in IMPACT**

**Within four (4) hours** of referral to 4Kids4Families, DFPS caseworker will:

- Update person detail page in IMPACT.

**Within twelve (12) hours** 4Kids4Families will in IMPACT:

- Create the placement entry and complete documentation in all sections of the placement information page.
  - If placement is in a Treatment Family Foster home, please select TFC (Treatment Foster Care) as the living arrangement on the placement entry.
- Save and submit the placement entry to the DFPS supervisor.
- Create the Medical Consenter entry.

*Note: If the placement entry is not documented in IMPACT by 4Kids4Families within 12 hours of the referral, DFPS caseworker will call 4Kids4Families Intake Department and request placement be documented.*

*If within one (1) hour of contacting 4Kids4Families placement information is not documented, DFPS caseworker will notify their supervisor.*

*The DFPS supervisor will contact 4Kids4Families Director of Placement for immediate resolution and will notify CBCA.*

DFPS supervisor will, by 5:00 pm the next business day:

- Review and approve the placement and medical consenter documentation in IMPACT.

*Note: If there is an error, DFPS will send notice of rejection by e-mail to the 4Kids4Families intake specialist and Director of Placement.*

*DFPS is responsible for filing the Notification of Medical Consenter with the Court and enter in IMPACT the date filed with the Court in accordance with policy.*

## **Additional Documentation Shared with 4Kids4Families Within Seven (7) Days**

**Within seven (7) days**, DFPS caseworker will document in IMPACT, upload into OneCase and provide any remaining placement documentation to 4Kids4Families including:

- Birth verification/certificate

- Social Security card or number (if available)
- Education portfolio
- Medicaid and STAR Health numbers or qualifying information (if available)
- Any external documentation (i.e. assessments, evaluations, or therapy notes) related to the care of the child/youth
- Removal affidavit or most recent court report
- Update person characteristics in IMPACT
- Update education log in IMPACT (with as much information as available)
- Update medical/dental page in IMPACT, as applicable
- Any requested intake forms from the residential provider

Any external forms and written placement information not available in IMPACT should be uploaded into OneCase and notification provided via email to 4Kids4Families at [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org) . E-mail must include subject line with “the oldest child/youth’s last name, first name” or “family name.”

## **Within Three (3) Days of Placement & Assessments Due Within Thirty (30) Days of Placement**

### **[CPS Handbook §11211: 3-Day Medical Exam](#)**

- **Within three (3) business days of removal**, 4Kids4Families will ensure that the caregiver or residential provider obtains the 3-day medical screening (three (3) business days) for all eligible children and youth identified meeting the criteria by the DFPS removing worker. Within one (1) business day of the screening, the caregiver or residential provider will provide notice of the completed screening to DFPS caseworker, and DFPS caseworker will enter into IMPACT.
- Within 30-days of removal:
  - CANS Assessment must be provided to child/youth ages 3-17. 4Kids4Families will ensure that the caregiver or residential provider has scheduled the CANS assessment. DFPS caseworker will call the caregiver by the 14<sup>th</sup> day after removal to ensure that the CANS Assessment has been scheduled.
  - Child/youth must complete a Texas Health Steps Check-up. 4Kids4Families will ensure that the caregiver or residential provider completes the exam and will notify the DFPS caseworker that it has been completed.
    - Any child under three (3) years of age is referred to Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) if the child/youth is suspected of having a disability, developmental delay, or exposure to illegal substances. This evaluation is required prior to the Texas Health Steps Check-up.

*Note: More detailed information regarding criteria for a 3-day medical exam, CANS Assessment, Texas Health Steps Check-up, can be located in the 3 in 30 Section of this Joint Operations Manual. More information on ECI can be found Medical/Dental/Vision Examination section of this Joint Operations Manual.*

## **Non-Emergency Referral and Placement Process**

### **Appendix C: Non-Emergency Placement Process Flow Charts**

The non-emergency placement process is used when DFPS makes a referral to 4Kids4Families for a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship who is moving to a paid foster care placement in 4Kids4Families network.

Before any non-emergency placement change, the DFPS caseworker must contact the following people and ask for their recommendations on the subsequent placement:

- Attorney ad litem (AAL)
- Guardian ad litem (GAL)
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), when applicable

## **Notification & Referral**

### **CPS Handbook §6151.3. Notification Requirements and Schedule**

#### **Non-Emergency Referrals Resulting from Discharge Notice of Child/Youth in Paid Care (Not same day)**

When DFPS receives a discharge notice for a child/youth from their current caregiver who is not in the 4Kids4Families network, DFPS will e-mail the discharge notice to 4Kids4Families at [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org).

#### **For 30-day discharge notice:**

**Within three (3) business days**, DFPS caseworker will e-mail 4Kids4Families at [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org) a copy of the discharge notice and will complete the SSCC referral in IMPACT for the child/youth being referred.

The email subject line should be: “30-Day Discharge Notice - (Last name of oldest child being referred)”, and email should include:

- Copy of discharge notice
- Updated Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) from IMPACT
- Include Psychological evaluation, if available
- CANS Assessment

- Any other available information that would aid in securing placement as requested by 4Kids4Families (i.e. removal affidavit)
- Include DFPS supervisor's name, who approves the placement and is a backup contact

DFPS will enter the following in IMPACT:

- SSCC Child Referral on the Case Summary page
- Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (form 2087; excluding level of care information); **or**
- Alternative Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (form 2087ex; excluding level of care information). The IMPACT 2087 must be used for all new entries into paid foster care.

**Within one (1) business day**, 4Kids4Families will:

- Provide DFPS caseworker and DFPS supervisor with the name of the 4Kids4Families intake specialist to make secondary within one (1) business day of the email referral notification.
- Send acknowledgement that the above information has been reviewed for completion to the DFPS caseworker and supervisor. The notification must identify any items in need of correction or not provided in the acknowledgement. DFPS caseworker will provide the needed information within two (2) business days.

**For 14-day and less discharge notice:**

**Within one (1) business day**, DFPS caseworker will e-mail copy of discharge notice and complete the SSCC referral in IMPACT for child/youth being referred to 4Kids4Families at Intake@4kids4families.org. The email subject line should be: "14-Day Discharge Notice - (last name of oldest child being referred)," including:

- Copy of discharge notice
- Updated Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) from IMPACT
- Psychological evaluation if available
- CANS Assessment
- Any other available information that would aid in securing placement as requested by 4Kids4Families (i.e. removal affidavit)
- DFPS supervisor's name, who approves the placement and is a backup contact

DFPS will enter the following in IMPACT:

- SSCC Child Referral on the Case Summary page
- Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (form 2087; excluding level of care information); **or**

- IMPACT Alternative Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (form 2087ex); excluding level of care information) The IMPACT 2087ex must be used for all new entries into paid foster care.

**Within one (1) business day**, 4Kids4Families will:

- Provide DFPS caseworker and DFPS supervisor with the name of the 4Kids4Families intake specialist to make secondary within one (1) business day of the email referral notification.
- Send acknowledgement that the above information has been reviewed for completion to the DFPS caseworker and supervisor. The notification must identify any items in need of correction or not provided in the acknowledgement. DFPS caseworker will provide the needed information within one (1) business day.

*Note: Some non-emergency referrals may require a placement for timeframes other than with 30-day or 14-day notices. DFPS should always make the non-emergency referral immediately after learning of a placement need. The referral must include information about the date placement is needed and this date is considered the deadline for a new placement to be completed.*

Based on the child/youth's needs, DFPS will notify relevant regional DFPS Subject Matter Experts (i.e., Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist, Well-Being Specialist, and Education Specialist). See additional information JOM section: Placing Children Who Have Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and Primary Medical Needs (PMN) or Complex Medical Needs.

4Kids4Families will include DFPS caseworker and supervisor, cc'ing CBCA on all correspondence throughout the case.

## **Pre-Placement Staffing (Optional)**

Pre-Placement staffing is optional for non-emergency placements and determined jointly by 4Kids4Families intake supervisor and DFPS supervisor. See additional information JOM: [Pre-Placement Staffings](#).

## **4Kids4Families Placement Options and DFPS Approval**

### **4Kids4Families Placement Option**

#### **[CPS Handbook §4211.6 Placements into Operations on Heightened Monitoring \(HM\)](#)**

- 4Kids4Families will provide weekly updates to the DFPS caseworker and supervisor on placement identification efforts until a placement is identified.

- **No less than three (3) business days prior to placement** needing to occur, 4Kids4Families will notify DFPS caseworker and supervisor by e-mail of recommended placement and medical consent.
- Information about the recommended placement will include:
  - Placement name, address, phone and resource ID, if known
  - Network provider name
  - Medical Consenter name and PID, if known
  - Information regarding other children or youth placed in the home, include if any have a child sexual aggression designation or a victim of child sexual aggression.
- Coordinate pre-placement visit opportunities to engage the child/youth in placement decision.
- For placement options on Heightened Monitoring, 4Kids4Families will follow steps outlined in policy 4211.6 Placements into Operations on Heightened Monitoring (HM).

### **DFPS Placement Approval**

- DFPS caseworker will evaluate and approve 4Kids4Families recommended placement option and medical consent within 24-hours of receipt of notification from 4Kids4Families by telephone (855) 454-3367 or e-mail Intake@4kids4families.org.
- DFPS caseworker will provide written approval of the placement by responding to the email from 4Kids4Families with the placement option that it is approved.
- Approval will be assumed if denial is not received within 24-hours of receipt.
- **No later than three (3) business days prior to placement** needing to occur, DFPS will notify CBCA of failure of 4Kids4Families to identify placement.
- If there are concerns about the placement recommendation:
  - DFPS caseworker must obtain supervisor, PD, and PA approval to deny placement recommendation.
  - Denial justification must be included and provided to 4Kids4Families by responding to referral e-mail.
  - The DFPS PD will contact 4Kids4Families Director of Placement with the decision.
  - The CBCA must be notified.

### **Placement of Child/Youth**

#### **CPS Placement Forms and Community Based Care Placement Forms**

##### **DFPS caseworker will:**

- Will transport the child/youth to the placement since the child/youth is not part of the 4Kids4Families network until placement is made.
- Including the CBC 2085 series forms, at the time of placement, worker will complete, review with caregiver, and obtain all required signatures:
  - Placement Authorization (Form 2085FC)
  - Designation of Medical Consenter (Form 2085B)
  - Designation of Education Decision-Maker (Form 2085E)

- Placement Summary Form 2279 and Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b (if applicable)
- Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) from IMPACT
- Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care (Form K-908-2530) *Note: review with the child/youth, signed by the caseworker, child/youth and caregiver, provide a copy to the child/youth, document the date reviewed in the child's placement information page and DFPS will upload a signed copy into OneCase in IMPACT within 72-hours.*

*Note: All prescribed placement paperwork instructions located on each form will be followed and enforced. Placement Summary Form (2279, Attachment A, and Medical Consenter form (2085b) must be uploaded by 7:00 pm the next calendar day following placement. If there are any missing signatures, those must be obtained within 72 hours and uploaded into OneCase.*

*This includes DFPS ensuring placement documents are signed by all required parties and uploaded into OneCase in IMPACT within mandatory timeframes.*

## **IMPACT Documentation**

### **CPS Handbook §4142 Enter the Placement Change Information in IMPACT**

**DFPS caseworker will at the time of referral to 4Kids4Families:**

- Update Person Information

**Within 12 hours of placement 4Kids4Families will:**

- Create the placement entry in the placement information page of IMPACT and complete documentation in all sections of the placement information page. *Note: If placement is in a Treatment Family Foster home, please select TFC (Treatment Foster Care) as the living arrangement on the placement entry.*
- Save and submit to placement entry to the DFPS Supervisor.
- Create the Medical Consenter entry in IMPACT.
- If the placement entry is not documented in IMPACT from 4Kids4Families within 12 hours of placement, DFPS caseworker will call the 4Kids4Families Director of Placement and request placement be documented.
- If placement information is not documented in IMPACT within one (1) hour of contact with 4Kids4Families, DFPS caseworker will notify their supervisor.
- The DFPS supervisor will contact the 4Kids4Families Director of Placement for immediate resolution and will notify CBCA.

**DFPS supervisor will by 5:00 pm the next business day:**

- Review and approve the placement and medical consenter documentation in IMPACT.
- If there is an error, DFPS will send notice of rejection by e-mail to the 4Kids4Families intake staff and Director of Placement.

*Note: DFPS caseworker is responsible for ensuring all placement documentation is entered in IMPACT within current policy timeframes.*

## **Additional Documentation Shared with 4Kids4Families Within Seven (7) Days**

**Within seven (7) days**, DFPS caseworker will document in IMPACT, upload into OneCase and provide any remaining placement documentation to 4Kids4Families including:

- Birth verification/certificate
- Social Security card or number (if available)
- Education portfolio at placement (check Education portfolio box in IMPACT)
- Medicaid and STAR Health cards or qualifying information (if available)
- Any external documentation (i.e., assessments, evaluations, or therapy notes) related to the care of the child/youth
- Removal affidavit or last court report
- Update person characteristics in IMPACT
- Update education log in IMPACT (with as much information as available)
- Update medical/dental page in IMPACT, as applicable
- Any requested intake forms from the residential provider

Any external forms and written placement information not available in IMPACT should be uploaded to OneCase and notification provided via email to 4Kids4Families:

[Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org). The e-mail subject line should be “the oldest child/youth’s last name, first name”.

## **Within Three (3) Days of Placement & Assessments Due Within 30 Days of Placement**

- **Within three (3) business days of removal**, 4Kids4Families will ensure that the caregiver or residential provider obtains the 3-day medical screening (three (3) business days) for all eligible children and youth identified meeting the criteria by the DFPS removing worker. Within one (1) business day of the screening, the caregiver or residential provider will provide notice of the completed screening to DFPS caseworker, and DFPS caseworker will enter into IMPACT.
- Within 30-days of removal:
  - CANS Assessment must be provided to child/youth ages 3-17. 4Kids4Families will ensure that the caregiver or residential provider has scheduled the CANS assessment. DFPS caseworker will call the caregiver by the 14<sup>th</sup> day after removal to ensure that the CANS Assessment has been scheduled.

- Child/youth must complete a Texas Health Steps Check-up. 4Kids4Families will ensure that the caregiver or residential provider completes the exam and will notify the DFPS caseworker that it has been completed.
  - Any child under three (3) years of age is referred to Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) if the child/youth is suspected of having a disability, developmental delay, or exposure to illegal substances. This evaluation is required prior to the Texas Health Steps Check-up.

*Note: More detailed information regarding criteria for a 3-day medical exam, CANS Assessment, Texas Health Steps Check-up, can be located in the 3 in 30 Section of this Joint Operations Manual. More information on ECI can be found Medical/Dental/Vision Examination section of this Joint Operations Manual.*

## Placement Changes of Children in SSCC Network

### Appendix C Continued: Placement Changes Tip Sheet

Placement changes in Region 4 with children or youth who are placed in a *paid* foster care setting within the 4Kids4Families provider network who will require a new foster care placement within the 4Kids4Families network, 4Kids4Families must make reasonable attempts to prevent placement changes.

Placement changes, initiated by DFPS, are typically non-emergency in nature.

*Note: DFPS caseworkers must obtain supervisor and PD approval to request a placement change from 4Kids4Families.*

Emergency placements changes may only be initiated when there is a perceived or actual threat to the safety or well-being of the child/youth or by court order. Non-emergency placement changes may need to be initiated based on a variety of reasons, all of which must be justified by 4Kids4Families or DFPS depending on who is requesting the change.

It should be noted that if 4Kids4Families receives a request from an external party for a placement change (i.e. GAL or CASA) then 4Kids4Families will notify the DFPS caseworker and supervisor. If DFPS decides a placement change is needed, then the DFPS initiated placement change process must be followed.

A staffing may be scheduled by 4Kids4Families to prevent disruption of an existing placement. For a disruption mitigation staffing, DFPS will be given three (3) business days' notice of the staffing by 4Kids4Families unless the situation calls for an emergency staffing.

To request a disruption mitigation staffing (save the placement staffing), 4Kids4Families will send an email to [FGDM04@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:FGDM04@dfps.texas.gov) with the subject line: "Save the Placement Disruption Staffing".

## **Placement Change Process**

### **Emergency Placement Changes Initiated by DFPS:**

#### **Emergency Referral and Placement process and Non-Emergency placement referral process.**

Upon identifying the circumstances requiring a placement change, the DFPS caseworker will:

- Staff the situation with their supervisor if placement is needed.
- Contact, discuss, and evaluate the situation and concerns with 4Kids4Families Director of Placement or designee.
- Obtain PD approval for the placement change.
- DFPS caseworker will update the Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (2087) in IMPACT.
- DFPS caseworker will update the Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) form in IMPACT
- For any emergency placement changes, follow the Emergency Referral and Placement process.
- For any non-emergency placement changes, follow the Non-Emergency placement referral process.

A new IMPACT referral is not needed for a child/youth already receiving services from 4Kids4Families.

*Note: 4Kids4Families will not begin to search for placement without a thorough and descriptive IMPACT Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care specific to the child/youth's needs.*

*4Kids4Families will have one (1) hour to review the referral and information and determine if it is sufficient for placement search. If the application for placement does not have sufficient information for placement search, 4Kids4Families will e-mail and call the DFPS caseworker/supervisor to update information.*

4Kids4Families will include DFPS caseworker, DFPS supervisor, and CBCA on all correspondence throughout the case.

### **Emergency Placement Changes initiated by 4Kids4Families:**

Upon identifying the circumstances requiring a placement change, 4Kids4Families will provide to the DFPS caseworker and supervisor:

- 4Kids4Families intake specialist contact information.
- 4Kids4Families intake specialist back-up contact information (i.e. supervisor).

- Reason for emergency placement change needed.
- DFPS caseworker will update Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (Form 2087) in IMPACT with collaboration from 4Kids4Families
- DFPS caseworker will update the Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) form in IMPACT.

*Note: In situations where DFPS may have physical supervision of the child/youth, 4Kids4Families will immediately begin the placement search.*

## **Non-Emergency Placement Changes Initiated by DFPS:**

### **Non-Emergency placement referral process**

Upon identifying the circumstances requiring a placement change, within 72-hours the DFPS caseworker will:

- Staff the situation with their supervisor.
- Contact, discuss, and evaluate the situation and concerns with 4Kids4Families director of placement or designee.
- If placement is needed, obtain PD approval for the placement change.
- Follow Non-Emergency placement referral protocol.

## **Non-Emergency Placement Changes Initiated by 4Kids4Families:**

### **Placing Children Who Have Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), Primary Medical Needs (PMN) or Complex Medical Needs**

Upon identifying the circumstances requiring a placement change, within 72 hours 4Kids4Families will provide to the DFPS caseworker and supervisor:

- 4Kids4Families's intake specialist contact information.
- 4Kids4Families's intake specialist back-up contact information (i.e. supervisor).
- Reason for non-emergency placement change.
- DFPS caseworker will update IMPACT Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care and will collaborate with 4Kids4Families.
- Children were placed in a Short-Term Emergency Placement (STEP) bed or temporary arrangement.

As part of case management, DFPS caseworker will complete any other edits that may be needed to the IMPACT Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care to ensure it reflects the current needs of the child within the following timeframes following discharge acceptance by 4Kids4Families intake specialist:

- For 30-day discharge five (5) business days
- For 14-day discharge two (2) business days

- For 24-hour discharge within four (4) hours

*Note: Based on the child/youth's needs, DFPS will notify relevant regional DFPS Subject Matter Experts (i.e., Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist, Well-Being Specialist, and Education Specialist).*

4Kids4Families will include DFPS caseworker, DFPS supervisor, and CBCA on all correspondence throughout the case.

## **Pre-Placement Staffing**

### **Pre-Placement Staffings**

Pre-Placement staffing for non-emergency placements will be held jointly by 4Kids4Families Director of Placement and DFPS supervisor.

## **4Kids4Families Emergency Placement Options and DFPS Approval**

### **4Kids4Families Emergency Placement Option**

4Kids4Families will notify DFPS caseworker and supervisor by e-mail and phone call of recommended placement and medical consentor.

- Information about the recommended placement will include:
  - Placement name, address, phone and resource ID, if known.
  - Network provider name.
  - Medical Consentor name and PID, if known.
  - Information regarding other children or youth placed in the home, include if any have a child sexual aggression designation or a victim of child sexual aggression. Coordinate pre-placement visit opportunities to engage the child/youth in placement decision.

### **DFPS Emergency Placement Approval**

- DFPS caseworker will evaluate and approve the 4Kids4Families recommended placement option and medical consentor within one (1) hour of receipt of notification from 4Kids4Families by telephone (855) 454-3367 or e-mail [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org).
- DFPS caseworker will provide written approval of the placement by responding to the email from 4Kids4Families with the placement option that it is approved.
- Approval will be assumed if denial is not received within one (1) hour.
- If there are concerns about the placement recommendation:
  - DFPS worker must obtain supervisor, PD, and PA approval to deny placement recommendation.
  - Denial justification must be included and provided to 4Kids4Families by responding to the referral email [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org).
  - The DFPS PD will contact 4Kids4Families Director of Placement with the decision.
  - The CBCA must also be notified.

## **4Kids4Families Non-Emergency Placement Options and DFPS Approval**

### **4Kids4Families Non-Emergency Placement Option**

4Kids4Families will provide weekly updates to the DFPS caseworker and supervisor on placement identification efforts until a placement is identified.

**No less than three (3) business days prior to placement needing to occur**, 4Kids4Families will notify DFPS caseworker and supervisor, through email, of recommended placement and medical consent. Information about the recommended placement will include:

- Placement name, address, phone and resource ID, if known.
- Network provider name.
- Medical Consenter name and PID, if known.
- Information regarding other children or youth placed in the home, include if any have a child sexual aggression designation or a victim of child sexual aggression.
- Coordinate pre-placement visit opportunities to engage the child/youth in the placement decision.

### **DFPS Non-Emergency Placement Approval**

- **Within 24-hours of receipt of notification** from 4Kids4Families, DFPS caseworker will evaluate and approve recommended placement option and medical consent via e-mail [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org).
- DFPS caseworker will provide written approval of the placement by responding to the email from 4Kids4Families with the placement option.
- Approval will be assumed if denial is not received within 24-hours.
- **No later than three (3) business days prior to placement** needing to occur, DFPS will notify CBCA of failure of 4Kids4Families to identify placement.
- If there are concerns about the placement recommendation:
  - DFPS caseworker must obtain supervisor, PD, and PA approval to deny placement recommendation.
  - Denial justification must be included and provided to 4Kids4Families by responding to the referral email [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org).
  - The DFPS PD will contact 4Kids4Families Director of Placement with the decision.
  - The CBCA must be notified.

### **Placement of Child/Youth**

[CPS Placement Forms, Community-Based Care Forms and CPS Handbook §4143.2 Notify the AAL, GAL, and CASA of an Emergency Placement](#)

- Since the child/youth is already placed with 4Kids4Families, the decision for the DFPS caseworker to participate in the physical placement of the child/youth with a new caregiver is based on the best interest of the child/youth.
- If the child/youth is under DFPS supervision, DFPS and 4Kids4Families will coordinate for the transition of the child/youth into 4Kids4Families supervision so that 4Kids4Families can make the placement with a new caregiver.
- DFPS will update all information under the person detail page tabs prior to the placement change.
- DFPS will e-mail an updated Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) to 4Kids4Families: [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org), prior to placement.
- 4Kids4Families or their authorized representative will complete the physical placement of the child/youth with the new placement caregiver and provide all completed placement forms to DFPS by uploading them into OneCase.
  - Placement Authorization (Form 2085FC)- to be signed by caregiver and electronic copy provided to DFPS by uploading to OneCase.
  - For SIL Placements, Placement Authorization: Supervised Independent Living (Form 2085SIL) - is needed instead of Form 2085FC.
  - Designation of Medical Consenter (Form 2085B)- to be signed by consenter and electronic copy provided to DFPS by uploading to OneCase. If DFPS will remain medical consenter (e.g. Backup), DFPS caseworker must sign.
  - Designation of Education Decision-Maker (Form 2085E) - to be signed by decision maker and electronic copy provided to DFPS by uploading to OneCase.
  - Placement Summary Form 2279 and Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b (if applicable) – to be signed by caregiver, and a copy uploaded into OneCase by 4Kids4Families. 4Kids4Families will notify DFPS when this is complete.
  - Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) from IMPACT – to be signed by all caregivers, and a copy uploaded into One Case by 4Kids4Families.
  - Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care (Form K-908-2530)- 4Kids4Families will review with the child/youth, obtain the child/youth signature, and sign the form as the caseworker. 4Kids4Families will obtain the caregiver signature, provide a copy to the child/youth, document the date reviewed in the child’s placement information page and upload a signed copy into OneCase in IMPACT (per policy may not exceed 72 hours). 4Kids4Families will notify DFPS when this is complete.
- DFPS will contact 4Kids4Families Director of Placement; [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org), if they do not receive paperwork timely.
- DFPS will ensure ALL signed placement documents are uploaded to OneCase in IMPACT.
- DFPS will ensure all legal parties (parents, parents’ attorneys, AAL, GAL, CASA) are notified of the placement change.

## IMPACT Documentation

### CPS Handbook §4142 Enter the Placement Change Information in IMPACT).

#### **4Kids4Families will, within 12 hours of placement:**

- Create the placement entry in the placement information page of IMPACT and complete documentation in all sections of the placement information page.
  - If placement is in a Treatment Family Foster home, please select TFC (Treatment Foster Care) as the living arrangement on the placement entry.
- Save and submit to placement entry to the DFPS supervisor.
- Create the Medical Consenter entry in IMPACT.
- If the placement entry is not documented in IMPACT from 4Kids4Families within 12 hours of the placement, DFPS caseworker will call 4Kids4Families Director of Placement and request placement be documented.
- If placement information is not documented in IMPACT within one (1) hour of contact with 4Kids4Families, DFPS caseworker will notify their supervisor.
- The DFPS supervisor will contact 4Kids4Families Director of Placement: [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org), for immediate resolution and will notify CBCA.

#### **DFPS supervisor will by 5:00 pm the next business day:**

- Review and approve the placement and medical consenter documentation in IMPACT.
- If there is an error, DFPS will send notice of rejection by e-mail to the 4Kids4Families Intake Specialist and Director of Placement: [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org).

#### **DFPS caseworker will complete any remaining placement documentation to 4Kids4Families including:**

- Update person characteristics in IMPACT.
- Update education log in IMPACT (with as much information as available).
- Update medical/dental page in IMPACT, as applicable.
- Any requested intake forms from the residential provider.

Any external forms and written placement information not available in IMPACT should be uploaded to OneCase and notification emailed to 4Kids4Families at [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org). The e-mail subject line should include “oldest child/youth’s last name, first name, and person id or case id number.”

*Note: All prescribed placement paperwork instructions located on each form will be followed and enforced. Placement Summary Form (2279, Attachment A, and Medical Consenter form (2085b) must be uploaded by 7:00 pm the next calendar day following placement. If there are any missing signatures, those must be obtained within 72 hours and uploaded into OneCase.*

*This includes DFPS ensuring placement documents are signed by all required parties and uploaded into OneCase in IMPACT within mandatory timeframes.*

## **Pre-Placement Staffing**

A pre-placement staffing is a collaborative process between DFPS and 4Kids4Families that focuses on the unique, individualized needs of the child/youth in DFPS conservatorship. The purpose of the pre-placement staffing is to ensure that all interested parties to the child/youth have an opportunity to share and discuss relevant child/youth information in support of 4Kids4Families search for the best possible placement option. The pre-placement staffing seeks to share all relevant information about a child/youth who requires a non-emergency placement or placement change. Relevant information includes:

- Additional information about the child/youth's present behaviors, circumstances, and history beyond what has been provided to 4Kids4Families at intake,
- Children/Youth with higher acuity needs,
- Children/Youth that have had multiple and/or frequent moves,
- Possible placement options for consideration,
- Children/Youth with current specific contracts,
- Children/Youth that have been in RTCs for longer than one year,
- Relevant court orders,
- Current visitation plans, and
- Pre-placement visitation needs.

If discussion between DFPS and 4Kids4Families deems a Pre-Placement Staffing would be beneficial, or at the request of either agency, then a staffing will need to be scheduled. 4Kids4Families staff will gather information about the child/youth (through IMPACT, previous caregivers, placement information from DFPS, etc.) for the group to be able to discuss the child/youth's placement needs and schedule/facilitate the staffing.

### **Timeframes**

A pre-placement staffing will occur at any given time based on the child/youth's needs and agreement of both DFPS and 4Kids4Families.

A staffing may be scheduled by 4Kids4Families in order to prevent disruption of an existing placement. For a disruption mitigation staffing, DFPS will be given three (3) business days notice of the staffing by 4Kids4Families unless the situation calls for an emergency staffing.

### **Recommended timeframes:**

For **emergency removals or placement moves**, a pre-placement staffing may be scheduled the same day.

For **14-day notices or less**, the pre-placement staffing will be scheduled to occur within three (3) business days of 4Kids4Families being notified of the notice.

For **30-day notices**, the pre-placement staffing will be scheduled to occur within five (5) business days of 4Kids4Families being notified of the notice.

*Note: 4Kids4Families and DFPS have established a weekly status update meeting for the Intake and Placement Workload. It is up to DFPS and 4Kids4Families discretion if, over time, this staffing will meet the need of the pre-placement staffing.*

## **Coordination**

4Kids4Families will ensure the pre-placement staffing is arranged. Pre-placement staffing will usually be conducted by telephone/virtually. However, pre-placement staffing may occur in-person as needed and determined by 4Kids4Families and DFPS.

4Kids4Families Director of Placement will coordinate with appropriate parties to:

- Identify scheduling options for pre-placement staffing.
- Work together with the DFPS caseworker to assess the appropriateness and level of the child/youth and parent's participation in the staffing.
- 4Kids4Families will complete all logistical arrangements (date, time, location, conference call information, notices) for the pre-placement staffing. 4Kids4Families will give all participants as much prior notice of the pre-placement staffing as possible.

4Kids4Families or their designee will facilitate the meeting.

## **Participants**

The following participants will be notified of the pre-placement staffing by 4Kids4Families:

- DFPS caseworker
- Local Permanency caseworker (if assigned)
- DFPS supervisor and DFPS PD
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
- Guardian ad litem
- Attorney ad litem
- 4Kids4Families Intake staff
- Current Provider Case Manager
- Current caregiver
- Child/youth
- Parent(s)
- Parents' attorney(s)

- Other relevant subject matter experts (i.e., Developmental Disabilities Specialist Nurse, Education Specialist, Well Being Specialist)

Efforts should be made to invite all participants to the pre-placement staffing. If the pre-placement staffing conflicts with a participant's schedule, 4Kids4Families must make every effort to:

- Obtain the participant's input about the child/youth's placement prior to staffing.
- Include the participant's discussion and decisions made at the staffing.

### **Inclusion and Participation of Children and Youth in Pre-Placement Staffings**

The inclusion of the child/youth's voice in the decision-making and planning about his or her placement is critical to achieving positive results for children, youth, and families. Therefore, children and youth must be given an opportunity to participate in pre-placement staffing. Although a child/youth's participation in a staffing is never forced, 4Kids4Families must make every effort to include the child/youth in the staffing. If a child/youth cannot or chooses not to participate, 4Kids4Families must provide the child/youth with alternate methods of participation.

### **Alternate Methods of Participation for Children**

If a child/youth is unable to participate in a staffing, 4Kids4Families or DFPS may ask the child/youth to express his or her thoughts about the placement by either:

- Writing them down in a letter to be read during the staffing;
- Verbalizing them in a video or audiotape to be played during the staffing; or
- Verbalizing them to a designated person, such as the CPA case manager, DFPS caseworker, current caregiver, or CASA volunteer, to be addressed at the staffing.

Older youth are strongly encouraged to participate in pre-placement staffing, unless they decline.

### **Alternate Methods of Participation for Older Youth**

If the youth decline to participate, 4Kids4Families **will**:

- Examine the reason for the decline.
- Ensure the youth fully understands the purpose for the staffing.
- Ensure the youth understands the importance of having a voice in planning for their future.

4Kids4Families must ensure that a follow-up discussion is held with the youth, regardless of how the youth plans to participate in the staffing, to ensure that the youth is aware of and understands the planning and decision-making that will be made on his or her behalf.

## Documentation

### Community-Based Care Forms

**4Kids4Families** will record notes from the staffing discussion and ensure DFPS staff receive a copy. Additional copies of the notes can be distributed to participants upon request.

4Kids4Families and DFPS staff will share and exchange (with each other) copies of all external documentation gathered related to the child/youth's needs, including but not limited to diligent search results for relatives and/or parents, birth certificates, social security cards, medical/dental reports or records, school records, progress notes, assessments, evaluations, and so on.

**DFPS caseworker will:**

- Document the pre-placement staffing in the IMPACT contact detail page.
- Upload a copy of the completed Pre-Placement Staffing Form (1503) in OneCase.

## Special Placement Needs

### **Placing Children Who Have Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), Primary Medical Needs (PMN) or Complex Medical Needs**

#### Primary Medical Needs Resource Guide

Placing children or youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), Primary Medical Needs (PMN), or complex medical needs require careful consideration in order to make the best placement matches to serve the special needs of these children and youth. The Primary Medical Needs Resource Guide describes the needs of children and youth who have PMN. The Foster and Licensed Facility Placements Process Resource Guide describes the needs of children and youth who have IDD needs.

### **Emergency or Non-Emergency Placement Process for Children and Youth with IDD, PMN, or Complex Medical Needs**

#### Exceptional Care Rate and CPS Handbook §4118 Additional Actions for Placing Children with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

DFPS should follow the process outlined in New Placements/Emergency Placements when requesting an emergency paid foster care placement from 4Kids4Families for a child and youth with IDD, PMN, or Complex Medical Needs.

In addition to the emergency placement process, the **DFPS caseworker will:**

Upon placement referral or prior to the removal, coordinate a telephone staffing with the DFPS supervisor and PD, regional DFPS Subject Matter Experts (i.e., Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist, Well-Being Specialist), 4Kids4Families Intake Specialist ([Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org)), and 4Kids4Families Care Coordinator ([care@4kids4families.org](mailto:care@4kids4families.org)) to discuss:

The specific needs of the child/youth.

The ability of available placement options to meet the child/youth's specific needs.

After a placement of a child/youth with PMN or complex medical needs has been recommended by 4Kids4Families and approved by DFPS, the DFPS caseworker will contact the Well Being Specialist (WBS) to request a PMN Staffing to develop a plan to address the medical services, equipment, and other needs during the transition to the new caregivers.

The staffing will include the new caregivers, their provider, medical staff, 4Kids4Families, Nurse Consultant (NC), DFPS staff, STAR Health, and previous caregivers (when appropriate).

When there is no time for a PMN Staffing prior to placement, DFPS caseworker will contact the WBS and/or the NC to plan for a safe transfer of the child/youth. When the WBS and NC are not available, consult with the Primary Medical Needs Resource Guide and notify the WBS and Nurse Consultant as soon as possible.

A placement staffing will occur prior to the child/youth arriving in their new placement unless exigent circumstances do not allow for a staffing to be held. If exigent circumstances are present, a staffing will be held within two (2) business days.

- **Within two (2) business days**, notify the Developmental Disability Specialist (DDS) if a placement for a child/youth with IDD has been recommended by 4Kids4Families and approved by DFPS.

*Note: Hospitalization of a child/youth may be the best option for PMN child/youth until caregivers are fully trained on the child/youth's care and/or the needed medical equipment, supplies or medication can be provided.*

If the child has exceptional needs that cannot be met appropriately through the use of the blended foster care rate, See additional information JOM Section: [Exceptional Care Rate](#).

## **Placement of Children When CVS is Not Obtained/Temporary Placement is Needed**

### **[Appendix B. Emergency Placement Process Flow Charts](#)**

Under special situations, a child/youth may need a temporary, paid foster care placement in Region 4. A child/youth's legal region may not be from the Region 4 DCA. If this occurs, Region 4 removal staff will refer the child/youth needing paid foster care placement to 4Kids4Families per current protocols outlined in Appendix B. Emergency Placement Process Flow Charts.

4Kids4Families will then secure temporary, paid foster care placement for the child/youth with the following considerations:

If the child/youth has emergency medical needs, then the DFPS caseworker will ensure written consent is received from the child/youth's parent/managing conservator, as needed.

If the child/youth is hospitalized, the DFPS caseworker will work with the child's insurance provider to cover the expenses related to the days spent in the hospital.

If a child/youth needs a hospital sitter, DFPS will request and pay for this service.

If a foster parent needs to be trained or needs time to bond with the child/youth while the child/youth is in the hospital, DFPS will notify 4Kids4Families and 4Kids4Families will determine a proper course of action.

4Kids4Families will request payment for placement through current regional processes established with local child welfare boards. If payment is denied by a local child welfare board, then 4Kids4Families will request a Manual Payment (form 4116) from DFPS.

*Note: Unless DFPS has custody or in the process of obtaining custody, DFPS maintains possession of the child/youth in DFPS regions and is responsible for all related care activities, including transport (e.g. an out-of-state child where CPI has no custody and not planning on obtaining but reaches out to 4Kids4Families for a courtesy placement via email: [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org)). The 4- and 7-hour CBC contract requirements do not apply for youth in this section, as this is courtesy assistance from the SSCC and the child/youth is not under the SSCC continuum of care.*

## **When a Youth in Substitute Care is Parenting**

The following is to address a youth parent in DFPS' managing conservatorship who has a baby while in care or enters care with a baby.

The term "baby" refers to any youth parent's child regardless of the child's age.

## **When DFPS Does Not Have Conservatorship of the Baby**

When DFPS does not have conservatorship of the youth's baby, the youth's baby must be placed in the same placement as the youth parent.

If DFPS does not have conservatorship of the baby, a Child's Service Plan is not needed for the baby. The caseworker should address in the youth parent's own Service Plan the youth's parenting issues, including any past concerns of abuse or neglect by the youth parent, and any needs of the baby.

## **When DFPS is Responsible for Payment of the Placement for a Baby Who is Not in DFPS Conservatorship**

[CPS Handbook §6440 When a Youth in Substitute Care is Pregnant or Parenting and Form 2450- Procedures Form for IMPACT Data Entry Associated with Youth Parents in DFPS Conservatorship .](#)

DFPS caseworker will:

- Open a Sub C-PB stage in IMPACT.
- Refer the baby to 4Kids4Families as either an emergency or non-emergency placement depending on the circumstances.
- Select the youth parent as a primary medical consentor in IMPACT and enter no backup medical consentor.

## **Request for Placement into a CBC Designated Community Area (DCA)**

[Community-Based Care Forms and CPS Handbook §4153.3 Requesting Placements Across Regional Lines into Community-Based Care Catchment Areas.](#)

This process outlines the steps DFPS caseworkers must take to request a paid foster care placement or adoption for a child/youth, who is legally from another part of the state, into a CBC DCA.

This process does not include:

- SSCC requests for placement into a different CBC DCA; or
- Youth who desire a SIL placement.

The requesting DFPS region's caseworker will complete each section of Form 1508 and staff with their supervisor. The completed form will be emailed to receive approval from DFPS supervisor/PD/PA/RD.

If the requesting RD approves the child's placement located in the DCA, the RD will email the completed Form 1508 to the respective RD from the CBC DCA or designee and cc'ing the CBCA for the DCA.

If the RD from the CBC DCA agrees with the placement, RD will contact via email the SSCC to discuss the placement decision. The RD from the DCA will notify the requesting RD and CBCA of the final decision.

See additional information JOM section: Solution-Based Communication . This will be utilized if there is a disagreement about the child's placement into the CBC DCA.

## **Placing Children or Youth in Certain Institutions**

**[CPS Foster and Licensed Facility Placements Resource Guide and CPS Handbook §4118 Additional Actions for Placing Children with Intellectual or Development Disabilities.](#)**

DFPS and 4Kids4Families will work together when considering and requesting placement of a child/youth in one of the following settings:

- Licensed Institutions for child/youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- State Supported Living Centers;
- Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) Residential Placements;
- Nursing Facilities; or
- Intermediate Care Facilities for the Intellectual Disabilities/Related Conditions (ICF/IID-RC).

Placing a child/youth in a certain institution should only take place when no other less restrictive placement is available that can meet the child/youth's needs.

Placement in a certain institution requires careful consideration, assessment, and justification. DFPS and 4Kids4Families will coordinate with the regional developmental disability specialist to carefully assess the child/youth's specific needs and exhaust all least restrictive placement options before recommending a child/youth's placement in a certain institution.

Depending on the type of institutional placement requested for the child/youth, the DFPS caseworker must follow current DFPS processes as provided for in the CPS Foster and Licensed Facility Placements Resource Guide. See CPS Handbook §4118 Additional Actions for Placing Children with Intellectual or Development Disabilities.

If a child/youth is placed in a certain institution, the DFPS caseworker must notify 4Kids4Families to discharge the child/youth from the SSCC in IMPACT (See additional information JOM section: [Ending the Referral](#) section for more information).

Special note: When an HCS placement is having issues with a child/youth and is not able to meet their needs:

- The DFPS caseworker must contact the Local Intellectual Developmental Disability Authority (LIDDA) and the Developmental Disability Specialist (DDS) to seek another Home Community Service (HCS) placement.
- This possible disruption or change in placement should go through the DFPS DDS, *not* 4Kids4Families.

## **Placement into an Inpatient Psychiatric Stabilization Program (IPSP)**

Before placing a youth in an Inpatient Psychiatric Stabilization Program, formerly known as sub-acute program, the program must be approved by DFPS. 4Kids4Families will electronically submit a request for approval of the Sub-Acute Program to the CPS Director of Placement or designee. 4Kids4Families will submit a copy of the subcontract with the IPSP that includes:

- The IPSP treatment model.
- The criteria and methodology used in considering a child/youth for IPSP placement, including client characteristics, approval process for the placement, and level of internal managerial approval.
- How 4Kids4Families will oversee, support, ensure safety, and monitor the placement while the child/youth remain in the placement.
- A transition plan to ensure the youth is moved to a lesser restrictive setting after the program's treatment model timeframe, with the intent that the youth transitions as soon as the youth has completed the program.

### **If the IPSP is Approved**

1. 4Kids4Families will forward the approved email to the CAM and the CBCA.
2. The CAM will create a resource in IMPACT to add the IPSP under the SSCC's provider network in IMPACT and reply to the email once completed.
3. 4Kids4Families may submit a request to use the Exceptional Care Rate to pay for placement. See additional information JOM section: [Exceptional Care Rate](#).

## Appeal Process If the IPSP is Not Approved

If the request was denied, and 4Kids4Families does not agree with denial then:

1. 4Kids4Families can forward the denial, along with their reason of appeal, to the CPS Associate Commissioner and/or the Director of Conservatorship Services.
2. The CPS Associate Commissioner and/or the Director of Conservatorship Services have two (2) business days to respond to the denial.

*Note: 4Kids4Families will not be reimbursed the foster care blended rate for any non-approved placement into an IPSP.*

## Temporary Absence from Care

### [CPS Handbook §4280 Temporary Absence from Paid Placement and DFPS Temporary Absence from Placement Job Aid](#)

Temporary absence from a placement is when a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship has a planned or unplanned overnight absence from a paid placement. Examples include:

- Psychiatric hospitalization
- Medical hospitalization
- Respite care
- Being held in jail, a juvenile detention center, or another locked facility
- Short-term placement to receive services related to substance use
- Summer camp or another similar camp
- Trip with a church group, scout group, or other community organization
- Being on runaway status or missing

Any time a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship is temporarily absent from the current paid placement, DFPS documents this by entering a Temporary Absence event in the Temporary Absence tab. See DFPS Temporary Absence from Placement Job Aid for instructions on how to complete the IMPACT entry.

See CPS Handbook §4280 Temporary Absence from Paid Placement

## Psychiatric Hospitalization of Children or Youth in DFPS Conservatorship

### [CPS Mental Health Resource Guide](#) and [\(CPS Handbook §6151.2 Child Admitted to an Inpatient Mental Health Facility\)](#)

There may come a time when a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship is determined to be a danger to himself or herself or others and is admitted to a psychiatric hospital. Hospitalization is an intervention designed to meet the child/youth's acute mental health needs and is not a long-term intervention. Admission to a psychiatric hospital is not a placement and should not be treated as or referred to as such. To ensure a child/youth's needs are met during this time, there are very specific steps DFPS caseworkers must take immediately following notification of hospitalization.

When the DFPS caseworker finds out a child/youth in conservatorship is admitted into a psychiatric hospital the DFPS caseworker will notify 4Kids4Families immediately at [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org). DFPS caseworkers must follow current agency policy.

*Note: If after hours, DFPS caseworker will call 4Kids4Families at (855) 454-3367.*

4Kids4Families will track hospital admissions and will identify any placement needs that may arise after hospitalization and will seek subsequent placements as needed.

DFPS hospital liaison staff may be a resource to 4Kids4Families for information and updates about a child/youth's needs or care while hospitalized. They may not search for placement for children or youth from SSCC DCAs.

4Kids4Families is responsible for monitoring when the child/youth will be discharged from the hospital and for all psychiatric hospitalizations.

The DFPS caseworker will follow guidelines listed in CPS Mental Health Resource Guide and e-mail the required information to all required parties. Ensure that the Regional WBS and 4Kids4Families staff are included on the e-mail.

## **New Removal When the Child/Youth is in Psychiatric Hospital at Time of Removal**

DFPS obtains TMC or Joint Managing Conservatorship (JMC) of child and paid placement is needed upon discharge, DFPS asks the hospital if they are willing to allow for placement days.

If approved, 4Kids4Families will request placement days through Star Health, Regional WBS or with the assistance of the Psychiatric Hospital Liaison and DFPS should follow Scenario 1 (see below).

If not approved, then DFPS will follow the Emergency Placement Process. See additional information JOM section: [Emergency Placement Process](#).

*Note: If newly removed child remains in the psychiatric hospital past the day DFPS obtains conservatorship, DFPS enters the hospitalization in IMPACT in the Placement Page. DFPS will ensure*

*that the proper documentation in IMPACT will be entered timely so that eligibility for STAR Health benefits start.*

Scenario 1: Discharge Date is MORE than 24 Hours Away\*

- Paid placement needed upon discharge.
- Upon intake, the removal caseworker sets a case staffing with 4Kids4Families to discuss placement with eligibility, supervisors and caseworker and other subject matter experts as needed.
- DFPS creates a non-emergency referral to 4Kids4Families.

Scenario 2: Discharge is LESS than 24 Hours Away\*

- Paid placement needed immediately.
- Upon intake, the removal caseworker sets case staffing with 4Kids4Families to discuss placement with eligibility, supervisors and caseworker and other subject matter experts as needed.
- 4Kids4Families will search for appropriate placement and will follow protocol in notifying DFPS once placement is found.
- DFPS creates an emergency or non-emergency referral to 4Kids4Families after the staffing.

Scenario 3: If Hospital Agrees to Placement Days but Star Health Does Not

- If 4Kids4Families requests placement days through Star Health, but Star Health refuses to grant the placement days, at that point, the referral would upgrade to an emergency and the 4-hour and 7-hour timeframes will be initiated.

## **Missing and Runaway Children in DFPS Conservatorship**

When a child/youth is missing from DFPS Conservatorship and he or she is recovered, there are specific actions that must occur. Since this is a crucial time to gather critical information and assess the child/youth needs, the DFPS caseworker or Special Investigator (SI), is responsible for the recovery of the child/youth, along with completing a recovery interview.

Time frames and transfer of supervision of the child/youth to 4Kids4Families in these types of circumstances will require close coordination, flexibility, and teamwork to ensure the best interest needs of the child/youth are met.

DFPS categorizes a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship as missing if any of the following apply: the child/youth runs away; the child/youth is abducted by a known or unknown person; or the child/youth is otherwise absent from care with no known location.

*Note: This type of temporary absence requires the Missing Child entry to be entered in the Missing tab to populate on the Temporary Absence page.*

## **Missing Incident:**

### **CPS Handbook §6461.31 Documentation and Review and HHSC Minimum Standards**

4Kids4Families or its providers will follow the HHSC Minimum Standards for reporting children missing from care.

- DFPS staff will document missing events according to CPS Handbook §6461.31 Documentation and Review regarding documentation of missing episodes and required notification.

## **Discharge from Placement Following Runaway Event:**

### **CPS Handbook §4281 Criteria for Paying for Foster Care During a Child's Absence**

- Current placement for a child/youth on runaway status can be held/paid for 14 days (five (5) days for emergency shelter placements) with supervisor and PD approval (See CPS Handbook §4281 Criteria for Paying for Foster Care During a Child's Absence for additional requirements).
- After the 14<sup>th</sup> day (or 5<sup>th</sup> day for emergency shelters) if the child/youth has not returned to placement, the child/youth's placement should be ended in IMPACT. DFPS should enter a placement entry to reflect runaway.
- 4Kids4Families will communicate with DFPS staff regarding if the placement will be held and for how long as part of the planning.

## **Recovery of Child/youth:**

**Within one (1) hour** of learning a missing child/youth has been located, DFPS will make a phone call, (855) 454-3367, to the 4Kids4Families Intake line and send an email to placement, [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org).

DFPS caseworker or SI recovers the child/youth and identifies youth needs regarding placement.

4Kids4Families and DFPS will determine if the child/youth is in 4Kids4Families network. This will be based on if there continues to be an open referral for the child/youth.

If the child/youth is not in 4Kids4Families network and needs paid placement, DFPS initiates and follows the referral process once it is determined that the child/youth needs a paid placement.

If the child/youth is in-network, DFPS and 4Kids4Families will coordinate where to meet to exchange the child/youth's supervision responsibility.

It is understood that communication between 4Kids4Families and DFPS is occurring throughout the process.

### **Ending the Referral:**

- 4Kids4Families will end the referral after 14 days, or sooner if negotiated and identified in DCA operations manual, if the child/youth has not been recovered.
- If the child/youth needs a paid placement in the future, a new referral will be created.
- 4Kids4Families will communicate with DFPS staff about ending the referral.

## **Encountering a Victim of Human Trafficking**

[CPS Handbook §6462 Confirmed or Suspected Victims of Human Trafficking](#), [CPS Handbook §4280 Temporary Absence from Paid Placement](#), [CPS Handbook §6460 When a Child/youth is Missing from DFPS Conservatorship](#), [CPS Handbook §4280 Temporary Absence from Paid Placement, Runaway/Missing Youth And Victims of Human Trafficking Resource Guide](#), and [Protocol for Care Coordination Guide](#)

If any 4Kids4Families staff has any reason to believe that a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship has been a victim of sex or labor trafficking based on their interactions with the child/youth, 4Kids4Families will notify DFPS assigned staff immediately. DFPS is responsible for screening the child/youth and must report any information that relates to possible victimization to law enforcement immediately, but no later than 8 hours after learning of the information.

The 4Kids4Families staff must make a report to Statewide Intake immediately, but no later than 8 hours upon becoming aware of this information.

### **DFPS Policy Regarding Recovery of a Missing Child/youth:**

- CPS Handbook §6460 When a Child/youth is Missing from DFPS Conservatorship

- Locating Missing Children in DFPS Conservatorship – Resource Guide
- CPS Handbook §4280 Temporary Absence from Paid Placement
- Runaway/Missing Youth and Victims of Human Trafficking Resource Guide

## **Temporary Placement for Children or Youth After Recovery from a Missing Episode**

This process primarily pertains to youth who have gone missing and are recovered. These types of situations are unique in their circumstances and decision-making regarding placement or temporary placement. Primary considerations must include child/youth safety and what is in the child/youth's best interest. 4Kids4Families and DFPS Legacy areas must work together to support child/youth in DFPS Conservatorship as needed to ensure their safety and well-being.

*Note: The 4- or 7-hour CBC contractual requirements do not apply for children or youth in this section, as this is assistance from the SSCC.*

Possible scenarios include, but are not limited to:

- SSCC child/youth recovered in a legacy region
- Legacy child/youth recovered in a CBC DCA

SSCC child/youth recovered in other CBC DCAs will be covered in an agreement between the SSCC's.

When the circumstance does not support the child/youth being able to return to their legal region/DCA immediately, a collaboration between DFPS legacy region and 4Kids4Families is required to develop a plan that meets the child/youth's immediate needs, including the possible need for securing temporary placement.

**Circumstances that may require a temporary placement for the child/youth may include, but are not limited to:**

- Recovery at a late hour and a distance from legal region/DCA that would not support safe return at the immediate time of recovery.
- Weather conditions in either recovery or legal region/DCA that do not support a safe return to the legal region/DCA at the immediate time of recovery.

Those involved in planning may include:

- Legal region/DCA DFPS/4Kids4Families PD depending on Stage I or II
- Recovery region/DCA DFPS/4Kids4Families PD depending on Stage I or II

- 4Kids4Families Intake Director
- CBCA

*Note: On-call DFPS and 4Kids4Families staff would need to be involved in the planning after hours and on weekends or holidays.*

**Options to consider in resolving placement needs include, but are not limited to:**

- Legal region SSCC secures in-network placement in the recovery region if they have an available contract with an opening.
- Legal region SSCC seeks assistance from recovery region's centralized placement unit (CPU) for temporary placement.
- If this is the plan, recovery region PD facilitates the referral to CPU for assistance.
- Legal region CPU requests assistance from recovery DCA SSCC for temporary placement: [See SSCC Intake and Placement Contacts.](#)

The expectation for these types of temporary placements is that they are temporary and will **not** require multiple nights for placement. The legal region or the legal region's SSCC will secure placement for the child/youth the following day after the child/youth is recovered and facilitate a least restrictive placement. In instances when DFPS cannot reimburse for placements that are less than 24 hours, the CBCA will verify the circumstances and contact the CAM to request payment be made at the Emergency Shelter rate.

**IMPACT Documentation for the Temporary Placement Would be as Follows:**

	The placement has a DFPS contract only	The placement has both SSCC and DFPS contract	The placement has an SSCC contract only
<b>Youth Legal Region is SSCC Catchment</b>	CBCA should be contacted and will aid in placement documentation. Payment will be directly paid to the provider and not through the SSCC.	Placement documented under SSCC network and paid via 3-tiered placement under SSCC contract.	Placement documented under SSCC network and paid via 3-tiered placement.

	The placement has a DFPS contract only	The placement has both SSCC and DFPS contract	The placement has an SSCC contract only
<b>Youth's Legal Region is a Legacy Region</b>	Placement documented under DFPS contract and paid via 2-tiered placement.	Placement documented under DFPS contract and paid via 2-tiered placement.	CBCA should be contacted and will aid in placement documentation. Have the SSCC provide you with the specific Resource ID (RID) for the organization that only has an SSCC contract. Payment will then need to be requested at the emergency shelter rate.

**IMPACT will not generate payment if placements are started and ended on same date:**

- If this occurs, the SSCC or DFPS will notify the CBCA that a temporary placement for placement services across regional boundaries that started and ended on the same date.
- The CBCA will verify the circumstances and contact the CAM to request payment be made at the Emergency Shelter rate.

## **Missing Child “Wraparound Meetings”**

### **[CPS Handbook §6461.5 Caseworker Actions when a Missing Child Returns to Care](#)**

A Youth Recovery Roundtable, also called a “Wraparound Meeting”, is to engage a child/youth returning from missing status and identifying support in creating a plan to address the child/youth’s fears and concerns and increase the likelihood of him or her remaining in a safe placement.

### **Process**

As soon as a child/youth in foster care is located and back in DFPS care, the CVS caseworker and CVS Supervisor will immediately notify all legal parties (CPS Attorney, CASA, Ad-Litem, Legal Parents and Parent’s Attorney(s)) in accordance with CPS Handbook §6461.5 Caseworker Actions when a Missing Child Returns to Care.

Notification will also be sent to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) staff via email: [FGDM04@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:FGDM04@dfps.texas.gov), to organize a Wraparound Meeting. During the Wraparound Meeting, the team will work with the child/youth to process the reason for running away, concerns about their experience in foster care, and any solutions to prevent him or her from running away in the future.

These meetings will be scheduled as soon as possible. The goal is to hold the meeting within 24 to 48-hours from the time the child/youth returned to DFPS care.

The following individuals should be invited to participate in these meetings:

- Child/youth
- CVS Caseworker
- CVS Supervisor
- CPS Legal
- Attorney Ad-Litem
- CASA
- Guardian Ad-Litem
- Legal Parents (if no Termination of Parental Rights (TPR))
- Parent Attorney(s)
- Placement (if one has been secured)
- PAL, if applicable
- Youth Specialist
- Education Specialist
- Developmental Disability Specialist, if applicable
- SSI Coordinator, if applicable
- 4Kids4Families or Child Advocate, if assigned: [Care@4kids4families.org](mailto:Care@4kids4families.org)

## **Subsequent Meeting**

In the event a child/youth goes missing after their initial Wraparound Meeting, the caseworker, supervisor, and PD should evaluate the previous goals and tasks developed to assess whether another meeting should be held to develop new strategies. If follow-up is not required for the goals and tasks of the previous Emergency Transition Plan Meeting another meeting may not be necessary. The child welfare team should make attempts to get the child/youth to recommit to the current plan and continue making efforts toward accomplishing the goals and tasks.

## Payment for Temporary Absences from Paid Placement

When a child or youth is temporarily absent from a paid placement, 4Kids4Families will follow the DFPS policies:

- [1537 Foster Care Payments During Absences From Foster Care Placements](#)
- [4280 Temporary Absence from Paid Placement](#),
- [4281 Criteria for Paying for Foster Care During a Child's Absence](#), and
- [4282 Payment Time Frames](#).

For Foster Care payment approvals, 4Kids4Families will follow the same approval process outlined in DFPS policy above and [TAC 700.323](#) requiring approval by DFPS.

These include:

- DFPS Permanency Supervisor and Permanency Director must approve payment for an absence of not more than 14 days. Note that the supervisor is responsible for notifying the foster care eligibility specialist when an approved temporary absence situations exceeds 14 days. The eligibility specialist will monitor the situation until the end of the temporary absence and update the child's Title IV-E eligibility status.
- DFPS Program Administrator must approve payment for an absence between 15 and 30 days.
- DFPS Regional Director and Director of Placement must approve payment for an absence between 31 and 90 days
- In unusual circumstances, payments may continue for an absence of longer than 90 days with prior written approval by the CPS Assistant Commissioner or designee.

Approvals will be documented in comment box on the Temporary Absence page for the specific episode that is approved for payment.

See [DFPS Temporary Absence from Placement Job Aid](#) for instructions on how to complete the IMPACT entry.

## Kinship Verification

[CPS Handbook §6660 Kinship Caregivers Interested in Becoming Verified as Foster Parents](#)

Before referring Kinship caregivers to 4Kids4Families for verification, Kinship staff must ensure that:

The Kinship caregiver has been approved by DFPS to provide care for a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship.

An approved Kinship Home Assessment, with Kinship Safety Evaluation (if applicable), has been completed on the Kinship caregiver.

Kinship staff should attempt to educate the potential kinship family of the overall process including the requirements to become a licensed placement option.

The Kinship Caseworker must follow CPS Handbook §6660 Kinship Caregivers Interested in Becoming Verified as Foster Parents.

## **Notification & Referral for In-Region Kinship Caregivers**

**Kinship caseworker will** e-mail 4Kids4Families at [Kinship@4kids4families.org](mailto:Kinship@4kids4families.org) and copy all parties involved:

- The subject line of e-mail should read: “Kinship Verification Referral: Last Name of Caregiver” (Include information if a Risk Evaluation needed, and if a Spanish or other Language Speaker is needed). E-mail should include:
  - Caregiver name
  - Caregiver address
  - Caregiver phone
  - Caregiver e-mail
  - Caregiver County of residence
  - Kinship caseworker
  - Kinship caseworker phone
  - Names and PIDs of children and youth placed by DFPS in home
  - Permanency goals
  - Type of license family desires: Foster – Foster/Adopt – Adopt only
  - Any additional information or comments
  - Copy of the Kinship family’s approved Kinship home assessment

**4Kids4Families will** review the additional information section of the referral to ensure it is forwarded to paid placement providers who can serve the kinship family (i.e., Spanish Speaking, Risk Evaluation required).

4Kids4Families will follow their internal process and report to DFPS when a kinship family is accepted or denied by a paid placement provider. If a referral is denied by a paid placement provider, the reason for denial will be included in the communication. The information will be sent to the Kinship caseworker and supervisors.

## Seeking Referral Recommendations for Kinship Families Out of Region

When a Kinship family is outside Region 4, Piney Woods and the Kinship family expresses interest in becoming a verified home, 4Kids4Families must be consulted for a referral recommendation. This will help facilitate the ability of the child/youth to receive services from 4Kids4Families once they are in a paid foster care placement.

### First, CVS caseworker will:

- Ask the Courtesy Kinship Caseworker and Local Permanency Specialist (LPS) Caseworker to inform the CVS Caseworker when the family is interested in being verified so that referral recommendations can be sought from 4Kids4Families.
- Include the requirement to seek verification referrals from 4Kids4Families on the Kinship referral when Kinship courtesy services are sought from another region.
- E-mail 4Kids4Families staff and copy all parties involved at [Kinship@4kids4families.org](mailto:Kinship@4kids4families.org) with the following:
  - Subject line: "Out of Region Kinship Verification Referral Recommendation: Last Name of Caregiver."
  - E-mail should include the same information identified for a referral within the region.

### Second, 4Kids4Families will:

- Identify CPAs they would like to recommend in the Kinship Caregivers area.
- Provide that information to the CVS Caseworker and the Kinship Caseworker.

### Then, CVS Caseworker will:

- Provide the information to the caregiver and to the courtesy Kinship Caseworker regarding 4Kids4Families referral recommendations for verification.
- Once the Kinship home out of region is verified, follow the "Placing a Child/youth with a Verified (or Newly Verified Kinship Caregiver)" below.

After the placement in the out of region verified Kinship home has occurred, the CVS Caseworkers will notify the courtesy Kinship Caseworker and LPS Caseworker of child/youth's placement in the newly verified home.

## Monitoring the Progress of In Region Kinship Verification

4Kids4Families will host a paid placement provider staffing quarterly to monitor the progress families are making to become a verified home. Participants on the call will include:

- Kinship Caseworker
- Kinship Supervisor
- CVS Caseworker
- CVS Supervisor
- Paid Placement Provider Case Manager

- 4Kids4Families Case Care Specialist

**4Kids4Families will** host a staffing monthly to monitor the progress for any families with challenging circumstances who are taking longer than needed to become verified.

Participants on the call will include:

- Kinship Caseworker
- Kinship Supervisor
- CVS Caseworker
- CVS Supervisor
- Paid Placement Case Manager
- 4Kids4Families Case Care Specialist

## **Placing a Child/Youth With a Verified (or Newly Verified) Kinship Caregiver**

**Paid Placement Provider will:**

- Notify 4Kids4Families, CVS Caseworker, and Kinship Caseworker on the day the verified family was submitted to CLASS as an approved foster home.
- Paid Placement Provider will notify the Kinship mailbox at [kinship@4kids4families.org](mailto:kinship@4kids4families.org) so that the process of placement can be initiated.

**DFPS caseworker will:**

- Within two (2) business days of learning the family has been submitted in CLASS, will complete the [Non emergency placement](#) process on all the children/youth placed in the Kinship home. See additional information JOM section: [Non-Emergency Placement](#)
- Add the SSCC referral in IMPACT and complete the 2087(Common Application) in IMPACT.

**4Kids4Families Intake Coordinator will** verify that the family is in CLASS and in 4Kids4Families provider network in IMPACT.

- Upon notification that the Kinship family is approved as a foster home or straight adopt home in CLASS, 4Kids4Families will inform the Kinship Caseworker and Supervisor, CVS Caseworker and Supervisor, and will advise of the official start date for the child/youth's placement in the foster home and follow the relevant placement process.
- Best practice for children/families is to complete placement within five (5) business days, if possible.

CVS caseworker will not initiate placement until 4Kids4Families approves the placement.

**DFPS Kinship caseworker will** end the Kinship caregiver payments on the same date that is approved for the Kinship Foster Parent placement.

*Note: Foster care maintenance payments to a verified Kinship family (foster home) begin once DFPS and 4Kids4Families have completed the relevant placement process described below. The date for the start of the placement will be the date the home was verified.*

## **Placement Change of a Child/Youth with a Verified Kinship Caregiver**

See additional information JOM section: [Placement Change Process](#) to determine the process that will be used when a child/youth is placed in a paid foster care setting within the 4Kids4Families provider network and requires a placement change to a verified Kinship caregiver (Kinship foster home) within the 4Kids4Families network.

## **Initial Coordination Meeting**

The Initial Coordination Meeting (ICM) is an internal, collaborative process between DFPS and 4Kids4Families that focuses on the unique, individualized needs of the child/youth and outlines services to address those needs. The ICM process seeks to share all relevant information about a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship who requires a new emergency placement within 4Kids4Families provider network. Relevant information includes assessments, evaluations, medical reports, recommended services, and all other information that pertains to the child/youth's individual needs. During the ICM, DFPS and 4Kids4Families jointly identify the child/youth's initial and concurrent permanency goals.

The ICM takes the place of the traditional post-removal staffing.

## **Timeframes**

**Within 10 calendar days** of a new emergency placement referral to 4Kids4Families, CPI Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) facilitator will host and coordinate the ICM.

DFPS and 4Kids4Families will participate in the ICM. ICM meetings will occur every Tuesday and Thursday from 8 am – 9 am.

If DFPS or 4Kids4Families staff are not in attendance, CPI FGDM facilitator will attempt to reach them at the start of the meeting. For 4Kids4Families, CPI FGDM facilitator may reach out to [Care@4kid4families.org](mailto:Care@4kid4families.org) and [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org) mailboxes if the invitees not present are 4Kids4Families staff and do not respond to FGDM's efforts.

## Coordination

**DFPS caseworker will** send a removal notification and Initial Coordination Meeting referral form, form 1502, to ICM mailbox: [DFPS04ICMStaffings@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:DFPS04ICMStaffings@dfps.texas.gov). CPI Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) will then begin the coordination process.

**The CPI FGDM facilitator will** coordinate all meeting logistics, including:

- Scheduling with participants a meeting date and time.
- Reserves a conference room, scan call line, or virtual meeting.
- Ensures all relevant participants are invited to the meeting.
- Provides notice, two (2) business days, of the ICM to all participants.

## Participants

### Removal Staffing Checklist and Community-Based Care Forms

At a minimum, the following participants will be notified of the ICM:

Director of Care Management at [Care@4kids4families.org](mailto:Care@4kids4families.org)

Removal caseworker and supervisor

Conservatorship caseworker, supervisor, and PD

CPI Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) facilitator

Paid placement provider

Other DFPS staff or subject matter experts as needed (i.e. Developmental Disabilities Specialist, Nurse, Education Specialist, Well Being Specialist)

Additional DFPS staff may be included in the notification e-mail, but may not need to participate in the ICM.

## Documentation

**Before the ICM, the removal caseworker will complete:**

As much of the Removal Staffing Checklist as possible, which has been updated per Community-Based Care protocols.

Page 1 through 4 (top section) of Community-Based Care Forms Initial Coordination Meeting Form 1502.

**No later than one (1) day prior to the meeting,** e-mail the FGDM facilitator a copy of the ICM form and the removal affidavit or legal pleadings,

**During the ICM, the CPI FGDM facilitator will:**

Gain information about the family to engage the family in a Single Case Plan Meeting; and provide the status, if any, of the family's agreement to participate in a Single Case Plan Meeting.

Notify the DFPS caseworker and 4Kids4Families if a Single Case Plan Meeting is accepted by the family for development of the family plan and Child Plan of Service. If the family declines a Single Case Plan Meeting or one cannot be held, an initial service planning meeting date will be held instead.

Record notes from the meeting discussion on the ICM form, including but not limited to the primary and concurrent permanency goals for the child/youth

4Kids4Families and DFPS staff will share and exchange copies (with each other) of all external documentation gathered thus far related to the child/youth's needs, including but not limited to removal affidavit, diligent search results for relatives and/or parents, immunization records, birth records, birth certificates, social security cards, medical/dental reports or records, school records, progress notes, assessments, evaluations, etc.

**After the ICM, the CPI FGDM facilitator will:**

- Record the ICM as a contact in the Family Substitute care (FSU) stage, Contact Detail page in IMPACT.
- Ensure the notes from the meeting are recorded in the Contact Detail Narrative.
- Send the ICM notes to all participants in the meeting and those invited but were not in attendance.

# Child and Youth Service Planning

Child and youth service planning is a collaborative and inclusive process between DFPS, 4Kids4Families, the Network Provider, the child/youth, and the family that focuses on developing and reviewing plans to meet the individualized and unique needs of the child/youth. Under Community-Based Care, service planning with child/youth will occur with all:

- Children or youth placed within the 4Kids4Families network upon removal.
- Children or youth currently placed in foster care who require a placement change into the 4Kids4Families network.
- Children or youth who have transitioned into the 4Kids4Families network via model implementation activities.

Upon placement with 4Kids4Families, child/youth are identified as receiving Child-care Services or Therapeutic Services.

The type of service the child/youth will receive as determined by the legal status and permanency goal, will determine the frequency by which the child's Service Plan will be reviewed.

## Service Planning Meetings and Child Service Plans

[CPS Handbook §6200 Case Planning for Positive Permanency](#), [CPS Handbook §6241 The Child's Plan of Service \(CPOS\)](#), [CPS Handbook §6241.22 Review of Child's Plan of Service](#), [Texas Administrative Code §700.1321](#), [HHSC Minimum Standards](#)

Child Service Plans will be developed and reviewed through Single Child Plan of Service model meetings. Child Service Plans must be developed with child/youth in accordance with the requirements established in Texas Administrative Code §700.1321, and applicable HHSC Minimum standards. Primary and concurrent permanency goals for the child/youth will be reviewed at each service planning meeting.

Whenever possible, sibling groups will have a combined service planning meeting, which may require additional time allotted for the meeting.

DFPS staff must adhere to the following policy:

- CPS Handbook §6241 Child Service Plan
- CPS Handbook §6241.22 Child Plan Review

## Single Child Plan of Service Model

The Single Child Plan of Service Model is an opportunity to create a collaborative environment for everyone that is involved with the child/youth to have a voice in the development of the child's Plan of Service at one meeting.

Goals of the Single Child Plan of Service model are:

- Ensure timely assessment and identification of child/youth needs and access to services.
- Eliminate having multiple meetings and both a treatment plan from a CPA and a separate child's Plan of Service in IMPACT.
- Develop a more collaborative approach to service planning.
- Create an opportunity for more active participation in service planning.

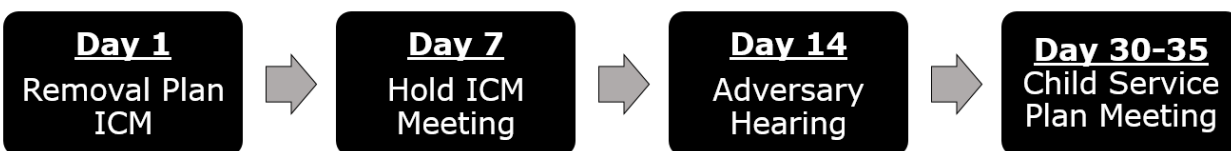
## Timeframes

### [CPS Handbook §6241.22 Review of Child's Plan of Service](#)

DFPS and the Paid Placement Provider will share responsibility for scheduling and conducting service planning meetings in accordance with the following Child Service Plan timeframes:

The initial Child Service Plan will be approved by DFPS Supervisor by the 45<sup>th</sup> day after removal. The initial Child Service Plan will be coordinated and facilitated by the FGDM staff. DFPS completes the first seven (7) sections in the Child Service Plan and it is sent to the Paid Placement Provider to complete the plan.

## Timeline



The FGDM staff will first contact the family to determine their availability for the Child Service Plan Meeting to be held by the 30-35<sup>th</sup> day from removal. It is important to note that the meeting scheduling is per family needs and availability. FGDM will provide all Child Service Planning participants 14-days' notice of the planning meeting.

The Child Service Plan will be reviewed at the following intervals:

<b>Legal Status</b>	<b>Services Needed</b>	<b>Review</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Coordination &amp; Facilitation Responsibility</b>
<b>TMC</b>	Basic Care	1 <sup>st</sup> Review	5 <sup>th</sup> Month Permanency Conference/FGC Re-conference	DFPS FGDM staff
<b>TMC</b>	Basic Care	All future reviews	Every 120 days	Paid Placement Provider/DFPS
<b>TMC</b>	Therapeutic	1 <sup>st</sup> Review	90 days following initial plan date	Paid Placement Provider/DFPS
<b>TMC</b>	Therapeutic	2 <sup>nd</sup> Review	5 <sup>th</sup> Month Permanency Conference/FGC Re-conference	DFPS FGDM staff
<b>TMC</b>	Therapeutic	All future reviews	Every 90 days	Paid Placement Provider/DFPS
<b>PMC</b>	Basic Care	All reviews	Every 180 days	Paid Placement Provider/DFPS
<b>PMC</b>	Therapeutic	All reviews	Every 90 days	Paid Placement Provider/DFPS

Child service plans will be updated or reviewed more frequently when a child/youth's circumstances change, significant events occur that dramatically alter the child/youth's needs, or the provider's accreditation requires a more frequent review.

## **Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment:**

[CPS Handbook §6431 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\) Assessment](#), [CPS Handbook §6150 Notification](#), [CPS Handbook §6151 Who to Notify](#) and [Texas Family Code §266.012](#)

CANS Assessments are required to be used in the development of Child Service Plans. Within 30-days of entering DFPS care, a CANS Assessment must be provided for children (ages 3-17). The CANS Assessment is a comprehensive trauma-informed behavioral health evaluation. It gathers information about the strengths and needs of the child/youth and helps in planning services that will help the child/youth and family reach their goals.

All children or youth will require an annual follow-up CANS Assessment. In addition, a child/youth receiving therapeutic services will require a follow-up CANS Assessment every 90-days.

4Kids4Families will ensure that CANS Assessments are completed, and results are available to be used during service planning for all children or youth requiring them. The requirement is based on the type of plan/review, the age of the child, and the service level needs of the child as stated above.

*Note: If the CANS Assessment is not received or ready by the time of the service planning meeting, it will be re-evaluated and the Child Service Plan can be updated. A desk review can be completed to include all legal parties that require notification.*

### **Notifications**

See CPS Handbook §6150 Notification and CPS Handbook §6151 Who to Notify.

4Kids4Families Director of Care Management, [Care@4kids4families.org](mailto:Care@4kids4families.org), will serve as the CANS Point of Contact (POC) for CANS Assessments to the State Office. The POCs will ensure that CANS Assessor Profiles are entered into the ECANS System.

## **Child Service Planning Responsibilities**

### **Coordination**

[CPS Handbook §6241.3 Participating in Development of the Child's Plan of Service](#), [CPS Handbook §6242 The Family Plan of Service \(FPOS\)](#), [CPS Handbook §6241.4 Documenting and Approving the Child's Plan of Service](#) and [Texas Family Code §700.1321](#)

**The FGDM staff or the Paid Placement Provider** (depending on who is responsible based on the chart above) will ensure the coordination of all service planning meeting logistics, including:

- Scheduling with participants a meeting date and time.
- Reserving a conference room, scan call line or a virtual meeting.
- All relevant participants are invited to the meeting.
- Coordination with CVS caseworker to ensure barriers to parent and/or family member participation are mitigated (i.e., transportation needs).
- Notice is provided to all participants of the service planning meeting:
  - Will ensure that invitations for scheduled service planning meetings are sent by e-mail to DFPS and other relevant professionals.
  - Will ensure that participants receive 14-days' notice of service planning meetings.
  - Will ensure parents, family members, and other participants (who may not have access to e-mail) receive timely notice of service planning meetings by phone, mail or face-to-face (FTF).

**CVS caseworker will** ensure the Paid Placement Provider knows how to contact the parents and other family members.

*Note: All service planning meetings will be hosted in a venue that allows for maximum participation either in-person or through conference call or virtual meeting.*

## Participants

Service planning meeting participants will generally include, at a minimum:

- Child/youth's parents and the parents' attorney(s), who must be invited when the parents have been invited
- Child/youth
- Family members
- Current caregiver
- Paid Placement Provider
- DFPS conservatorship caseworker and supervisor
- 4Kids4Families at Care@[4kids4families.org](mailto:Care@4kids4families.org)
- Local Permanency Caseworker (if assigned)
- Kinship Caseworker (if assigned)
- Legal representatives (i.e., CASA, ad litem, etc.)
- Relevant subject matter experts (i.e., Developmental Disability Specialist, Nurse, Education Specialist, Well-Being Specialist), as needed
- Other relevant professionals
- Other persons identified in the case who can contribute to service planning with the child/youth
- Paid Placement Provider Case Manager
- TYC/TJID case manager, if applicable

## Documentation

### CPS Handbook §6241.4 Documenting and Approving the Child's Plan of Service, and Texas Family Code §700.1321

**Within five (5) business days of the Child's Service Plan meeting Paid Placement Provider will:**

- Provide 4Kids4Families and CVS Caseworker their documentation of their respective sections of the Child's Service Plan.
- Ensure all participants sign the Child's Service Plan.
- E-mail the CVS Caseworker and Care Coordinator at Care@[4kids4families.org](mailto:Care@4kids4families.org) a copy of the completed and signed Child's Service Plan.

**By the 40th Day After the Removal for Initial plans and within five (5) days of the child plan of service review meeting for subsequent plans.**

**CVS caseworker will:**

- Complete all sections of the Child Service Plan or Child Service Plan Review in IMPACT.
- If the information in the plan documented by the paid placement provider is sufficient AND the CVS caseworker participated in the meeting for the development of that plan, the CVS caseworker may upload the paid providers plan in OneCase and document the following statement in the specific sections of the IMPACT plan "See Single Child Plan of Service dated [add date] in OneCase for information.

**CVS caseworker will, upon 4Kids4Families completed Child Service Plan documentation:**

- Include all participants that were involved in the Child Service Plan development in the Child Plan Participation section of the plan in IMPACT.
- Review the Child Service Plan is complete, save, and submit the Child Service Plan or Child Service Plan Review to the CVS Supervisor for approval.

**By the 45th Day After the Removal:**

**The CVS Supervisor will:**

- Approve the Child Plan of Service in IMPACT.
- **Within five (5) days** after approval of the service plan, CVS Caseworker will:
  - Send a final, approved, and signed copy of the IMPACT Child Service Plan or Child Service Plan Review to all meeting participants, including participants who were unable to attend the meeting.
  - Document the service planning meeting and participants in IMPACT on the contact detail page.

If a service planning meeting is held in conjunction to a DFPS Permanency Conference (PC), **the FGDM Staff will** document the service planning meeting in each child/youth's Permanency Planning Meeting (PPM) detail page in IMPACT.

**CVS Caseworker** is responsible for ensuring the family service plan is developed, reviewed, and/or updated during each service planning meeting (see CPS Handbook §6242 The Family Plan of Service (FPOS)).

**4Kids4Families, Paid Placement Provider, and DFPS will** share and exchange with each other any relevant external assessments, evaluations, progress notes, medical/dental forms, diligent search results for relatives and/or parents, and other documents related to care of the child/youth.

All participants are encouraged to bring any supporting documentation (i.e. court reports, CFE tools, etc.) that will aid in the development of the Child Plan of Service.

Roles	Responsibilities
Care Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If CANS assessment is available, 4Kids4Families or 4Kids4Families provider brings to the meeting.</li> <li>• When applicable before or during the meeting, identifies and assists with other community resources (wrap around).</li> </ul>
CASA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brings any available information after having met the children or family.</li> </ul>
Current Caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides relevant information on the child's needs and strengths.</li> <li>• Updates participants on any current services.</li> </ul>
FGDM Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates and facilitates the first and second meeting.</li> </ul>
Legal Representatives (Attorneys)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides input throughout the meeting on the development of the Child Plan of Service.</li> <li>• Shares any court-ordered requirements (services or actions).</li> </ul>
Other professionals (e.g. Church, school, counselor, therapist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides input throughout the meeting on the development of the Child Plan of Service.</li> </ul>

Roles	Responsibilities
Other support network members (e.g. relatives or friends)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides input and support throughout the meeting on the development of the Child Plan of Service.</li> </ul>
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides input throughout the meeting on the development of the Child Plan of Service.</li> <li>Identifies and brings any other members of their support network they would like to attend the meeting.</li> </ul>
Placement Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provider/Caregiver shares information for the last 13 sections of the Child Plan of Service and any current services the child(ren) are receiving.</li> </ul>
Primary CVS Caseworker	<p>Completes the first 7 sections of the Child Plan of Service prior to the meeting and comes prepared to share information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepares, reviews, and launches the FSNA in IMPACT by the time of the meeting.</li> <li>During the meeting, shares the overall CANS assessment results if the assessment is available.</li> <li>Completes the Child Plan of Service after the meeting and receiving information from provider.</li> </ul>
Primary CVS Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviews and approves the FSNA prior to the meeting so the Family Plan of Service can be launched and started prior to the meeting.</li> <li>Approves 2054's for identified services.</li> <li>Ensures Family Plan of Service is approved at conclusion of the meeting or an appropriate timeframe thereafter.</li> </ul>
Subject Matter Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring any relevant information related to the child's needs (e.g. medical or educational documentation).</li> </ul>
Youth (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides input to the development of their plan during the meeting.</li> </ul>

Roles	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If youth is not attending, other participants, as part of their interactions with the child/youth, will share and consider any information the child/youth wants captured on their plan.</li> </ul>

# Medical/Dental/Vision Examinations

[CPS Handbook §11131 Participating in Each Medical Appointment](#), [CPS Handbook §11200 Medical and Dental Services](#), [Texas Family Code §266.004](#) and [CPS Placement Forms](#)

4Kids4Families will ensure that children in paid foster care receive medical and dental exams in accordance with STAR Health and DFPS Policy timeframes including:

- All follow-up medical exams.
- Early and Periodic Screening and Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) exams.
- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) referral and that the caregiver provides written consent for the child's ECI information to be entered into the child's Health Passport.
- Dental exams.

A person consenting to medical care for a child/youth must participate in each appointment set for the child/youth with the healthcare provider (See Texas Family Code §266.004).

Participation must be in person or, if it is appropriate and acceptable to the provider, by telephone. The level of participation depends on the nature of the medical care the child/youth is receiving, except that medical consenters must attend in person any appointments when a child/youth may be prescribed psychotropic medications. Healthcare providers may have varying requirements for participation. Medical consenters and residential providers must discuss with healthcare providers their expectations for participation (See CPS Handbook §11131 Participating in Each Medical Appointment).

4Kids4Families will ensure the caregivers of child/youth receive the Medical, Dental, Vision, Hearing, or Behavioral Health Appointment (Form 2403) along with Instructions (Form 2403ins). The caregiver (usually the medical consentor) and the doctor/dentist will jointly complete the form at a child/youth's medical, dental, or vision appointments.

**Within four (4) days** from the date of the child/youth's appointment, the Paid Placement Provider will send a copy of the completed DFPS Medical/Dental/Vision Examination (Form 2403) to the DFPS caseworker and 4Kids4Families.

**Within two (2) days** of receipt of the completed DFPS Medical/Dental/Vision Examination (Form 2403), the CVS Caseworker will enter the information into IMPACT as provided for in the CPS Handbook §11200 Medical and Dental Services.

4Kids4Families will ensure that youth ages 16 to 22 are advised of their right to request to become their own Medical Consenter.

## 3 in 30

### [3 in 30 Resource Guide](#)

## What is 3 in 30?

### [Texas Family Code §264.1076 Medical Examination Required](#)

The “3 in 30” combines three separate, yet critical tools for assessing the medical, behavioral, and developmental strengths and needs of children and youth entering DFPS conservatorship. Texas Family Code §264.1076 Medical Examination Required requires each component and together the three assessments chart the path for services of children and youth from the beginning of their time in care.

## What are the components of 3 in 30?

### [3-Day Medical Exam:](#)

Within 3 business days, some children entering DFPS care must see a medical provider to be checked for injuries or illnesses and get any needed treatments. Children who meet one of six criteria at the time of removal should receive a 3-day exam. These criteria are:

- Removal due to physical abuse
- Removal due to sexual abuse
- Obvious physical injury
- Chronic medical condition
- Complex medical condition
- Diagnosed mental illness

The 3-day medical exam is a medical screening that is intended to provide a baseline of a child’s or youth’s physical health when they are first removed and enter foster care.

See DFPS Policy [11211 3-Day Medical Exam](#)

The DFPS removing worker will notify the caregiver and 4Kids4Families if the child or youth meet the criteria for a 3-day exam. This notification will be included in the SSCC referral email and in the Common Application Form 2087ex in the physical health section. 4Kids4Families will ensure the 3-Day Medical Exam is completed by the caregiver and will ensure the caregiver notifies the primary caseworker within one (1) business day of the appointment occurring.

**4Kids4Families will:**

Ensure the caregiver or residential provider obtains the 3-day medical exam (three (3) business days) for all eligible children and youth identified meeting the criteria by the DFPS removing worker.

### **Texas Health Steps Checkup:**

**Within 30-days of entering DFPS care**, children/youth must see a doctor for a complete check-up with lab work. This is to ensure:

- Medical issues are addressed early.
- Children and youth are growing and developing as expected.
- Caregivers know how to support children and youth strong growth and development.

4Kids4Families will ensure that children in paid foster care receive a TX Health Steps medical Checkup within 30 days of removal.

### **Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment:**

#### **[CPS Medical Consent Resource Guide and CPS 3 in 30 Resource Guide](#)**

**Within 30 days of entering DFPS care**, a CANS Assessment must be provided to children (ages 3-17). The CANS Assessment is a comprehensive trauma-informed behavioral health evaluation. This Assessment gathers information about the strengths and needs of the child/youth and helps in planning services for the child/youth and family reach their goals. All children/youth require an annual follow-up CANS Assessment. In addition, a child/youth receiving therapeutic services will require a follow-up CANS Assessment every 90 days.

DFPS will call the caregiver by the 14<sup>th</sup> day to ensure the CANS Assessment has been scheduled.

# Psychotropic Medication Appointments

## Modified Final Order 36

4Kids4Families will ensure that all substitute care providers and employees who serve as medical consenters for a child/youth, who is prescribed psychotropic medications, facilitate an office visit with the prescribing physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse in the STAR Health Network at least once every 90 days. This allows the practitioner to:

- Appropriately monitor the side effects of the drug on the child/youth.
- Determine whether the drug is helping the child/youth achieve the treatment goals.
- Determine whether continued use of the drug is appropriate.

For all children/youth receiving psychotropic medication, 4Kids4Families must assess the extent the child/youth:

- Has been provided appropriate psychosocial therapies, behavior strategies, and other non-pharmacological interventions.
- Has been seen by the prescribing physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse in the STAR Health Network at least once every 90 days.

In the event that a DFPS staff or 4Kids4Families staff is designated as the medical conserter for a child/youth, the DFPS staff member must attend in person or virtually, if offered by the physician, any appointments where psychotropic medication may be prescribed and all medication review appointments.

See also Remedial Order 36 of the Modified Final Order of the United States District Court in the Corpus Christi Division of the Southern District of Texas.

## Consenting to Psychotropic Medication

[CPS Handbook §11327 Psychotropic Medication Utilization Review \(PMUR\)](#), [CPS Handbook §11300 Medication](#), [CPS Handbook §11600 Behavioral \(Mental Health\) Services](#), [The Medical Services Resource Guide](#), [CPS Making Decisions about Psychotropic Medications Resource Guide](#) and [Modified Final Order and Psychotropic Medication Treatment Consent \(form 4526\)](#)

4Kids4Families will ensure the proper oversight of their provider network when a healthcare provider initially prescribes a psychotropic medication. This oversight will include that all

substitute care providers and employees in their network who serve as medical consenters for a child/youth will:

- Notify the CVS Caseworker in writing of any initial psychotropic medications and subsequent dosage changes by the next business day.
- Complete and sign the Psychotropic Medication Treatment Consent (form 4526) with the healthcare provider.
- Provide a copy of Form 4526 to the CVS Caseworker within four (4) business days. Form 4526 is not required for changes in decreasing the dosage or for refills of the same medication.
- The child/youth will not start a new psychotropic medication or an increase in the dosage of a medication without DFPS caseworker consent.
- Notification to all child advocates assigned will be provided by DFPS.
- Medication refusals by child/youth will be discussed with the prescribing physician to discuss a plan of action.
- Medical consenters and DFPS caseworkers can request a Psychotropic Medication Utilization Reviews (PMUR) by sending an email to [TXFC\\_PMUR@superiorhealthplan.com](mailto:TXFC_PMUR@superiorhealthplan.com).
- Follow the same notification process of any medical appointments.

The CVS Caseworker will upload a copy of the Form 4526 into OneCase.

The CVS Caseworker will notify a child/youth's parents of the initial prescription of a psychotropic medication and any change in dosage of the psychotropic medication at the first scheduled meeting between the parents and the child/youth's caseworker after the date the psychotropic medication is prescribed, or the dosage is changed.

# Foster Daycare Services

Foster Child daycare is available for children in a Foster Home when:

- The child does not turn six years of age by September 1, and
- All caregivers are employed and work at least 32 hours per week (daycare is available for children up to age 13 for school summer breaks).

## Caregiver Daycare Verification

### Foster/Relative & Other Designated Caregiver Daycare Verification (Form 1809) and Form 1806 Caregiver Statement of Self-Employment Income

When foster daycare services are needed for a child, who is legally from Piney Woods and placed within 4Kids4Families provider network, 4Kids4Families staff will provide the following to the regional daycare coordinator, [daycare4@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:daycare4@dfps.texas.gov):

- Foster/Relative & Other Designated Caregiver Daycare Verification (Form 1809) for each foster parent household each time an application for daycare services is requested. This form is required for both initial requests and renewals.

*Note: Foster parent e-signatures are acceptable.* (completed/signed/scanned copy of Form 1809 or on-line completion of Form 1809 with foster parent approval in return e-mail).

- The 4Kids4Families Daycare Liaison (4Kids4Families Care Coordinator) will need to verify caregiver employment. Acceptable verification includes:
  - Copies of the caregivers last three paystubs.
  - Statement from the employer attesting to being employed full-time for 32 hours a week; or in the case of self-employment, a completed Form 1806 Caregiver Statement of Self-Employment Income.
  - Waivers, if applicable.
- All Caregivers must be informed:
  - Only DFPS can authorize DFPS-funded day care services.
  - DFPS is not responsible for the payment of the day care services that eligible children may receive until after DFPS returns the approved IMPACT Form 2054 Service Authorization to the Child Care Services Agency (CCS) authorizing day care services.
  - If a child receives day care services before the child-care services agency receives the approved Form 2054, DFPS will not pay for those days of service.

## Sending to DFPS District Daycare Coordinator

4Kids4Families Care Coordinator will send an e-mail to the Regional Daycare email inbox, [daycare4@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:daycare4@dfps.texas.gov), and the primary Caseworker that includes:

- Subject line: Region, Foster Parent's Name, Oldest Child's Name needing daycare, Case ID, DFPS Unit #, (do not only enter the foster parents name, the child's name must be included).

- If only one child's name is entered in the subject line but there are multiple children that requests were completed for, all of their names must be provided in the body of the e-mail.
- The body of the e-mail must have the 4Kids4Families staff and their supervisor's approval. If there is no supervisor approval in the body of the e-mail, regional daycare coordinators cannot process the impact daycare requests.
- A statement explaining what verification has been provided for the employment verification and the number of hours each caregiver works (note employment verification must also be provided for renewals).
  - Attach the Following:
    - Completed Foster/Relative & Other Designated Caregiver Daycare Verification (Form 1809), unless an exception is met as described below.
- The 4Kids4Families staff will complete the Daycare Request in IMPACT.

Communication with the 4Kids4Families staff can be made to [Care@4kids4families.org](mailto:Care@4kids4families.org).

## Exceptions

[CPS Handbook §8235.4 Foster Child Day Care Services](#) and [Foster/Relative or Other Designated Caregiver Daycare Verification \(Form 1809\)](#)

For the initial daycare authorization, the requirement for the foster parent to complete Designated Caregiver Daycare Verification Form 1809 may be waived if it is determined the verification would prevent an emergency placement in the child's best interest. Such an emergency placement would be one where the placement cannot be sustained or is unlikely to be sustained if the person requesting daycare was required to verify the unavailability of community resources. The required waiver must be approved by the DFPS PD, PA, and RD. The waiver should only be utilized where the foster parent has exercised reasonable diligence but has been unable to verify community resource unavailability. If such a waiver is approved, the foster parent will be required to verify the unavailability of community resources at the time of the first daycare renewal

## District Daycare Coordinator Approval and Processing

After receiving the daycare request e-mail and the daycare request in IMPACT and has approved day care services, the DFPS Regional Daycare Coordinator will:

- Generate the service authorization in IMPACT and send to CCS.
- The service authorization must be approved and sent to the appropriate CCS before DFPS will pay for the caregivers to use the day care services.

# Court Requirements

[CPS Handbook §5500 From Status Hearing to the Final Hearing](#) and [CPS Handbook §5534 Notice Requirements for All hearings Before the Final Order](#)

DFPS will take the lead on all court and legal activities (court hearings and court reports) for children/youth in DFPS conservatorship and placed within 4Kids4Families provider network.

## Court Hearing Notice

**DFPS caseworker will:**

- Add 4Kids4Families to the e-file notification using the mailbox [Legal@4kids4families.org](mailto:Legal@4kids4families.org).
- This will ensure that 4Kids4Families is informed about scheduled court hearings and has a copy of all court orders, settings, notices, court reports including CASA or guardian ad-litem reports, and other relevant court information.
- Send any court filed documents or notice of hearings to 4Kids4Families if received prior to adding them to e-file notice d-list.
- If date and time of a court hearing is announced during court, DFPS will notify 4Kids4Families via email.
- Will provide notice to the caregiver of all court hearings.
- Will prepare and file all required court reports.

## Court Preparation and Court Reports

**4Kids4Families or Paid Placement Provider will:**

- When requested, 4Kids4Families will provide information necessary for preparation of court reports within five days of receiving the e-mail request for information.
  - If DFPS has any problems obtaining information from Paid Placement Providers, DFPS will contact the Care Coordinator, [Care@4kids4families.org](mailto:Care@4kids4families.org) who will assist with obtaining the necessary information.
- 4Kids4Families will attend preparation meetings for court, as requested by DFPS, CASA, attorney ad litem, or other members of the judiciary.
- Maintain documentation of all court orders received from DFPS.

*Note: All case management court related activities are to be continued by DFPS. Court Attendance by 4Kids4Families*

**4Kids4Families will:**

- When requested by the court or identified by jurisdictional expectations information, 4Kids4Families will identify and ensure attendance of the most appropriate staff (i.e., CPA case manager, placement staff, etc.) with personal knowledge of the case.

- Refer to jurisdictional expectations information for which courts require attendance (if available) and under what circumstances.
- Upon receipt of notification of required presence at court hearing from DFPS, ensure the primary DFPS caseworker is emailed who from 4Kids4Families will be attending the court hearing.

Attendance by 4Kids4Families at Adversary Hearings (the 14-day hearings) is not expected, unless specifically requested.

## **Court Attendance by Child/Youth**

**DFPS will:**

- Provide no less than five days' notice (to court e-mail) of need to have child/youth attend court, unless DFPS receives a last-minute request from the court for child's attendance at which point will notify the Paid Placement Provider immediately by phone directly to the Case Manager.

**4Kids4Families will:**

- Ensure children/youth attend court hearings, unless excused by the presiding judge prior to the court hearing.
- Attendance may occur through video conference and/or teleconference when appropriate and approved by the court.
- Maintain documentation of child/youth attendance at court for performance reporting.

Attendance at Adversary Hearings (the 14-day hearings) and Status Hearings are generally not expected, unless the child/youth's attorney ad litem requests the child/youth's attendance or as requested by the Judge.

## **Service of Legal Process**

4Kids4Families will immediately notify CPS legal mailbox at [legalregion4@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:legalregion4@dfps.texas.gov) of any service of legal process (i.e., subpoena, summons, discovery notices) related to performance under contract.

## **Subpoena Protocol for SSCC Employees**

The DFPS Subpoena Policy for SSCC explains the procedures to be followed when a party:

- Seeks information for the purpose of serving an SSCC employee or the custodian of records with a subpoena regarding a DFPS case; or
- Has served an SSCC employee or custodian of records with a subpoena regarding a DFPS case.

## **Subpoenas for DFPS Records in Open and Closed Cases**

### [CPS Handbook §2000 Procedures for Receiving Subpoenas](#)

When a subpoena is directed to a SSCC caseworker regarding a pending or closed DFPS matter or concurrent criminal case, the caseworker follows the procedure described in CPS Handbook §2000 Procedures for Receiving Subpoenas.

These matters are highly time sensitive. Subpoenas must be sent to the DFPS Region 4, Piney Woods subpoenas mailbox: [Reg04subs@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:Reg04subs@dfps.texas.gov) within two (2) hours of receipt by the caseworker.

## **Subpoenas for Contractor Records**

SSCCs have separate records not maintained by DFPS. For subpoenas received by a contractor for personnel records or records maintained by the contractor, DFPS may give guidance as to how DFPS legal handles such requests generally but will then refer the contractor to their in-house counsel for specific instructions and legal advice.

# Permanency Care Assistance

[CPS Handbook §6680 Permanency Care Assistance \(PCA\) and CPS Handbook §6685 Applying for Permanency Care Assistance](#)

When a Region 4, Piney Woods child/youth's permanency plan calls for a change to permanent managing conservatorship by a relative or fictive kin (regardless of the relative/fictive kin's location) with intent to pursue permanency care assistance, DFPS staff must follow current CPS Handbook §6680 Permanency Care Assistance (PCA). When a prospective permanent managing conservator is nearing completion of the required six consecutive months as a verified foster parent, the child's primary CVS caseworker and 4Kids4Families must begin working with the caregiver to apply for assistance. The DFPS caseworker must follow current CPS Handbook §6685 Applying for Permanency Care Assistance.

*Note: A permanent managing conservator cannot receive PCA if the agreement for assistance is not in place before permanent managing conservatorship of the child is transferred to the relative or fictive kin. It is extremely important that the caseworker inform the caseworker's supervisor of any court order that could affect the transfer of conservatorship and result in preventing the caregiver from participating in PCA.*

## Applying for Permanency Care Assistance

### DFPS caseworker will:

- At least 60 days prior to an anticipated PMC transfer date, the CVS Caseworker will request necessary documentation from 4Kids4Families.
- DFPS will confirm that the Level of Care (LOC) is current and not set to expire within the next 3-4 months. If the LOC may expire between the time of application, negotiation, transfer of PMC, and entry of benefits, then the primary caseworker for the child(ren) will work to ensure that the LOC review with Youth For Tomorrow has been completed and entered into IMPACT.
- Send the completed Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) packet to the eligibility specialist no later than 30 days prior to the transfer of PMC to the caregiver.

### 4Kids4Families will:

- **Within three (3) weeks** of request, provide the requested information to CVS caseworker that would be needed to secure a review and update if needed for a current level of care, such as:
  - Last 30 days documentation, including but not limited to therapy notes, incident reports, daily notes, school reports if any
  - CANS Assessment
  - For children/youth with emotional disturbance: Psychological or psychiatric evaluations, completed within 14 months

- For children/youth with primary medical needs: An evaluation by a physician (MD), physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner, describing medical conditions or disabilities
- Provide assistance and support for the caregiver to complete and return the following forms to the primary caseworker for the children:
  - [Form 2115 Permanency Care Assistance Request](#) (the application for assistance)
  - [Form 2116 Permanency Care Assistance Worksheet](#)
  - [Form 2118 Kinship Family Resources](#)

Upon transfer of PMC to the relative/kinship caregiver, 4Kids4Families will ensure that the caregiver's FAD stage will remain open in CLASS until it has been confirmed that benefits have been entered into IMPACT.

## Adoption

4Kids4Families will take primary lead on all adoption recruitment and matching activities for referred children and youth in DFPS conservatorship in Region 4, Piney Woods

The following sections outline what Region 4, Piney Woods DFPS staff can expect from 4Kids4Families, as well as the responsibilities that DFPS staff will maintain during the adoption process.

*Note: For judiciary inquiries contact Region 4 Legal Liaisons*

## Legal and Court Activities

**DFPS Conservatorship Caseworker** will continue to be responsible for all legal and court activities related to:

- Termination of Parental Rights (TPR).
- All court hearings
- Adoption (giving or withholding consent to adoption and waiving service to adoption hearings).
- Eligibility for and authorization of post-adoption subsidies and services.

## Recruitment

[CPS Handbook §6921 Completing the Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History \(HSEGH\) Report and Educational, and Genetic History \(HSEGH\) Report](#), [CPS Handbook §6986 TARE Inquiries](#) and [CPS Placement Forms](#)

**4Kids4Families** will conduct general and child/youth-specific recruitment activities for adoption-motivated homes for children/youth from Region 4, Piney Woods. 4Kids4Families is responsible for all general and child/youth-specific adoption recruitment activities.

4Kids4Families will update adoption recruitment efforts on a monthly basis using COBRIS and will send their monthly documented efforts to the DFPS Adoption PD(s). For 4Kids4Families to conduct general and child/youth-specific recruitment, within 30 days of TPR:

**DFPS caseworker will:**

- E-mail the Adoption Specialist at [adoption@4kids4families.org](mailto:adoption@4kids4families.org) and copy all parties involved with the following information:
  - Name of the child/youth whose permanency plan is adoption and no permanent home has been identified.
  - Name, address, and phone of current placement.
  - Completed TARE Child Registration (form 2228).
  - Access to various adoption recruitment tools, such as Heart Gallery, Wednesday's Child, and TARE.
  - Child/youth-specific profiles.
  - Copy of child/youth's most recent psychological evaluation.
  - Notice of any adoption events hosted by DFPS.
    - General or child/youth-specific adoption inquiries as they are received.
    - Send the file for redaction and once received will be passed on to 4Kids4Families.
    - As general or child/youth-specific adoption inquiries are received, DFPS will document the inquiry and e-mail 4Kids4Families the information at [adoption@4kids4families.org](mailto:adoption@4kids4families.org) and provide:
      - Requestor's name, phone number, address, and date of initial contact.

**4Kids4Families will:**

- Register the child/youth on TARE if no family has been identified by no later than 60 days from Termination of Parental Rights (TPR).
- Track all child/youth-specific adoption inquiries.
- Follow up with families from any inquiries received via TARE or other means within three (3) business days. (See CPS Handbook §6986 TARE Inquiries).

**Within five (5) business days**, DFPS will respond to 4Kids4Families regarding the submitted inquiries.

## **Home Studies**

**To request adoption home study initiation:**

**DFPS caseworker will** e-mail 4Kids4Families at [adoption@4kids4families.org](mailto:adoption@4kids4families.org) and copy all parties involved with subject line of "Adoption Referral" and provide the following information:

- Family Name
- Family Address
- Family Phone
- Agency who has licensed family, if applicable
- Case manager for family if applicable
- Phone number and email for case manager if applicable.
- Any supporting documentation, such as Kinship home assessment

**4Kids4Families** will manage their provider network to ensure that home studies on all potential adoptive homes (including kinship) within Region 4, Piney Woods are conducted and assessed for approval within 60 days. There are times that it will take longer than 60 days to complete and this will be communicated as quickly as possible to DFPS.

## Home Selection and Staffing

[CPS Handbook §6939 Presentation Staffing, CPS Handbook §6939.5 Confirming Approval of a Prospective Adoptive Family, and CPS Handbook §6941.1 Sharing the HSEGH Report with the Prospective Adoptive Family, Child-Placing Agency, Single Source Continuum Contractor, or Other Person Placing a Child for Adoption](#)

### **4Kids4Families will:**

- Coordinate, host, and facilitate a selection staffing with DFPS, CASA, ad litem, and guardian ad litem.
- Provide recommended home studies to staffing participants prior to the selection staffing for review.
- Present recommended adoptive homes for a child/youth to all parties.
- Paid Placement Providers and foster parents will be invited as appropriate.

A decision regarding the selection of the family will be made during the staffing.

4Kids4Families will, by the next business day after the staffing, send official notification to all parties by e-mail confirming the decision made during the staffing and approving the plan to proceed with the selected family, if one was identified.

### **DFPS will:**

- Approve or deny the 4Kids4Families selected adoptive parent/family at the selection staffing.
- Approval is to be assumed if denial of selection of adoptive family is not provided to 4Kids4Families within one (1) business day.

- If selection is denied, DFPS will provide within three (3) business days, in writing the rationale for the decision, including specific reasons that would indicate why the family was not an appropriate match and/or how the decision is not in conformity to the agreed upon placement guidelines.

**4Kids4Families will:**

Once an adoptive home is approved, provide all appropriate redacted information to the prospective family (i.e., psychological evaluation, service plans, HSEGH, etc.).

When the prospective family notifies 4Kids4Families they agree to proceed with the adoption process, 4Kids4Families will notify DFPS.

**DFPS will:**

- Provide 4Kids4Families with the redacted file previously prepared or within three (3) days of receipt of redacted file if not available with (7) days of selection staffing. Preferably the redacted file will be completed before the selection staffing.
- Request a supplement redacted file and provide to 4Kids4Families when completed.

When an adoptive home recommendation is denied, 4Kids4Families will continue the recruitment of adoptive homes to find a match for the child/youth.

## **Presentation Staffing**

[CPS Handbook §6941 Presenting Information About the Child](#) and [CPS Handbook §1714.2 Application Process for Adoption Assistance](#)

A Presentation Staffing is an opportunity for the prospective family to ask questions, for the current family to discuss the child's/youth's daily care, and for the attendees to collectively develop an appropriate transition plan.

**4Kids4Families will:**

- Ensure the prospective family has an opportunity to review the child/youth's case file prior to the Presentation Staffing.
- Ensure a Presentation Staffing is held with the prospective family, current family if appropriate, CASA, attorney ad litem, guardian ad litem, DFPS, and service providers as appropriate.
- Coordinate, host, and facilitate the Presentation Staffing.
- Follow up with potential adoptive families regarding their decision to adopt after the Presentation Staffing has been conducted.
- Send an e-mail to DFPS caseworker upon hearing the adoptive family's decision with the subject line of "Adoptive Family Decision".

## **Adoption Assistance**

**CVS Adoption (ADO) caseworker will:**

- At least 90 days prior to adoptive placement date, request any needed documentation from 4Kids4Families to complete child/youth's Level of Care (LOC).
- Request LOC review from Youth for Tomorrow (YFT)
  - If 4Kids4Families utilizes YFT, the DFPS caseworker can request YFT to load the current LOC into IMPACT.
- Must send the completed adoption assistance packet to the eligibility specialist no later than 30 days prior to adoptive placement.

**4Kids4Families will:**

- Provide the requested information within three weeks of request.
  - 30 days documentation: therapy notes, incident reports, daily notes, school reports if any.
  - CANS Assessment.
  - For children with emotional disturbance include psychological or psychiatric evaluations.
  - For children with primary medical needs include an evaluation by a physician (MD), physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner, describing medical conditions or disabilities.
  - (Optional) Information describing any extenuating circumstances, incident reports, etc.
  -

## **Placement of the Child**

### [Adoption Checklist](#)

When placement of the child/youth with the adoptive family is determined, DFPS and 4Kids4Families will coordinate the placement of the child/youth in the home (Region 4, Piney Woods Adoption Checklist for more detail).

If the adoptive home is out-of-state, refer to additional steps required to fulfill ICPC requirements. See additional information JOM section: [ICPC requirements](#).

## **Services After Placement**

In order to ensure placement stability, 4Kids4Families is responsible for obtaining and delivering services to children/youth placed with adoptive families prior to consummation of the adoption.

**4Kids4Families or their providers will:**

- Provide services to prepare and support adoptive placements. Provide documentation of these services to the DFPS caseworker upon request.

**DFPS caseworker will:**

- Continue to provide monthly supervision of children/youth who are placed with adoptive families until consummation is achieved and DFPS is dismissed as the child/youth's conservator
- Seek supervisor guidance if more frequent supervision of children/youth in adoptive placements is needed.

## **Authorization of Adoption Services**

[OCBCT Authorizing Purchased Client Services in CBC Resource Guide and Completed and signed Adoption Placement Agreement \(Form 2226\)](#)

### **DFPS caseworker will:**

- Complete the Service Authorization (Form 2054) for the identified adoption service to 4Kids4Families in IMPACT.
- For straight adopt both service codes F and G will be utilized.
- For Foster to Adopt service code G will be utilized.
- In the comments section of the Form 2054, add the following:
  - The Child Placing Agency CPA name.
  - Whether Form 2054 is for a sibling set; and if yes, how many siblings.
  - The type of adoption (i.e., Foster-to-adopt/kinship/matched).
  - The YFT LOC Determination for the child/youth.

Send e-mail notification to 4Kids4Families at [adoption@4kids4families.org](mailto:adoption@4kids4families.org) and attach the following:

Completed and approved Service Authorization (Form 2054).

Completed and signed Adoption Placement Agreement (Form 2226).

## **Legal Risk Placement Referrals**

4Kids4Families will conduct child/youth-specific legal risk homes searches for children/youth from Region 4, Piney Woods. Legal risk means that the plan for the child/youth is adoption, but the parental rights of the legal parents have not been terminated or a legal challenge to the termination is pending. Placement in this home does not guarantee the child/youth will be adopted by the family.

## **Notification & Referral**

For 4Kids4Families to conduct child/youth-specific legal risk searches,

### **DFPS caseworker will:**

- E-mail Intake Specialist at [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org) and copy all parties involved with:
  - Name of the child/youth.
  - Caseworker name, e-mail, and phone.
  - Legal parties and their contact information.
  - Copy of most recent CANS Assessment and/or Psychological Evaluation.

- Updated Common Application.
- Recruitment quality picture of a child/youth.
- Child/youth-specific profile that discusses the child's needs and wants in an adoptive home.

If 4Kids4Families needs additional information and documentation that is not included in the list above, 4Kids4Families and DFPS will communicate and coordinate on the need.

## **4Kids4Families Placement Options and DFPS Approval**

Discharges of less than 30 days will need to follow [Placement Change Process](#) for non-emergencies. 4Kids4Families can broadcast the children/youth for placement and legal risk. If a placement expresses interest in adoption during the placement request search, 4Kids4Families will complete a home study upon request and send to DFPS. If no options are located through Legal Risk broadcast, but 4Kids4Families locate placement. The [Placement Change Process](#) will be followed.

# Transitional Living Services

DFPS and 4Kids4Families will work together to prepare youth in DFPS conservatorship who are transitioning to adulthood. 4Kids4Families will share responsibility with DFPS in the provision of transitional living services for youth. During 4Kids4Families provision of transitional living services with youth, DFPS will:

- Determine a youth's eligibility for all transitional living services and financial benefits.
- Track all transitional living services for youth.
- Utilize transitional living services information from 4Kids4Families for the completion of court reports.

The following sections outline the specific responsibilities of DFPS and 4Kids4Families for transitional living services for youth in DFPS conservatorship.

## Transition Plan Development

Beginning when the youth turns 14 years of age, plans for transitioning to successful adulthood are completed in the Child's Plan of Service and enhanced over time until the youth leaves substitute care. The plans for transitioning must address the issues that are important for the child/youth as he or she transitions into adulthood.

DFPS and 4Kids4Families will work together to initiate the discussion of the plans for transitioning to successful adulthood.

## During Service Plan Meetings

[CPS Handbook §6252.1 Reviewing and Documenting a Youth's Plans for Transitioning to Successful Adulthood](#)

At the first service plan meeting following the youth's 14th birthday the Transitioning to Successful Adulthood section will be addressed. The youth will have the opportunity to invite anyone in their support system, who are not the youth's foster parent(s) or caseworker, to all Circles of Support (COS) and service planning meetings.

**DFPS, 4Kids4Families, and the Paid Placement Provider will:**

- Ensure Transitioning to Successful Adulthood section of the Child Plan of Service is discussed and developed with the youth during their service plan meeting.
- Inform the youth that a Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) staff member will further discuss COS with them when he or she turns age 14.

**DFPS supervisor will:**

- Approve and sign the youth's Child Plan of Service each time the Plan of Service is developed, reviewed, and updated at subsequent service planning meetings or COS.
- The DFPS caseworker and Paid Placement Provider will continue to discuss and document the Transitioning to Successful Adulthood section of the Child Plan of Service and progress with the youth over time during face to face visits, subsequent service planning meetings, and COS.

## Circle of Support (COS)

[CPS Handbook §6252 Permanency Planning Meetings for Youth 14 and Older](#), [CPS Handbook §1121: Documentation Requirements for Models of Family Group Decision Making \(FGDM\)](#) and [CPS Handbook §1121.23 Circle of Support \(COS\)](#).

Circles of Support (COS) will be generally coordinated and facilitated according to current CPS policy. Some exceptions apply and are noted in the chart below. If the youth declines a COS, a subsequent service planning meeting will be scheduled instead.

### **DFPS caseworker will:**

- When the youth turns 14 years of age, submit a referral for COS to the appropriate Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) to the appropriate staff and 4Kids4Families at [Care@4kids4families.org](mailto:Care@4kids4families.org).
- Work with FGDM staff to prepare and schedule the COS with the youth.
- Participate in the COS or subsequent service planning meetings.

### **FGDM staff will:**

Coordinate the COS per CPS Handbook §6252 Permanency Planning Meetings for Youth 14 and Older.

- If the youth declines a COS, the FGDM staff member will notify the DFPS and 4Kids4Families at [Care@4kids4families.org](mailto:Care@4kids4families.org) with a subject line of COS Declined, Last Name, First Name.
- Ensure documentation of COS in IMPACT per CPS Handbook §1121: Documentation Requirements for Models of Family Group Decision Making (FGDM).

### **4Kids4Families will:**

- Ensure the youth can attend the COS, even if 4Kids4Families is not invited to the COS.
- If the youth declines a COS, notify the Paid Placement Provider to schedule a subsequent service planning meeting instead.
- Work jointly with FGDM staff and DFPS caseworker to engage youth, family, and other caring adults in the COS or subsequent service planning meetings.

- Work with the youth, the caregivers, and other significant individuals to identify caring adults and other lifelong connections that can be sustained once the youth transitions to adulthood.
- Participate in the COS (if invited by the youth) or subsequent service planning meeting.

**DFPS Supervisor will:**

- Approve and sign the youth's Plan of Service each time the Plan of Service is reviewed and updated at subsequent service planning meetings or COS.

DFPS caseworker, 4Kids4Families, and Paid Placement Provider will continue to discuss and document the Transitioning to Successful Adulthood section of the Child Plan of Service and progress with the youth over time during face-to-face visits, subsequent service planning meetings, and COS.

# Extended Foster Care/ Return to

[CPS Handbook §10400 Extending Foster Care for Young Adult Who Are Age 18 or Older](#) and [CPS Handbook §10530 Roles and Responsibilities of Staff Helping a Young Adult Return for Extended Foster Care](#)

DFPS and 4Kids4Families will work together to identify young adults from Region 4, Piney Woods for either Extended Foster Care or Return to Extended Foster Care programs. Participation in the Extended Foster Care or Return to Extended Foster Care programs will be discussed and planned with the young adult during regularly scheduled service planning meetings, Circles of Support (COS), or upon the young adult's request.

*Note: Young Adults who desire to return to Extended Foster Care during their 6 or 12 months (determined by court order) Trial Independence period (Trial Independence begins once they leave paid foster care or turn 18 years of age and are not in a paid foster care placement) are considered to be in Extended Foster Care. Young Adults who desire to return to Extended Foster Care after their Trial Independence period are considered Young Adults in Return to Extended Foster Care.*

The following sections outline the responsibilities of DFPS and 4Kids4Families staff if a young adult requests participation in either the Extended Care or Return to Extended Foster Care program.

## Extended Foster Care

### Eligibility and Placement Assessment

[CPS Handbook §10410 Preparation Required When a Youth Plans to Stay in Extended Foster Care](#), [CPS Handbook §10473 Discharge to Trial Independence](#), [CPS Handbook §10420 Qualifying for Extended Foster Care](#), [Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement \(Form 2540\)](#) and [Extended Foster Care](#)

When a young adult from Region 4 is interested in staying in extended foster care, **4Kids4Families and DFPS will:**

- Assist the young adult with completing the Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement (Form 2540) within 30 days of the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or 30 days after the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Provide the completed Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement Form 2540 to the DFPS caseworker, PAL Coordinator, and 4Kids4Families Care Coordinator.

**DFPS caseworker will:**

- Follow CPS Handbook §10410 Preparation Required When a Youth Plans to Stay in Extended Foster Care.
- Once the young adult is determined eligible for Extended Foster Care, notify 4Kids4Families Care Coordinator via email: [care@4kids4families.org](mailto:care@4kids4families.org).
- Follow CPS policy related to Extended Foster Care.
- DFPS will review CPS Handbook §10473 Discharge to Trial Independence and ensure the sub-care stage remains open.

4Kids4Families Care Coordinator **will:**

- Identify if the young adult will continue their current placement; or

Needs a new Extended Foster Care placement.

## **Continuing in Current Placement**

**If the young adult will continue their placement:**

4Kids4Families Care Coordinator **will:**

- Notify the Paid Placement Provider.

**Paid Placement Provider will:**

- Provide assistance to the young adult to maintain eligibility for the Extended Foster Care Program.
- Provide 4Kids4Families Care Coordinator any update of young adult's continued compliance with the Extended Foster Care Program.

Report the young adult's progress during subsequent service planning meetings or COS.

## **Requires New Placement**

**If the young adult requires a new foster care placement:**

4Kids4Families Intake Specialist **will:**

- Follow the Placement Change Process. See additional information JOM section: [Placement Change Process](#).

Request necessary information from the DFPS caseworker to secure placement.

## **Return to Extended Foster Care**

### **Eligibility and Referral**

[CPS Handbook §10531 Roles and Responsibilities of PAL Staff and CPS Handbook §10532 Re-Entry Liaison](#), [CPS Handbook §10533 Conservatorship \(CVS\) Caseworker](#), [CPS Handbook §10520 Return to Extended Foster Care and Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement \(Form 2540\)](#)

A young adult who was in DFPS conservatorship when turning 18 and leaves foster care may Return to Extended Foster Care at any time prior to the month before the young adult's 21st birthday, provided the young adult meets the requirements in CPS Handbook §10420 Qualifying for Extended Foster Care.

Return to Extended Foster Care does not include young adults who are in Trial Independence (See CPS Handbook §10510 Trial Independence).

**DFPS caseworker will**, upon learning of a young adult's desire to Return to Extended Foster Care notify DFPS PAL Coordinator/Re-Entry Liaison. **4Kids4Families will support as needed for the youths' best interest.**

**DFPS PAL Coordinator/Re-Entry Liaison will:**

- Follow CPS Handbook §10531 Roles and Responsibilities of PAL Staff and CPS Handbook §10532 Re-Entry Liaison.
- Open C-RC Stage.
- Determine the DFPS unit to assign the returning young adult.
- Notify the DFPS caseworker and DFPS supervisor of the young adult's eligibility to Return to Extended Foster Care and DFPS unit assigned.

**DFPS caseworker will:**

- Follow CPS Handbook §10533 Conservatorship (CVS) Caseworker.
- Submit non-emergency placement referral to 4Kids4Families based on the young adult's unique needs.
- Assess the young adult's current living arrangement and living arrangement options, such as non-paid placement while a placement search is conducted.

**4Kids4Families will:**

- Keep the DFPS caseworker and PAL Coordinator informed as the placement search (paid and non-paid) is conducted.
- Notify the DFPS caseworker and PAL coordinator if placement is found.

## **If Placement is Found**

**4Kids4Families will:**

- Assist the young adult with completing the Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement (Form 2540).
- Provide completed Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement (Form 2540) to DFPS caseworker.
- Ensure the young adult is assisted in maintaining necessary documentation for the Return to Care program.

**DFPS caseworker will:**

- Assist the young adult with following placement requirements.
- Follow CPS Handbook §10520 Return to Extended Foster Care.

Add the referral to the SSCC in IMPACT.

## **If Placement is Not Found**

**4Kids4Families will:**

- Notify the DFPS caseworker and DFPS supervisor.
- Email exhaustive placement list (paid and non-paid placements) to DFPS caseworker and CVS supervisor, PAL specialist, and service program administrator (SPA).

**DFPS will:**

- Discuss with the young adult the reasons why he or she is unable to Return to Extended Foster Care.
- Rescind the SSCC placement referral in IMPACT.

Document the reasons why the young adult is unable to Return to Extended Foster Care in the contact section in IMPACT.

## **Discharge from Extended or Return to Extended Foster Care**

As a voluntary program, discharge from Extended or Return to Extended Foster Care can occur:

- When the young adult completes Extended or Return to Extended Foster Care goals.
- When the young adult loses Extended or Return to Extended Foster Care eligibility.
- At the request of DFPS, the foster caregiver, or the young adult.

All discharges are expected to be planned.

### **Planned Discharge**

A planned discharge occurs when:

- The young adult is due to complete goals for participation in Extended or Return to Extended Foster Care; or
- Eligibility for Extended or Return to Extended Foster Care is scheduled to end.

**Within 90 days before planned discharge, 4Kids4Families and DFPS caseworker will:**

- Schedule a service planning meeting or COS with the young adult and other important adults.
- Work together to coordinate the type of meeting with the Paid Placement Provider or DFPS staff.

**FGDM Staff will** document the meeting if it is a COS.

**DFPS caseworker will** document the meeting in IMPACT under Permanency Planning Meetings if it was a staffing.

Upon discharge, DFPS caseworker must:

- Ensure the young adult has received all personal records and documents including:
  - Birth certificate
  - Social Security card
  - Texas Identification card or driver's license
  - Savings account information
  - Medicaid card
  - Education records and transition portfolio
  - Health Passport

## **Supervised Independent Living (SIL)**

**[Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement \(Form 2540\)](#), [Referral to SIL Provider Form 2529](#) and [CPS Extended Foster Care Resource Guide](#)**

Supervised Independent Living (SIL) placement settings are living arrangements offered through the Extended Foster Care program that allow young adults to reside in a less restrictive, non-traditional foster care setting while continuing to receive casework and support services to become independent and self-sufficient.

To be eligible for SIL, young adults must be able to live independently in a setting with minimal to no supervision. Through conversations with the young adult and the initial assessment, the young adult will be placed in the setting which best meets his or her needs. In order to maintain placement in the SIL program, young adults must comply with the Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement (Form 2540). Young adults can move through the settings offered based on behaviors, enhancement of skills, or overall progress made in the young adult's current setting. The SIL case managers will maintain documentation of the young adult's progress in case notes, as well as in the subsequent service planning meetings, which will be filed in the young adult's case record. If the young adult is eligible, 4Kids4Families will work to seek appropriate SIL program placements.

### **Process to follow:**

DFPS caseworker will send placement request to 4Kids4Families [intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:intake@4kids4families.org) mailbox with the email subject line "SIL Placement Request" to include the following documents:

- The Referral to SIL Provider Form 2529.
- The [Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement Form 2540](#).

- [Alternative Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care \(form 2087ex\)](#) to 4Kids4Families Independent Living (IL) Specialist.

After ensuring documents are completed, 4Kids4Families Intake Specialist will forward the documents to the SIL Provider.

4Kids4Families Independent Living (IL) Specialist will sign and return Form 2529 to 4Kids4Families Placement Coordinator (all parties if information is known).

4Kids4Families Placement Coordinator will ensure Form 2529 is sent back to pertinent parties for DFPS (worker, PAL staff, Aftercare Worker) as well as any potential SIL programs.

DFPS caseworker will:

Send placement request to 4Kids4Families mailbox: [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org) with the email subject line "SIL Placement Request" and include the following:

- a. The Referral to SIL Provider Form 2529 (signed and approved by State Office)
- b. The Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement Form 2540.
- c. Application for Placement

4Kids4Families will:

Review submitted documents

Will send SIL Provider Form 2529 for signatures

After ensuring completed documents, 4Kids4Families Intake Coordinator will forward:

The 4Kids4Families SIL coordinator will sign and return Form 2529 to 4Kids4Families Placement Coordinator (all parties if information is known).

4Kids4Families Placement Coordinator will ensure Form 2529 is sent back to pertinent parties for DFPS (caseworker, PAL coordinator, Aftercare caseworker) as well as any potential SIL programs.

See additional information JOM section: [Appendix I: Supervised Independent Living Flow Chart](#).

# National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

## [CPS Handbook §10262 National Youth in Transition Database \(NYTD\)](#)

DFPS will take the lead on identifying youth (ages 17, 19, and 21) who will participate in surveys for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). DFPS will inform 4Kids4Families of the youth who will participate in NYTD surveys by e-mail with subject line of “NYTD Survey Participant” if assistance is needed to complete the survey.

4Kids4Families will assist DFPS in obtaining NYTD surveys from the identified youth. Youth must be allowed to take the NYTD survey on their own without assistance from others. 4Kids4Families current contact information for youth placed within their provider network and inform DFPS when updated information becomes available.

Youth will need to have an active e-mail account. The SSCC will need to ensure that the Provider is meeting this requirement.

# Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) Situations

[CPS Handbook §4500 Interstate Placements](#) and [CPS Handbook §9000 Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children \(ICPC\)](#) and [ICPC Resource Guide](#)

For additional information regarding processes for referrals for services related to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) please see the [ICPC Resource Guide](#) on listed with [CBC Resources](#) on the DFPS Safety Net.

## Ending a Referral (Paid Foster Care)

DFPS and 4Kids4Families will work together to determine when a child/youth is ready for discharge from paid foster care placement. Ending the SSCC referral does not include Discharge Planning for a child/youth from DFPS conservatorship.

The child/youth's Discharge Planning will be discussed when appropriate at Family Group Conference (FGC), Circle of Support (COS), service planning meeting, or internal staffing.

Both 4Kids4Families and DFPS understand that should the court order discharge from paid foster care unexpectedly, there may not be time to hold a family meeting.

The chart below reflects the specific tasks DFPS and 4Kids4Families must take to facilitate the discharge of a child/youth from placement and ending the SSCC referral and services with 4Kids4Families.

### End Referral Due to Monitored Return

[CPS Handbook §6500 Family Reunification](#), [CPS Handbook §1121 Family Group Decision Making](#), [CPS Handbook §6250 Permanency Planning Meetings](#), [CPS Handbook §6252 Permanency Planning Meetings for Youth 14 and Older](#) and [CPS Handbook §6180 Discharging Children from Substitute Care](#)

#### DFPS caseworker will:

- In conjunction with CVS supervisor, determine the type of family meeting that will be most beneficial to the family for discussion and planning to end the referral and paid foster care services from 4Kids4Families.
- Initiate the staffing with 4Kids4Families or coordination of family meeting through referral to FGDM.

DFPS and 4Kids4Families or their designee will participate in staffing or family meeting to discuss and develop recommended reunification plan to be presented to court.

**DFPS caseworker will:**

- When applicable, once legal parties have been notified of reunification plan, inform 4Kids4Families Care Coordinator and Paid Placement Provider of approval and need to follow through with the agreed upon monitored return plan.
- Complete Planned End Referral Notification in IMPACT on the SSCC Referral Page.
- If an unplanned discharge occurs (i.e., through a court order), immediately notify 4Kids4Families and the Child Placing Agency.
- Complete Final End Referral in IMPACT once child/youth has left paid placement.

**Discharge and End Referral due to Planned Relative Placement**

**DFPS caseworker will:**

- Notify 4Kids4Families Care Coordinator by e-mail at [Intake@4kids4families.org](mailto:Intake@4kids4families.org) when a child/youth needs to be discharged from placement and services ended with 4Kids4Families because there is a need to place with a relative.
- Collaborate with DFPS Supervisor and 4Kids4Families to determine recommendations and a date and time, for the relative placement and discharge from 4Kids4Families
- When applicable, once legal parties have been notified of planned relative placement, DFPS caseworker will notify 4Kids4Families Intake Specialist and Paid Placement Provider of approval and need to follow through with the agreed upon plan.
- Complete Planned End Referral Notification in IMPACT on the SSCC Referral Page.
- If an unplanned discharge occurs (i.e., through a court order), immediately notify 4Kids4Families and the Child Placing Agency.

Complete Final End Referral in IMPACT once child/youth has left paid placement.

# Solution-Based Communication

There may be times when DFPS and 4Kids4Families (and network paid placement providers) may not agree on a case decision or what should happen with a child/youth and/or family.

**Solution-focused communication** is goal-oriented communication which focuses on the solution rather than the problem. Emphasizes on strengths and resources and how these can be utilized to achieve a positive outcome.

There will be instances when there may be an issue that cannot be agreed upon by DFPS and 4Kids4Families. During this time, all parties involved will need to work together and communicate by e-mail, phone calls, in person, or virtually to ensure that the best interest of child/ren and youth take precedence.

*Note: The safety and best interest of the child/youth should always be paramount in making the case decision and finding a solution to a barrier or disagreement.*

The following section outlines the protocol to resolve case disagreements between DFPS and 4Kids4Families.

## Solution-Based Communication Process:

### Step 1

- DFPS caseworkers and supervisors, 4Kids4Families, and/or provider (who are closest to the issue) will work together to resolve case specific issues informally. This will be done through an objective, solution-driven discussion or meeting (e.g., phone call or virtual meeting).
- If a mutually agreeable solution is not achieved in **three (3) business days**, those involved will notify the other individuals the plan to involve their chain of command. The disputed issue will be elevated to the PD and/or PA level in DFPS and the Director level at 4Kids4Families for possible resolution. The disputed issues should be elevated in writing.
- A meeting will be scheduled by either 4Kids4Families or DFPS to discuss the issue and come to an agreed upon solution. DFPS and 4Kids4Families an uninformed party to the specific case to listen to the issue and assist with coming to an agreement. If an agreeable solution is not achieved during the meeting, it will be elevated to step 2.
- Disputes proceeding to Step 2 will be elevated to a knowledgeable, independent staff member (CBCA) who understands the philosophy and goals of community-based care and is not a direct supervisor of the individual involved in the appeal.
- 4Kids4Families must ensure continuity of services, as defined by DFPS, to the child/youth or family affected while seeking to resolve case-specific disputes.

## **Step 2**

### **Escalation**

- The escalating party will send an e-mail with supporting documentation to the CBCA and Sr. VP of Community-Based Care with a subject line of “Solution-Based Communication”.

### **Resolution**

- Within five (5) business days, the CBCA will provide a written decision to the appeal. The written decision will be e-mailed to the Sr. Vice President of CBC with the subject line of - “Solution-Based Communication Appeal Decision.”
- If the Sr. Vice President of CBC chooses, he/she will have three (3) business days from receipt of the notification from the CBCA to appeal the decision to the DFPS Regional Director. The DFPS Regional Director will have five (5) business days to decide on the Sr. Vice President of CBC appeal.
- If the Sr. Vice President of CBC chooses not to appeal, they will notify the CBCA. The CBCA will distribute the decision to the appropriate staff and management.
- If the Sr. Vice President of CBC appeals the decision of the CBCA to the DFPS RD, the DFPS RD will distribute their decision to the appropriate staff and management.

# Serious Incidents and Situations Requiring Immediate Notification between 4Kids4Families and DFPS

Notification is important in the Community-Based Care model that shares responsibility between DFPS and 4Kids4Families. Notification is to ensure all parties involved (i.e., DFPS, 4Kids4Families, CASA, GAL, AAL, etc.) are aware of serious incidents, situations to collaborate, and provide aid in ensuring safety for the child/youth. Other entitled parties will be informed timely as well.

**Immediately, but no later than 24 hours**, following a serious incident notification must occur between 4Kids4Families and DFPS.

**DFPS caseworker will** notify 4Kids4Families Care Management via email: [care management email] if during normal business hours, or if after normal business hours will notify via after hours email inbox: [after hours email address].

**4Kids4Families will** notify DFPS caseworker and DFPS supervisor, or on call worker (if during on call hours).

## Situations that Require Immediate Notification Between SSCC and DFPS Include:

[CPS Handbook §6151.3 Notification Requirements and Schedule, Texas Family Code §748](#) and [Texas Family Code §749](#) .

Any non-routine occurrence that has an impact on the care, supervision, or treatment of a child/youth.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Child fatality.
- Child is in life-threatening situation.
- Serious incidents such as:
  - Suicide attempts.
  - Injuries requiring medical treatment including psychiatric hospitalization.
  - Runaway incidents.
  - Commission of a crime.

- Allegations of abuse or neglect or abusive treatment.
- A Child's abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation.
- Child on child physical and/or sexual abuse.
- Failure to locate a placement for at least one night.
- Situations where placement is found but not able to be secured safely for the night, such as:
  - Child refuses placement at last minute.
  - Inclement weather prevents safely completing secured placement.

Note: Please refer to Guidance for Special Placement Issues involving other SSCC or Legacy areas.

- Significant change in medical condition.
- Psychiatric hospitalization.
- Child who was missing from care and placed on the Amber Alert system returns to care.
- Natural disasters where children are displaced.
- Media involvement that is not positive in nature that involves a child placed with SSCC.
  - For situations that involve the media, the DFPS RD will contact and inform 4Kids4Families and the regional media specialist who will:
    - contact and inform the media relations manager of the situation.
    - contact and coordinate media message with SSCC prior to releasing any information or comments to the media about the situation.

# Ensuring Safety

## Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) Abuse or Neglect Investigations

[CPS Handbook §2121.1 DFPS Employee or Single Source Continuum Contractor \(SSCC\) Abuse or Neglect Investigations](#), [CPS Handbook §2120 CPS Authority for Investigating Reports of Abuse or Neglect](#) and [CPS Handbook §1260 Administrative Review of Investigation Findings \(ARIF\)](#)

A CPI investigation is considered an employee abuse or neglect investigation when:

- A DFPS employee or SSCC employee is alleged to have abused or neglected a child in his or her own family.
- A DFPS employee, contracted staff, volunteer, or intern or an SSCC employee is alleged to have abused or neglected a child in DFPS conservatorship, and the child is in an unlicensed setting.

Special investigators are assigned to conduct employee investigations meeting the above criteria. If a special investigator is the alleged perpetrator in an employee investigation, CPI conducts the investigation.

- SSCC will follow steps outlined in policy CPS Handbook §2121.1 DFPS Employee or Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) Abuse or Neglect Investigations,

# Reporting Threats or Incidents

Safety is the most important factor in any client interaction. No law, policy, or local procedure requires employees to put themselves in or remain in a dangerous situation. However, because employees must often interview people who are angry, fearful, and occasionally hostile or aggressive, it is wise to take precautions and ensure that information about caseworker safety incidents such as assaults, threats, harassment, etc. are reported and information is shared with both 4Kids4Families and DFPS. For qualifying safety incidents, DFPS worker safety support (WSS) staff will track safety incidents and ensure that information is shared with both 4Kids4Families.

Threats or incidents reportable to DFPS WSS include but are not limited to:

- Client makes a threat to come to a shared location and cause harm.
- Client makes a threat to SSCC caseworker that is tied to a case decision and DFPS staff could be perceived as in danger due to the nature of statement/action.
  - *Example:* Client's visitation is suspended and makes a threat to physically harm anyone that gets in the way of them and their children.
- Client makes a threat toward DFPS staff or a DFPS building to an SSCC caseworker.
- There is an outburst by a client in a shared location that causes damage to the building.
- Law enforcement is called to a shared office to respond to a safety concern for staff.
- Vandalism of a car on state property or DFPS leased facility.
- Internal worker safety issue between a DFPS staff and SSCC staff.

To report a worker safety incident, 4Kids4Families staff will send notification to WSS at [workersafety@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:workersafety@dfps.texas.gov) and CC [WorkerSafety@4kids4families.org](mailto:WorkerSafety@4kids4families.org).

The DFPS WSS team will document and track reportable incidents as well as send notification to points of contact with DFPS and 4Kids4Families at [WorkerSafety@4kids4families.org](mailto:WorkerSafety@4kids4families.org).

Additionally, 4Kids4Families staff should document worker safety information in the IMPACT case record. This information can be documented on the Case Summary page, under the Special Handling drop down section by checking the box next to "Worker Safety Issues" and adding details regarding the safety concern in the comment box. The information should also be documented as a regular contact in the case, so it appears on the contact summary page.

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▼ Special Handling

Special Handling

↑ Special Handling Comments

☒ Worker Safety Issues

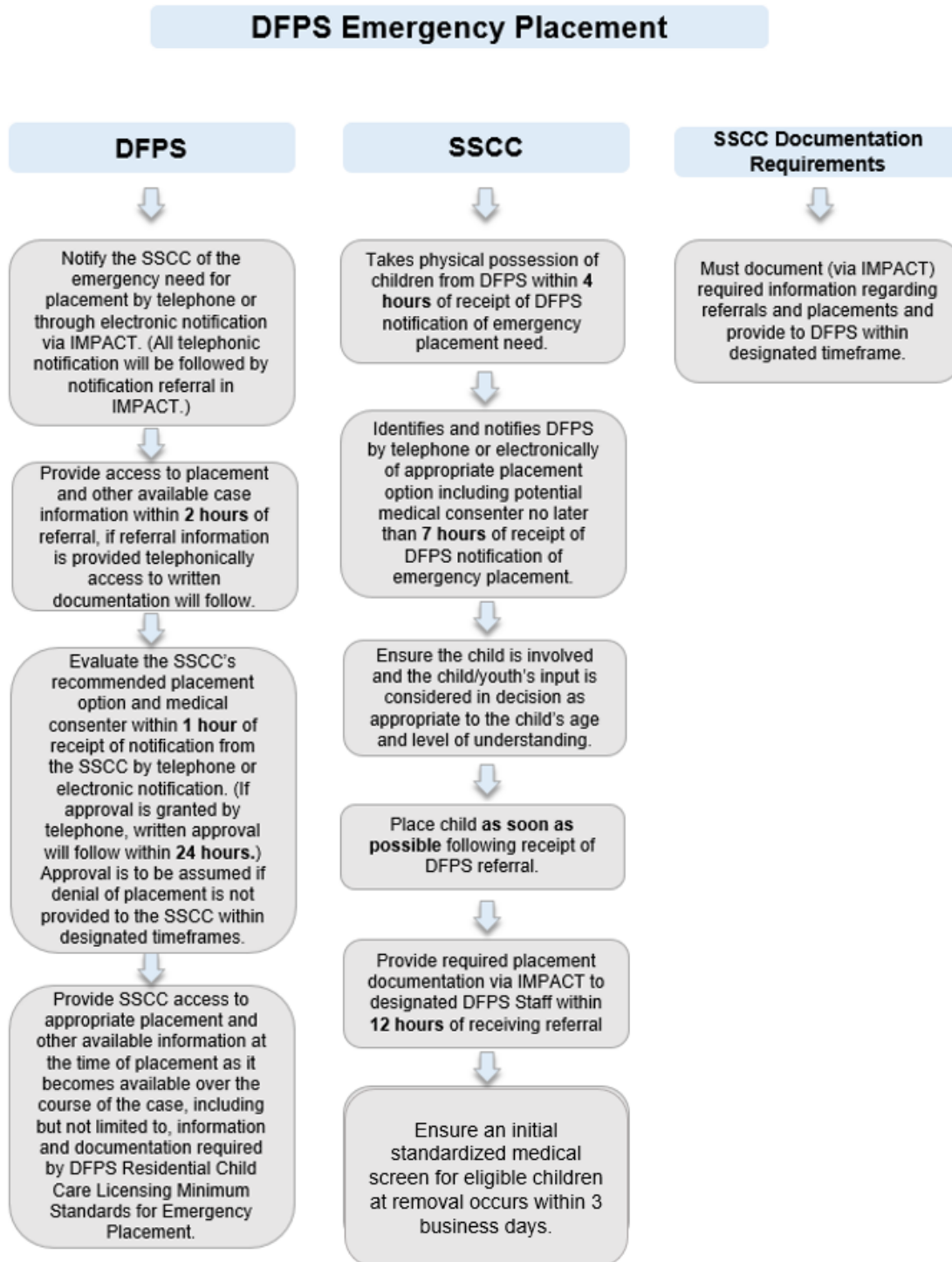
↑ Comments:

ENTER SAFETY ISSUE HERE!

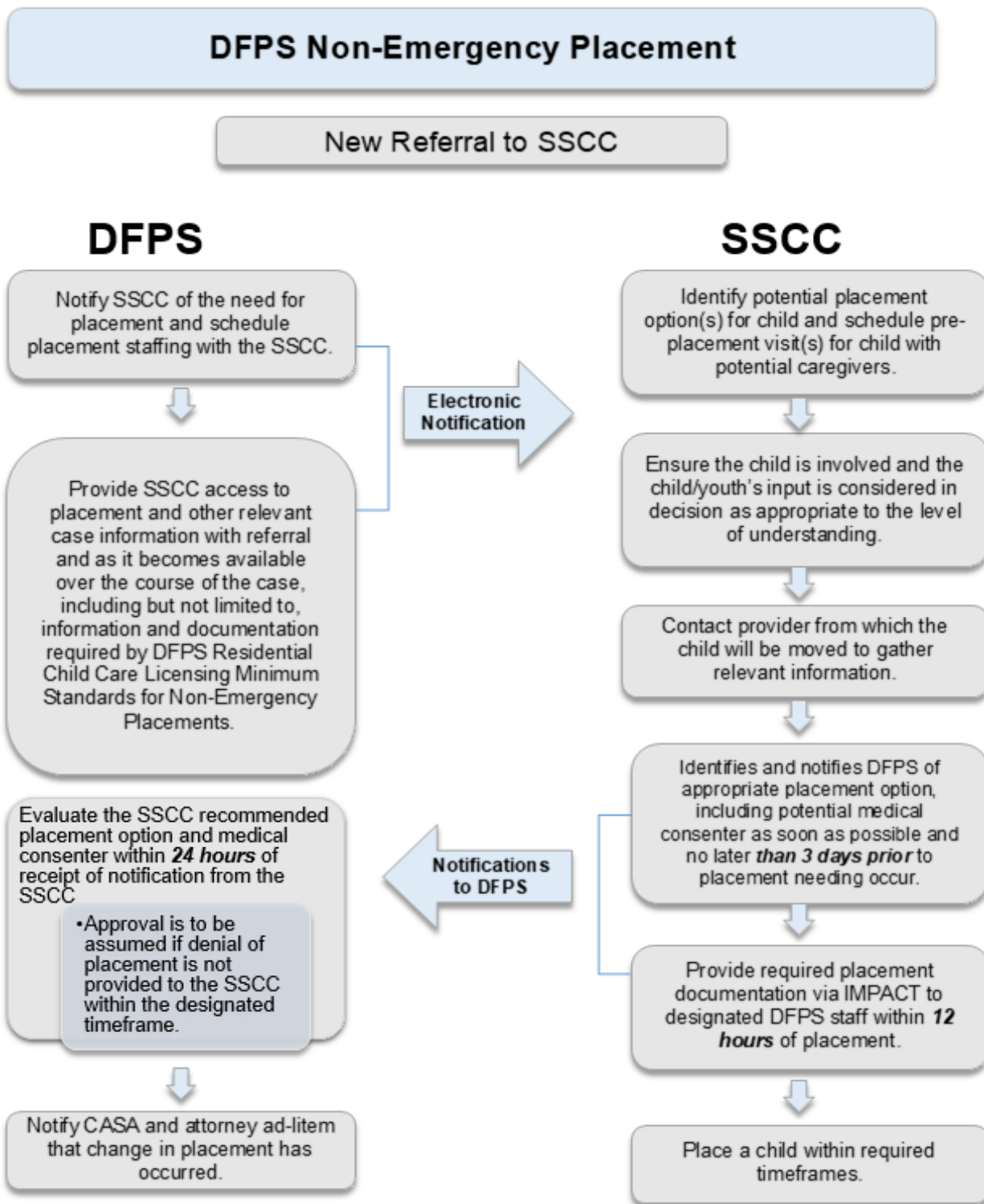
4Kids4Families staff should also follow any internal procedures for incident reporting that may be outlined in the 4Kids4Families operations manual.

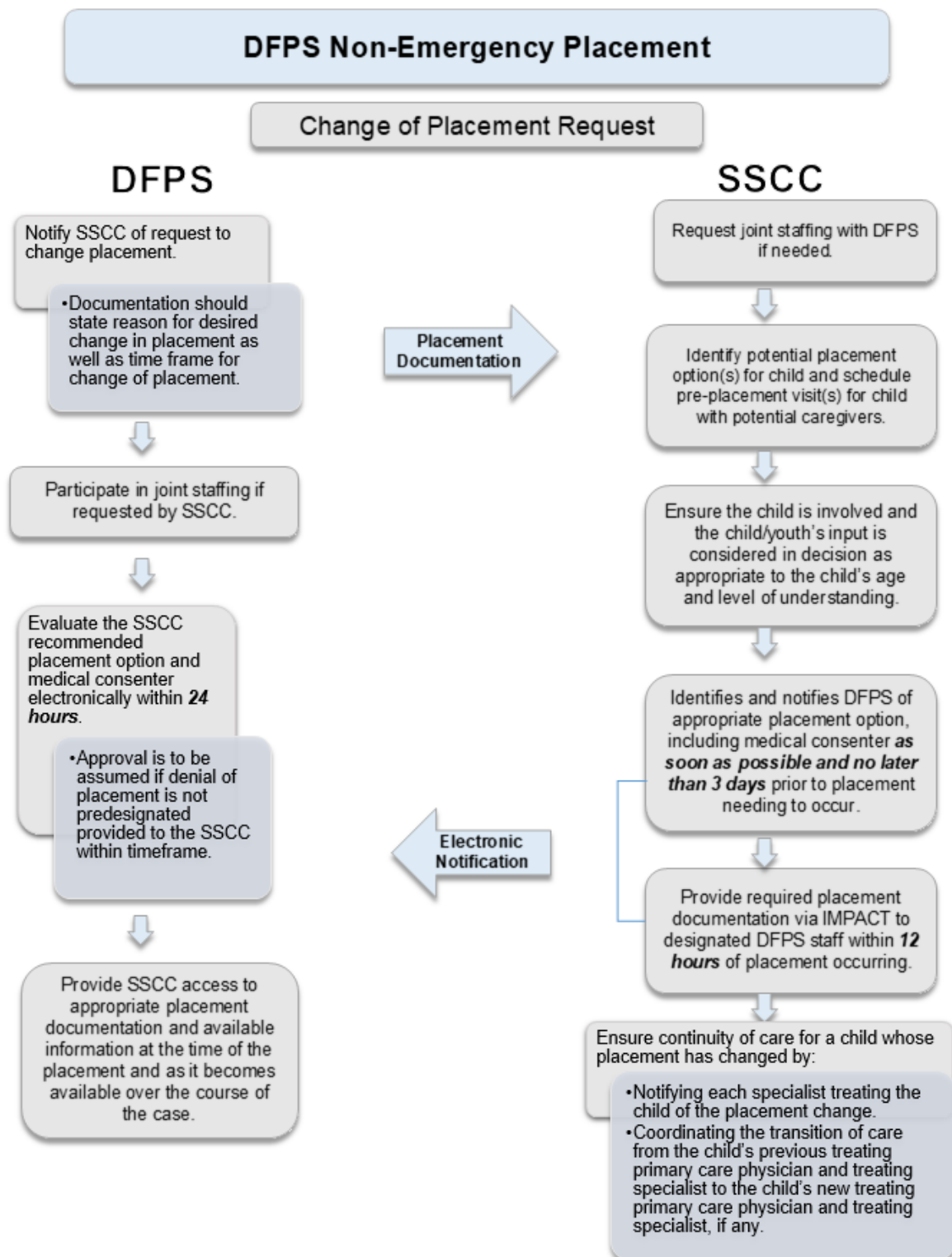
# Appendix

## Emergency Placement Process Flow Charts



## Non-Emergency Placement Process Flow Charts





### SSCC Non-Emergency Placement

# DFPS

Evaluate the SSCC recommended subsequent placement option and medical consentor within **24 hours**.

- Approval is to be assumed if denial of placement is not provided to the SSCC within the designated timeframe.



Provide the SSCC access to appropriate placement documentation of approval or denial and as it becomes available over the course of the case, including, but not limited to, information and documentation required by DFPS Residential Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards for Non-Emergency Placements.

## SSCC

Within **30 days** of placement:  
Notify DFPS of need to evaluate  
current placement for  
appropriateness. Documentation  
must clearly state reason for  
desired change in placement.



Identify and notify DFPS of appropriate placement option, including potential medical consenter ***as soon as possible and no later than 3 days prior*** to placement change needing to occur.



Complete a pre-placement visit(s)  
for child with potential caregivers



Coordinate communication between and among current and future caregivers.




Ensure the child is involved and the child/youth's input is considered in decision as appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding.



Provide required placement documentation to designated DFPS staff within **12 hours** of placement occurring.



Ensure continuity of care for a child whose placement has changed by:



**Electronic Notification**

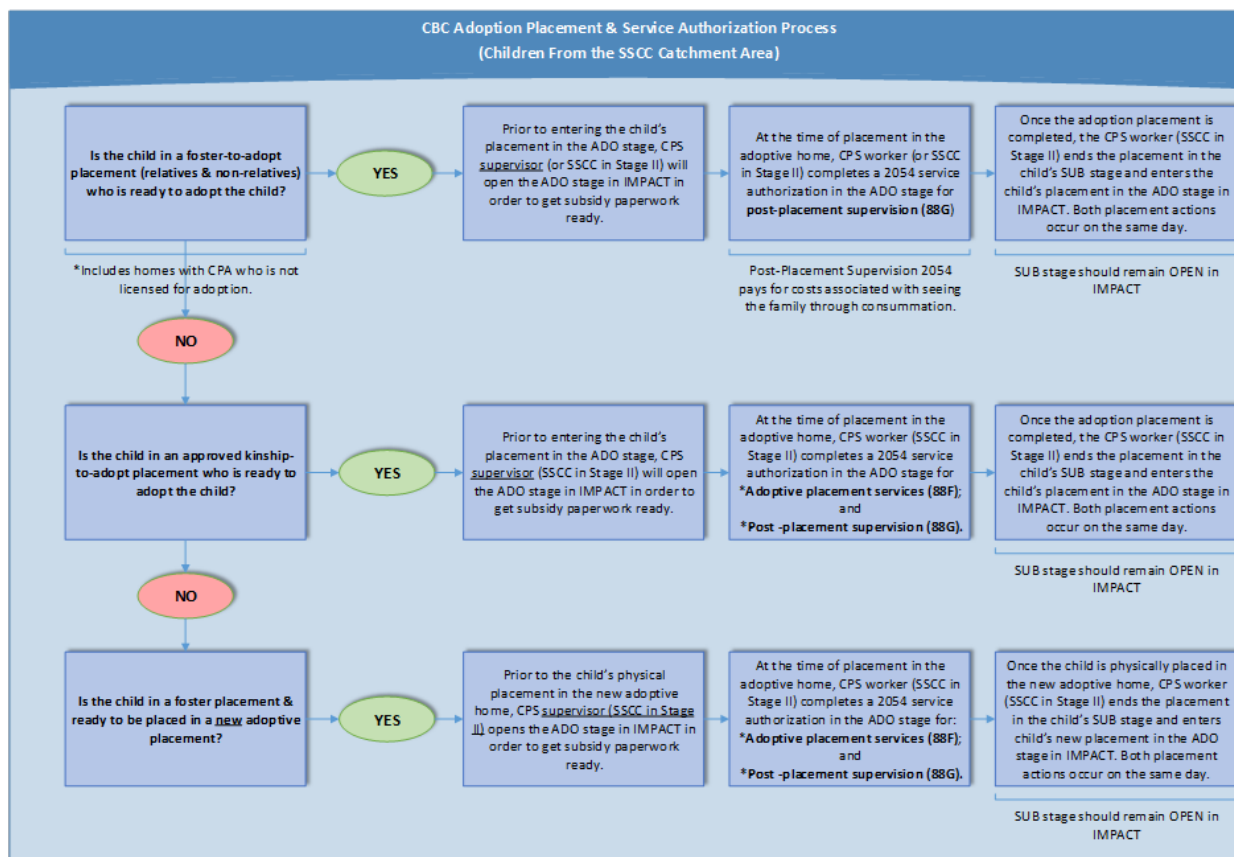


**Placement  
Documentation**

- Notifying each specialist treating the child of the placement change.
- Coordinating the transition of care from the child's previous treating primary care physician and treating specialist to the child's new treating primary care physician and treating specialist, if any.

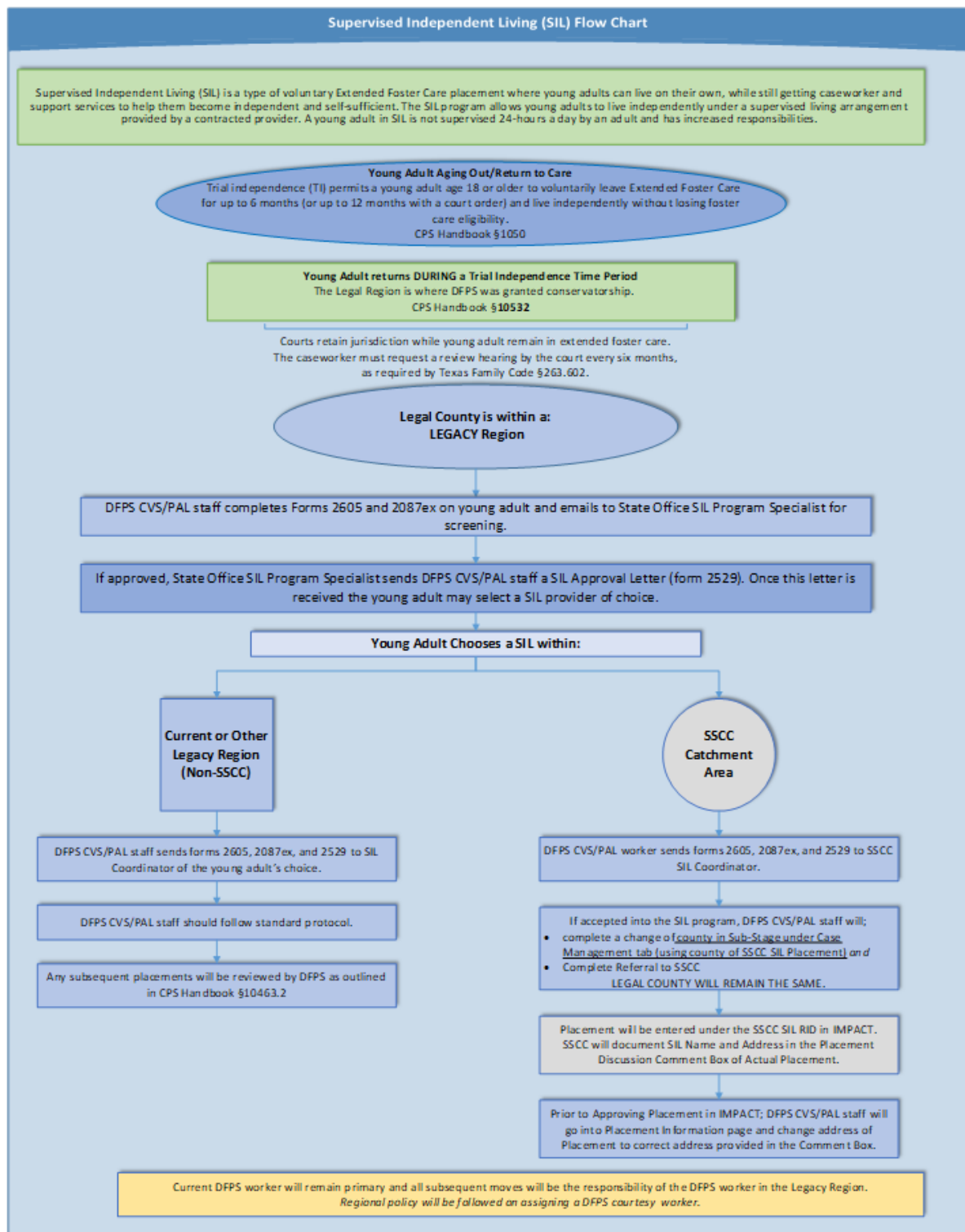
Pre-Consummation Services (2054 = Placement services 88F)	Pre-Consummation Services (2054 = Placement services 88F)	Post-Consummation Services (2054 = Post-placement supervision 88G)
Foster-to- <u>New</u> Adopt Home	Kinship-to-Adopt	All Adoptions
Case Review	Home Screening	Supervision of the Adoptive Placement
Pre-Placement Visits (between the child & prospective adoptive family)	Household Members Background Checks	Facilitate Sibling Contact
Adoption Placement Documentation	Supervision of the Adoptive Placement	Progression to Consummation (supervision of placement, written reports, legal & policy requirements)
Home Screening	Progression to Consummation (supervision of placement, written reports, legal & policy requirements)	Delays in Consummation (review of placement with DFPS & contractor and develop a revised Plan of Service)
Household Members Background Checks	Delays in Consummation (review of placement with DFPS & contractor and develop a revised Plan of Service)	Disrupted Placement
Training for Adoptive Homes	Court Related Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testimony (judicial hearings, court depositions &amp; admin reviews)</li> <li>• Court Related Assistance (assist adoptive family &amp; their attorney to complete consummation process)</li> </ul>	Court Related Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testimony (judicial hearings, court depositions &amp; admin reviews)</li> <li>• Court Related Assistance (assist adoptive family &amp; their attorney to complete consummation process)</li> </ul>
Adoption Preparation of the Child	Adoption Service Plan	Adoption Service Plan
	Adoption Preparation of the Child	Adoption Preparation of the Child

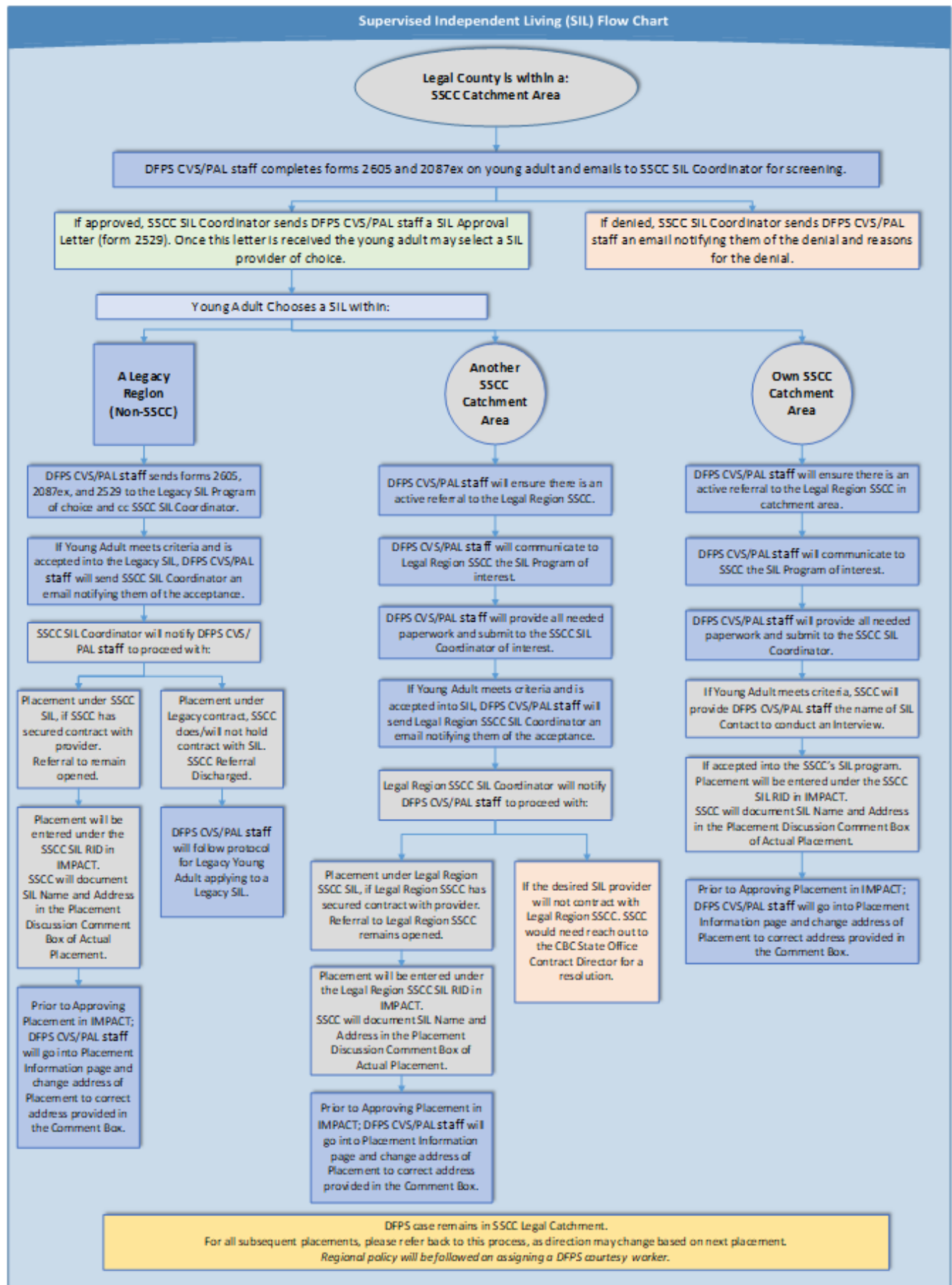
# CBC Adoption Placement/Service Authorization Process



*CBC Adoptions Placement Services Authorization Process*

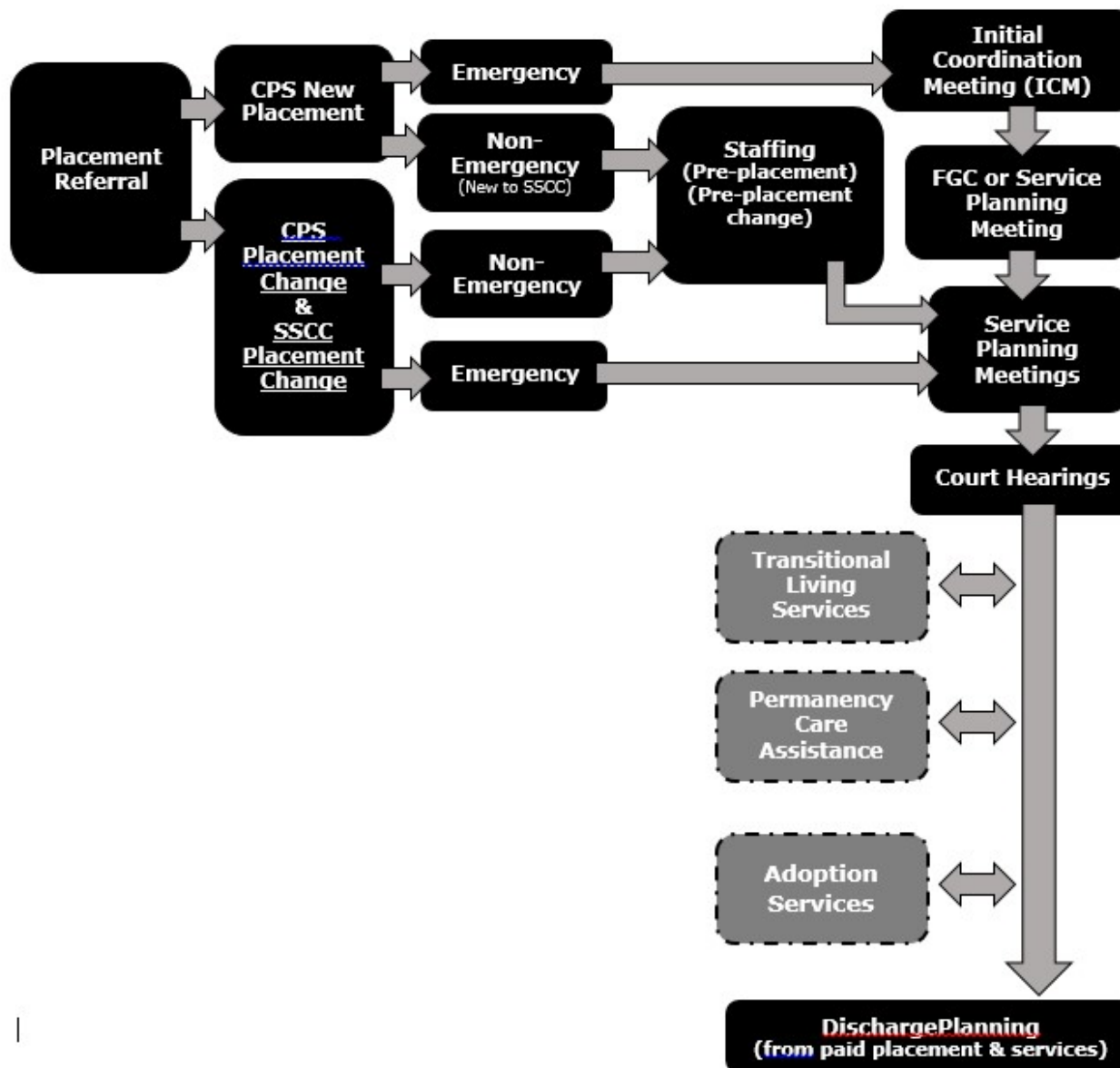
# Appendix I: Supervised Independent Living Flow Chart



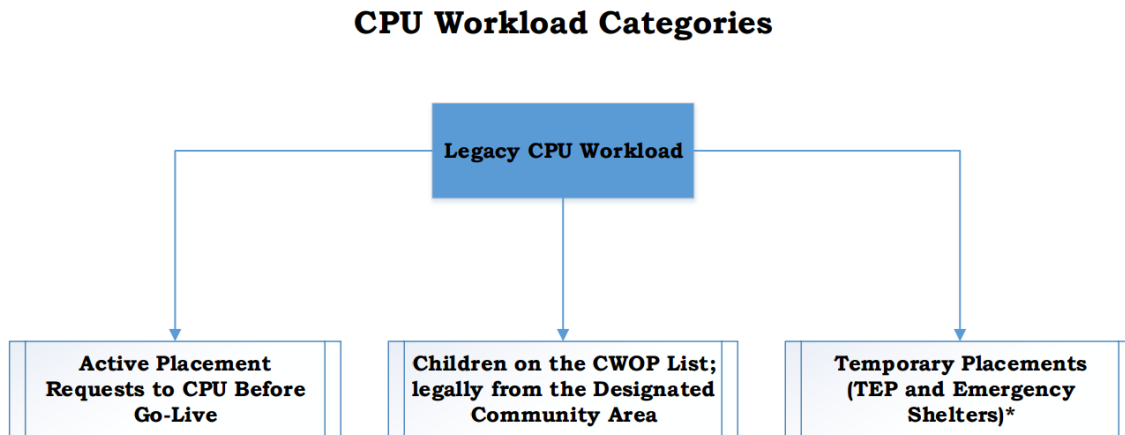


## Appendix K: Region 4, Piney Woods Community-Based Care Case Flow Chart

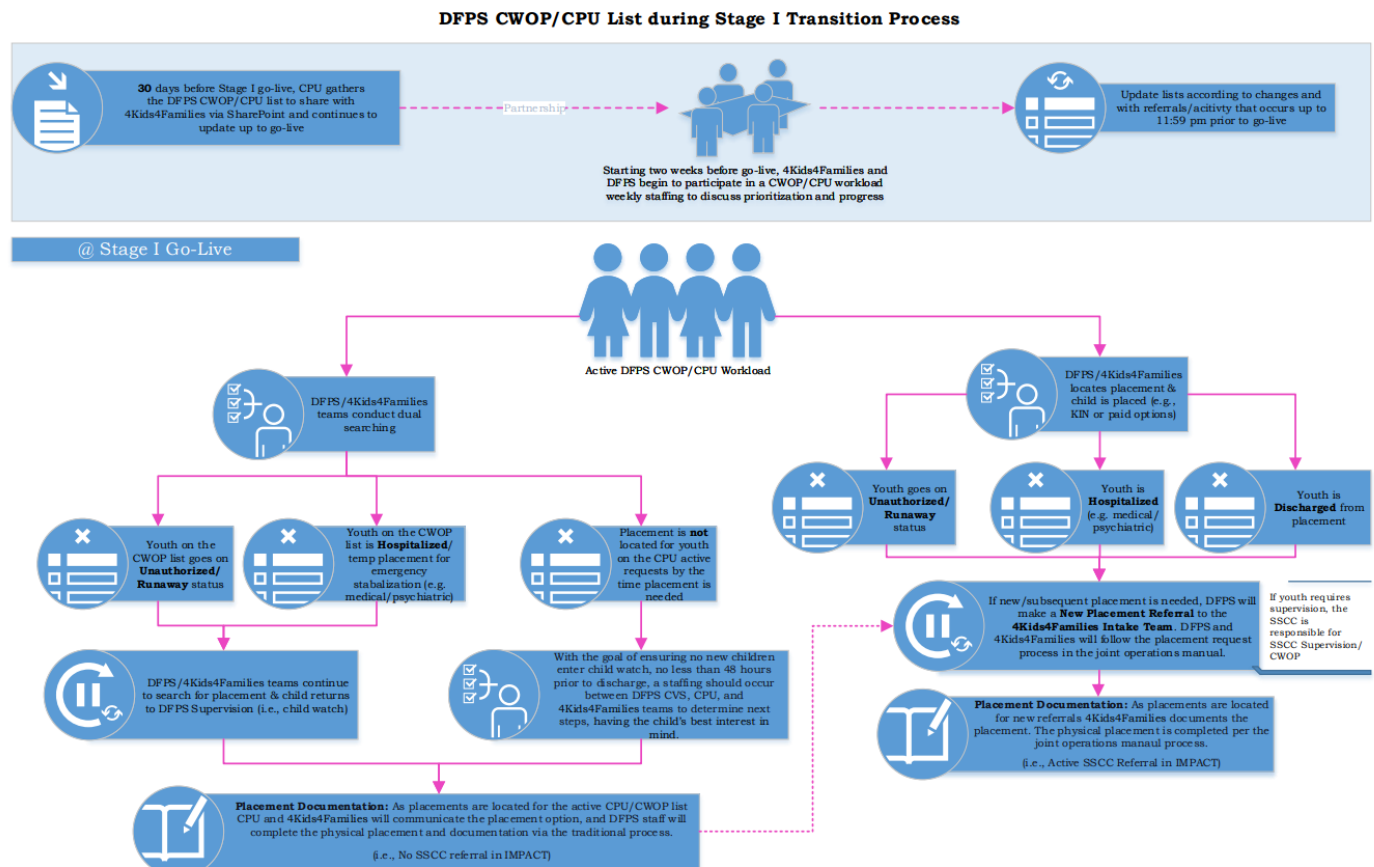
Description: the chart below describes the case flow for children and youth in DFPS conservatorship, who are legally from Region 4, Piney Woods and are placed with 4Kids4Families.



## Appendix L: CPU Workload Categories



# Appendix M: DFPS CWOP/CPU List during Stage I Transition Process



**CWOP List at Go-Live Agreement:** Children Without Placement (CWOP), before the start of Stage I go-live, will remain under DFPS supervision. DFPS and SSCC will begin joint planning for the children at least 30 days before Stage I go-live. The DFPS CWOP list will close the day before SSCC begins Stage I, and both DFPS and the SSCC will agree on the final list. New paid placement requests will be referred to the SSCC starting with the onset of Stage I. During this time the SSCC will take primary responsibility for continuing the search for placement options, and DFPS will remain responsible for supervision of children and youth in CWOP status. Weekly meetings will be held between DFPS CPU and SSCC Placement staff to coordinate placement searches for children in CWOP. For children/youth on the agreed upon list, use of the exceptional care rate is approved. The SSCC shall track and submit documentation to DFPS that demonstrates how/why the child meets the criteria for the exceptional foster care rate, and a high level summary of the services the child will be receiving that correlate to the negotiated rate. DFPS understands that children who have been in CWOP for an extended period may need additional supports and services. Once a paid placement is secured and placement occurs, the child/youth will enter the placement network of the SSCC. The DFPS clinical coordinators will continue the 90-day wraparound support process, conducting 30-60-90 day check-ins with child and caregiver/provider. DFPS and SSCC have a shared goal of eliminating DFPS supervision of CWOPs as quickly as possible and will work collaboratively for resolution. The SSCC understands the urgency of eliminating DFPS supervision responsibilities, and the common goal for both DFPS and the SSCC is to secure safe and stable placements that are in children's best interests outside of CWOP. Therefore, the SSCC will diligently work to identify placement options for children who are difficult to supervise. As the SSCC assumes responsibility for placement in Stage I, the goal is for children/youth on the established DFPS CWOP to transition under the SSCC within the first 90 days but will be fully completed on the date that the SSCC begins Stage II.

# Glossary

**Adoptive Placement:** Begins when a child/youth is placed with an adoptive family and includes post-placement supervision and assistance in completing the adoption consummation process. Ends when the adoption is consummated and the case is closed.

**Alternative caregiver:** A person who is not the foster parent of the child/youth and who provides temporary care for the child/youth for more than 12 hours but less than 60 days.

**Authorized Service Level (ASL):** A Basic, Moderate, Specialized, or Intense service level determined by the third party contractor or a Basic service level determined by the DFPS caseworker and supervisor. The authorized service level is based on information regarding the child/youth's service needs.

**Awaiting Adoption:** A child who is legally free for adoption; the child's Permanency Goal is Adoption; and the child is not in an Adoptive Placement or own home placement.

**Blended Foster Care Rate:** Foster care rate paid to the SSCC for each day of service provided to a child/youth in paid foster care, equal to the weighted average rate paid across all placement types.

**Caregiver:** A caregiver is a person, including an employee, foster parent, contract service provider, or volunteer, whose day to day responsibilities include direct care, supervision, guidance, and protection of a child/youth in care. This includes employees and contract staff who provide 24-hour awake night supervision in accordance with Remedial Orders A7 and A8. See [CPS Handbook §7911 Notice of Any Associated Child Sexual Aggression, Behaviors, or Victimization to an Alternate Caregiver or Temporary Placement](#).

Generally, and in furtherance of a child/youth having as normal of a life experience as possible while in substitute care, “caregiver” does not include individuals who are not routinely responsible for direct care, supervision, guidance, and protection of a child/youth in care, such as school personnel, mentors, tutors and chaperones. Instead, determining what information to provide an adult involved with a child/youth’s normalcy activity (e.g., extra-curricular activity, part-time job, church activities, school field trip, and visit to friend’s house) must be considered on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind the confidential nature of the information and the need to balance the child/youth’s privacy concerns. Depending on the history, age of the child/youth, and situation in which the child/youth may be when engaging in a normalcy activity, the involved adult may not need to know of the child/youth’s history, for example a tutor periodically at the child/youth’s placement or an adult chaperone on a school field trip.

**Casey Life Skills Assessment:** An assessment of a youth's independent living skills designed to be completed by both the youth and the caregiver. The youth and caregiver results are

combined into a report which provides an indication of the skill level and readiness of the youth to live independently and creates the opportunity for the caregiver and youth to talk about the youth's strengths and challenges.

**Designated Community Area (DCA):** A geographic service area for providing child protective services that is identified as part of community-based care.

**Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment (CANS):** A comprehensive and developmentally appropriate child welfare assessment required by [Texas Family Code §266.012](#). This definition does not refer to the CANS assessment used to determine eligibility for mental health rehabilitative services and mental health targeted case management services. It is a multi-purpose tool that links the assessment and service planning process. It was developed with the goal of improving permanency, safety, and improved quality of life. This structured assessment of the youth and their caregiver assists in the identification of appropriate actions to address a need or to support a strength. In this way, the CANS, provides decision support for the service planning process. Available subsequent reassessments using the CANS tool also provide information about the appropriateness of the service plan and whether individual goals and outcomes are being achieved.

**Child's Placement Information:** DFPS shares information about a child with 4Kids4Families in order for 4Kids4Families to assess and make recommendations for the child's placement in a paid foster care setting. Placement information may vary between DFPS and SSCC initiated placement referrals, but, in general, the following placement information is shared with 4Kids4Families based on timeframes set within the Operations Manual:

Alternative Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (Form K-902-2087ex excluding level of care information).

Application for Placement of Child in Residential Care Form 2087 excluding level of care information).

Court orders/affidavit.

Visitation plans with siblings, parents, or other family member and fictive kin (if established).

Birth verification/certificate.

Social Security card or number (if available).

Education portfolio.

Medicaid and STAR Health cards or qualifying information (if available).

Any relevant external documentation (i.e. assessments, evaluations, or therapy notes) related to the care of the child.

Signed Placement Authorization (2085FC).

Signed Medical Consenter (2085B).

Signed Education Decision-Maker (2085E).

**Caregiver:** A person whose duties include the supervision, guidance, and protection of children and youth.

**Case Information:** Case information is all abuse and neglect records, including records relating to reports, investigations, legal actions, and the provision of services to adults, children and families.

**Case Management:** In accordance with [Texas Family Code §264.151](#), the provision of case management services to a child for whom DFPS has been appointed Temporary Managing Conservator or Permanent Managing Conservator or to the child's family, a young adult in extended foster care, a relative or kinship caregiver, or a child who has been placed in the catchment area through Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, and includes, but is not limited to:

1. Caseworker visits with the child, family and caregivers.
2. Convening and conducting permanency planning meetings.
3. Development and revision of child and family plans of service, including a permanency plan and goals for a child or young adult in care.
4. Coordination and monitoring of services required by the child & the child's family.
5. Assumption of court-related duties regarding the child.
6. Any other function or service that DFPS determines necessary to allow a Single Source Continuum Contractor to assume responsibility for case management.

**Caseworker:** A DFPS or SSCC employee who provides casework services to children and youth in Substitute Care under the conservatorship of the State.

**Child(ren)/Youth:** A person(s) eligible and referred by DFPS to the SSCC for services under this contract from birth through the end of the month in which the individual turns 22 years of age.

**Children/Youth in DFPS Legal Responsibility:** All children for whom a court has appointed DFPS legal responsibility through temporary or permanent managing conservatorship or other court ordered legal basis. DFPS legal responsibility terminates upon court order or when a youth turns 18, whichever comes first.

**Child-Care Services:** Services that meet a child/youth's basic need for shelter, nutrition, clothing, nurture, socialization and interpersonal skills, care for personal health and hygiene, supervision, education, and service planning.

**Child Placing Agency:** A person, including an organization, other than the natural parents or guardian of a child who plans for the placement of or places a child in a childcare facility, agency foster home, agency group home, or adoptive home.

**Community-Based Care:** As required by the 85th Legislative Session, Senate Bill 11, a community-based model where DFPS purchases case management and substitute care services from a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) to meet the individual and unique needs of children, youth and families in Texas. Substitute care includes both foster care and relative / kinship placements. Purchasing substitute care and case management services from the provider community allows DFPS to focus on child safety by investigating reports of abuse and neglect, providing in-home family-based safety services, and ensuring quality oversight of the foster care system. Ensuring individual children achieve timely permanency will be the responsibility of the SSCC.

**Confidential Information:** Personally Identifiable Information (PII), Protected Health Information (PHI), Case Information, Criminal History Record Information (CHRI), or Sensitive Personal Information.

**Consortium:** A group of providers who propose to jointly develop and implement a Single Source Continuum Contract proposal with different providers responsible for different parts of the proposal and resulting network. DFPS will only contract with one of the providers of a Consortium who will be directly responsible to DFPS for all services and performance outcomes under the SSCC Contract. DFPS will also contract with a separate business entity Formed by Consortiums that all members have an ownership interest in.

**Contract:** A promise or a set of promises, for breach of which the law gives a remedy, or the performance of which the law in some way recognizes as a duty. It is an agreement between two or more parties creating obligations that are enforceable or otherwise recognizable at law. The term also encompasses the written document that describes the terms of the agreement. For state contracting purposes, it generally describes the terms of a purchase of goods or services from a vendor or service provider.

**Criminal History Record Information (CHRI):** CHRI is arrest-based data and any derivative information from that record, such as descriptive data, FBI number, conviction status, sentencing data, incarceration, and probation and parole information.

**Designated Victim:** A child determined as such by an investigation resulting in a disposition of Reason to Believe (RTB) and entered in the data system.

**Disproportionality:** The over representation of a particular race or cultural group in a program or system.

**Disparity:** The inequitable or different treatment or services provided to one group as compared to another group. It is how one is treated or the types, quality, and quantity of services made available.

**eCANS:** The eCANS portal is an online system that will be able to house CANS assessment results, deliver a suite of reports containing aggregate data, and provide system functionality that ties HHSC and DFPS efforts together.

**Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program:** A federally-funded (Chafee) and state-administered program. Under this program, Youth and young adults ages 16 to 23 years old may be eligible for up to \$5,000.00 financial assistance per year to help them reach their post-secondary educational goals.

**Education Portfolio:** The updated and maintained separate education binder that contains important school documents and is designed to follow school-age children and youth to each placement. This allows for the review of the most current educational records and documentation by school officials, residential child-care contractors, foster parents, family caregivers, children and youth.

**Emergency Behavior Intervention:** An intervention used in an emergency situation, including personal restraint, mechanical restraint, emergency medication, or seclusion.

**Exceptional Foster Care Rate:** Based on a pro Forma approach which involves using historical costs of delivering similar services, where appropriate data are available, and estimating the basic types and costs of products and services necessary to deliver services meeting federal and state requirements.

**Experiential Life Skills Activities:** Activities which engage children and youth in learning new skills, attitudes, and ways of thinking through hands-on learning opportunities. Experiential life-skills training is tailored to the child/youth's skills and abilities and may include training in practical activities that include grocery shopping, meal preparation and cooking, using public transportation, performing basic household tasks, balancing a checkbook, and managing personal finances.

**Extended Foster Care:** A program for youth and young adults, ages 18 to 22 years old that are eligible, and have signed an agreement to participate in this program. A youth who turns 18 years of age while in the conservatorship of DFPS who is continuing to receive Extended Foster Care services under the Extended Foster Care is eligible for Extended Foster Care services through the end of the month in which the Youth or young

Adult reaches the age limit referenced in 1 through 7, so long as sufficient documentation is provided on a periodic basis as required by the terms of the youth or young adult's Extended Foster Care Agreement to demonstrate that the youth or young adult is:

1. Regularly attending high school or enrolled in a program leading toward a high school diploma or GED up to the youth or young adult's 22nd birthday;
2. Regularly attending an institution of higher education or a post-secondary vocational or technical program up to the youth or young adult's 21st birthday. These can remain in care to complete vocational-technical training classes regardless of whether or not the youth or young adult has received a high school diploma or GED certificate (40 TAC §700.316);
3. Actively participating in a program or activity that promotes, or removes barriers to employment up to the youth or young adult's 21st birthday;
4. Employed for at least 80 hours per month up to the youth or young adult's 21st birthday;
5. Incapable of doing any of the above due to a documented medical condition up to the youth or young adult's 21st birthday ([40 TAC §700.316](#)); or
6. Accepted for admission to a college, or vocational program that does not begin immediately. In this case, the youth or young adult's eligibility is extended three and a half months after the end of the month in which the youth or young adult receives his/her high school diploma or Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) certificate.

**Face-to-Face (FTF) Contact:** An in-person meeting or visit that does not require video conferencing or similar technology.

**Family:** For purposes of this contract, family is defined as the parents or other relatives (including fictive kin) of children in paid foster care who are referred by DFPS to the SSCC for services. Families may remain eligible for the SSCC service coordination and delivery after children have exited paid foster care so long as DFPS remains the legal conservator.

**Fictive Kin:** For purposes of this contract, fictive kin is an individual who has a longstanding and significant relationship with a child in DFPS conservatorship, or with the child's family and provides, or is anticipated to provide, care to the child.

**Financial Literacy Education Program:** Education, training, and experiential support that includes:

1. Obtaining and interpreting a credit score.
2. Protecting, repairing, and improving a credit score.
3. Avoiding predatory lending practices.

4. Saving money and accomplishing financial goals through prudent financial management practices.
5. Using basic banking and accounting skills, including balancing a checkbook.
6. Using debit and credit cards responsibly.
7. Understanding a paycheck and items withheld from a paycheck.
8. Protecting financial, credit, and identifying information in personal and professional relationships.

**Form 2054:** DFPS Form which initiates invoicing process and contains, at a minimum the following information:

1. Name of the contractor and contract number.
2. Service Code.
3. Names of client or Family members who are to receive services.
4. Types services requested.
5. Number of units for each service requested.
6. Time limit for the service.

**Foster Care:** A placement paid by DFPS or other public facility. Placements include foster homes, foster group homes, basic child-care facilities, residential treatment centers, and shelters. This is a subset of children in Substitute Care.

**Foster Family Home:** An independent licensed operation or a home under the regulation of a child-placing agency that is the primary residence of the foster parents and provides residential child-care for six or fewer children up to the age of 18 years.

**Full Continuum of Care:** An array of least restrictive, most-family like placement services that meet the residential and treatment service needs of all children and youth in the care of a contractor.

**General Residential Operation:** A child-care facility that provides care for more than 12 children for 24 hours a day, including facilities known as children's homes, residential treatment centers, and emergency shelters.

**IMPACT:** Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas, a computer application used by DFPS staff for case management.

**Initial Coordination Meeting (ICM):** Convened by DFPS and held within seven (7) days of referral to the SSCC for placement and/or services to a child/youth (Stages I-III) and/or family

(Stages II-III). Purpose of ICM is to review child/youth/families history and identify service needs to be included in the child/youth and/or family plan(s) of service.

**Intermittent Alternate Care:** A planned alternative 24-hour care provided for a child/youth by a licensed Child-Placing Agency or Independent Foster Home as part of the agency or home's regulated child-care and that lasts more than 72 consecutive hours.

**Least Restrictive Placement:** Most family-like setting (e.g., parent or legal family of origin, non-custodial parent, kinship care, foster family home, adoptive home or cottage style general residential operation (GRO)) based on the child's or youth's individual needs.

**Legacy System:** Foster care system where DFPS delivers placement and case management services and utilizes the service level system as the method in which to pay for residential services for children and youth in DFPS conservatorship or who voluntarily agree to remain in care. In addition, current purchased client services funding mechanisms to access family services that are coordinated and authorized through DFPS.

**Level(s) of Need:** Array of services (including both licensed child-care and treatment services) required by an individual Child who resides in substitute care, and are designed to support the achievement of safety, permanency and well-being.

**Legal Conservator:** Also known as the managing conservator, is an entity responsible (either temporarily or permanently) for a child/youth as the result of a district court order pursuant to the [Texas Family Code §153 Conservatorship, Possession, and Access](#)

**Minimum Standards:** DFPS rules which are the minimum requirements for permit holders and which are enforced by DFPS to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children and youth. DFPS provides publications that contain the HHSC Minimum Standards and guidelines for compliance for each type of operation.

**National Youth in Transition Database:** The data collection system developed by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to track the independent living services provided to children and youth and to develop outcomes that measure the States' performance in preparing children and youth for their transition from foster care to independent living. More information is available at: [National Youth in Transition Database](#).

**No eject/no reject:** Contract requirement that a contractor may not refuse to accept a properly referred client for services under this contract nor may a contractor cease to serve, or request DFPS remove a child, youth, or family from its referred client list.

**Outcome:** A measure that reflects or reveals change or impact.

**Performance-Based Contract:** A contract that ties payment, financial incentives and remedies to performance. Additional performance measures may be included and used to make decisions to renew or terminate the contract.

**Permanency Care Assistance:** The Permanency Care Assistance program gives financial support to kinship caregivers who want to provide a permanent home to children who can't be reunited with their parents.

**Permanency Goal:** DFPS's permanency goals are subcategories of the four goals identified by the [Texas Family Code §263.3026](#). The categories are as follows:

1. Family Reunification.
2. Adoption by a relative or suitable individual (Relative Adoption or Unrelated Adoption).
3. Permanent Managing Conservatorship to a relative or suitable individual (Relative Conservatorship or Unrelated Conservatorship).
4. Another planned permanent living arrangement (Foster Family -DFPS Conservatorship, Other Family DFPS Conservatorship, Independent Living or Community Care).

**Permanency Planning:** The identification of services for a child/youth (and usually to the child/youth's family), the specification of the steps to be taken and the time frames for taking those steps so as to achieve the following goals:

1. A safe and permanent living situation for the child/youth.
2. A committed Family for the child/youth.
3. An enduring and nurturing family relationship that can meet the child/youth's needs.
4. A sense of security for the child/youth.
5. A legal status for the child/youth that protects the rights of the child/youth.
6. ([40 TAC §700.1201](#) and [DFPS policy 6200](#)).

**Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC):** When a court orders DFPS as PMC, it can be either with a child's parental rights terminated or parental rights intact. The rights and duties of DFPS are generally the same as with TMC.

**Personal Contact:** A meeting, either face-to-face or by telecommunication, during which the parties' discussion and actions are not directed.

**Personally Identifiable Information (PII):** Any information that can be used alone or in conjunction with any other personal information to identify a specific individual. PII includes

any information that can be used to search for or identify individuals or can be used to access their records. Examples include name, SSN, DOB, Social Security benefit data, and state or government issued driver's license number.

**Placement Change:** Any change in placement location except for temporary breaks in service as further defined in the contract.

**Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Activities:** Benefits and services provided to children and youth in DFPS-paid Substitute Care who are age 14 or older and likely to remain in foster care until at least age 18, who can qualify for services up to their 21st birthday. Services and benefits may include:

1. Casey Life Skills Assessment to assess strengths and needs in life skills.
2. Life Skills training in core areas including financial management.
3. Job readiness and life decisions/responsibility.
4. Educational/vocational services.
5. Coordination of the Transitional Living Allowance (TLA) up to \$1000 (distributed in increments up to \$500 per month for children and youth who participate in PAL Life Skills training, to help children and youth with initial start-up costs in adult living).
6. Coordination of After Care Room and Board (ACRB) assistance, based on need, up to \$500 per month for rent, utility deposits, food, etc. (not to exceed \$3000 of accumulated payments per child/youth).
7. Case management to help children and youth with self-sufficiency planning and resource coordination.
8. Teen conferences.
9. Leadership development activities.
10. Additional supportive services, based on need and availability of funds, such as mentoring services and driver's education.

**Protected Health Information (PHI):** Individually identifiable health information that is transmitted or maintained in any Form or medium. Individually identifiable health information is data, including demographics, that relates to:

1. The individual's past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition.
2. The provision of health care to the individual, or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual.
3. Information that identifies the individual or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe it can be used to identify the individual.

As a general rule, health information linked with any one of the following direct or indirect identifiers of the individual, relatives, employers, or household members is considered protected health information:

1. Name
2. Street address, city, county, precinct, zip code, and equivalent geocodes
3. All elements of dates (except year) for dates directly related to an individual and all ages over 89
4. Telephone number
5. Fax number
6. Electronic mail address
7. Social Security number
8. Medical record numbers
9. Health plan ID numbers
10. Account numbers
11. Certificate and license numbers
12. Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers, including license plate numbers
13. Device identifiers and serial numbers
14. Web addresses (URLs)
15. Internet IP addresses
16. Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints
17. Full face photographic images and any comparable images
18. Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code

**Purchased Client Services:** Services designed to remedy abuse, neglect and exploitation of DFPS clients. For purposes of this contract, these services are purchased by the SSCC (through an allocation of funds) and offered to children and youth in DFPS's conservatorship and their families to support the achievement safety, permanency and well-being.

**Reason to Believe:** Abuse or neglect occurred based on a preponderance of the evidence. This means when all evidence is weighed, it is more likely than not that abuse or neglect occurred.

**Referral:** Process by which DFPS notifies the SSCC of need to initiate placement and/or other services to eligible children, youth and/or families.

**Residential Child-Care:** The care, custody, supervision, assessment, training, education, or treatment of an unrelated child/youth for 24 hours a day that occurs in a place other than the child/youth's own home.

**Return to Care:** A program designed for youth and young adults 18 to 22 years old that are eligible and sign an agreement to participate in this program. Eligible participants must have been in DFPS conservatorship at the time they turned 18 years old (or were on run away status at the time they turned 18 years old and their conservatorship case had not been dismissed), and want to Return to Extended Foster Care, and:

1. Attend high-school or a program leading toward a high school diploma and have not reached their 22nd birthday;
2. Are enrolled at or within 30 days of placement in a course of instruction to prepare for the GED and have not reached their 21st birthday;
3. Attend and, within two years, complete a certified vocational or technical program and have not reached their 21st birthday; or
4. Return on a break from college or a technical or vocational program for at least one month, but no more than 4 months and have not reached their 21st birthday ([40 TAC 700.316](#)).

The return to care program does not include youth and young adults over 18 years old who are overnight visitors or living in the homes of foster parents, and the foster parents are not receiving a foster care payment for the care of these youth and young adults ([40 TAC §745.601](#), [§745.615](#), and [§749.2653](#)).

**Reunification:** Identification of a child's own home as the safe and permanent living situation towards which services are directed. Reunification means that (1) DFPS has removed the child from the home and (2) DFPS has determined that the child's parents are willing and, after completing services, able to provide the child with a safe living environment. Reunification occurs when the child has returned to the home.

**Sensitive Personal Information:** Sensitive personal information means an individual's first name or first initial and last name in combination with any one or more of the following items, if the name and the items are not encrypted:

1. Social Security number;
2. Driver's license number or government-issued identification number; or
3. Account number or credit or debit card number in combination with any required security code, access code, or password that would permit access to an individual's financial account.

Sensitive Personal Information also includes data revealed directly or indirectly relating to:

1. Natural persons concerning their racial or ethnic origin;
2. Political opinion;
3. Trade union membership;
4. Religious or philosophical beliefs;
5. Physical and mental health including state of health, illness, handicaps, pathological defects or medical treatments;
6. Sexual orientation or activity;
7. Criminal records, including convictions, decisions of penalties and fines, or other information collected in judicial or administrative proceeding to ascertain an offense or regarding an alleged or suspected commission of an offense;
8. Biometric or genetic data; or
9. Social welfare needs or benefits or other social welfare assistance received.

Sensitive information does not include publicly available information that is lawfully made available to the public from the federal, state, or local government.

**Serious Incident:** Any non-routine occurrence that has an impact on the care, supervision, or treatment of a child/youth. This includes, but is not limited to, suicide attempts, injuries requiring medical treatment, runaways, commission of a crime, and allegations of abuse or neglect or abusive treatment.

**Service Plan:** The contractor's developed plan that addresses the services that will be provided to a child/youth to meet the child, youth and/or family member's specific needs while served by the contractor.

**Service Area:** The designated area in which the SSCC will provide all services described in this contract. The SSCC will provide all services described in this contract in Region 4, Piney Woods.

**Siblings:** Children, youth, and young adults who have one or more parents in common either biologically, through adoption, or through the marriage of their parents, and with whom the child, youth or young adult lived before his or her substitute care placement, or with whom the child, youth or young adult would be expected to live if he or she were not in substitute care. Counted as any child in the same DFPS case with another child.

**Sibling Group:** Any DFPS case with two or more children in paid foster care.

**Single Source Continuum Contract/Contractor (SSCC):** Entity with whom DFPS enters into a contract for the provision of the full continuum of care in a catchment area, as required in this contract.

**STAR Health:** Statewide managed care program that provides comprehensive health care to children and youth in foster care and relative care, including medical, behavioral health, dental and vision care.

**Start Up Period:** A one time, initial period of six months that will begin on the date the contract is signed during which the Contractor will perform necessary readiness activities and build its system of service prior to the first Client referral from DFPS.

**Substitute Care:** All children who are living in a DFPS out of home placement (kinship or paid foster care). It does not include children living in a return and monitor placement. Unless noted otherwise, it does include youth over 18 who are in Extended Foster Care but are not in DFPS custody.

**Supervised Independent Living (SIL):** A type of voluntary Extended Foster Care placement where young adults can live on their own, while still getting caseworker and support services to help them become independent and self-sufficient. The SIL program allows young adults to live independently under a supervised living arrangement provided by a contracted provider. A young adult in SIL is not supervised 24-hours a day by an adult and has increased responsibilities. Through SIL a young adult has increased responsibilities, such as:

- Managing their own finances.
- Buying groceries or personal items.
- Working with a landlord.
- SIL also helps transition young adults to independent living by teaching them to:
  - o Achieve identified education and employment goals.
  - o Access community resources.
  - o Engage in needed life skills training.
  - o Establish important relationships.

**Temporary Managing Conservatorship (TMC):** When a court orders DFPS as TMC, DFPS can exercise specific rights including but not limited to the right to have physical possession of the child along with specific responsibilities, including but not limited to the duty of care, control and protection of a child, the right to designate the primary residence of the child and the right to make decisions concerning the child's health-care and education.

**Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE):** [TARE](#) website is the leading recruitment tool for prospective adoption homes for DFPS. The purpose of TARE is to expedite permanency for available waiting children by increasing the number of prospective adoptive home resources.

**Therapeutic Services:** In addition to child-care services, a specialized type of childcare services designed to treat and/or support children:

- With Emotional Disorders, such as mood disorders, psychotic disorders, or dissociative disorders.
- With Intellectual Disabilities, who have an intellectual functioning of 70 or below and are characterized by prominent, significant deficits and pervasive impairment.
- With Pervasive Developmental Disorder, which is a category of disorders (e.g. Autistic Disorder or Rett's Disorder) characterized by prominent, severe deficits and pervasive impairment.
- With Primary Medical Needs, who cannot live without mechanical supports or the services of others because of life-threatening conditions.
- Determined to be a trafficking victim.

**Trauma Informed Care:** An approach to understanding the biological, developmental, relational and social effects of trauma and violence on children, youth and families which integrates the understanding-based perspective to care.

**Treatment Services:** A specialized type of child-care services designed to treat and/or support children or youth with Emotional Disorders, Mental Retardation, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, and Primary Medical Needs as described in [40 TAC §748.61](#).

**Verified Kinship Care:** A kinship caregiver who has become verified as a foster parent to provide residential care in accordance with child-care licensing regulations.

**[Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement Form 2540](#):** DFPS's Form which documents the youth or young adult's agreement to voluntarily remain in foster care and outlines the categories of activity which qualify a child/youth to remain in foster care.

**[Voluntary Return to Extended Foster Care Agreement Form 2540](#):** DFPS's Form which documents the youth or young adult's agreement to voluntarily return to foster.

# Operation Manual Version Tracking

Version (Published Date)	Section Topics Affected	Change Details
[Enter Version Date Published]	[Enter Section(s) or topic affected]	[Enter information describing the changes made for each section or topic affected]