

Transitioning Children From Placement to Placement

Protocol Guidelines

I. TRANSFER INFORMATION

A. Most recent Court Report

B. Medical Information

Include:

- Last Medical and Dental exam dates, and a copy of these exams
- Doctors and dentists used
- Medi-Cal card and number
- Immunization record card
- Medication Consents (current)
- Authorization for administration of psychotropic medication (if applicable)
- Medication list
- Supply of medication.
- Obtain a copy of the Health /Education Passport from the placing agency (required within thirty [30] days of initial placement, and two [2] days for transfer of placement). (W and I Code 16010a) b) and c)

C. Significant Relationships to the Child

Include:

- Strength of connection & mental health of the relationship.
- Location of significant relationships.
- Current contact with significant relationships (location; day of week; time of day; type of supervision, if necessary by court order or law). Include:
 - Relatives
 - Siblings
 - Friends
 - Teachers
 - Social Workers
 - Previous foster parents and their family members
 - CASA Worker
 - Mental Health worker (as applicable)
 - Etc.

D. Educational Information

1. Case Plan

Obtain the case plan for the child: placing agency must provide summary of case plan for caretaker (30 days for first placement, within 48 hours for each subsequent placement).

Plan must contain:

a. Proximity to School

Assurances that the child's foster placement takes into account proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.

b. Health and Education Information

Include a summary of the health and education information or records.

c. Education Information

Include specified education information about the child including

- Names and addresses of the child's education providers
- Grade level performance
- School record
- Copy of IEP or 504 plan (if applicable)
- Any other relevant education information.

If any required information is not in case plan, plan must document where the information is located. Welfare & Institutions Code §16010(a)(b)(c); CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures 31-206.351(a) (c)(d)

2. School Placement:

a. Alternatives

A student placed in a group home or foster home shall attend programs operated by the local educational agency, unless:

- 1) The student has an IEP requiring another educational placement, or
- 2) The person holding right to make educational decisions determines that it is in the best interest of student to be placed in another educational program, or that the student continue in his or her school of origin. Education Code §48853

b. Immediate Enrollment

Foster children are entitled to immediate enrollment following any change in schools. Even if a foster youth owes fees to the previous school, and even if he or she is unable to produce the records or clothing normally required for enrollment (such as academic or medical records, immunizations, proof of residency, other documentation or school uniforms) the school must enroll the foster student immediately. Education Code 48853.5

c. Local Educational Agency Liaison

Every Local Educational Agency (LEA) must designate an appropriate staff person as a local educational agency liaison for foster children. Liaison shall ensure and facilitate proper

school placement, enrollment and checkout from school; assist foster children when transferring schools including ensuring proper transfer of credits, records, and grades; and shall, within 2 business days of foster child's request for enrollment, contact the school last attended to obtain all academic and other records. School liaison for school last attended shall provide all records to new school within 2 business days of receiving request. Education Code §48853.5(b),(c),(d)

d. Continuation In School of Origin

At initial detention or placement, or any subsequent change in placement of a foster child, the LEA serving the foster child shall allow the child to continue in the school of origin for the duration of the academic school year. Education Code §48853.5(d)(1)

e. Transferring Schools and Notifying the LEA

As soon as it becomes aware of the need to transfer a student, the county placing agency must notify the LEA of the student's expected last day of attendance, request the LEA to compile the student's complete educational record, and request that the student be transferred out. Education Code §49069.5©(e)

The placing agency must notify the LEA when the student is placed in a Licensed Children's Institution (LCI), and provide information to facilitate transfer of records and appropriate placement. Education Code §48852

f. The Foster Parent and Education Rights

If the juvenile court limits the educational rights of the parent/guardian, it may appoint the foster parent as the "responsible person" to assume those educational rights. Foster parents may exercise parental authority and consent to special education and related services without the need for a court order only if the juvenile court has limited the right of the parent/guardian to make educational decisions on behalf of the child, and the child has been placed in a planned permanent living arrangement as a dependent/ward of the court.

A foster parent includes relative caretaker or non-relative extended family member with whom the child is placed through the juvenile court. Education Code §56055; WIC 366.27; 726, 361(a).

g. Special Education Requirements

At least 10 days prior to discharge, the placing agency must notify, in writing, the current LEA & receiving SELPA of the impending discharge; give receiving SELPA a copy of IEP; identify the person representing the child's educational interests; and provide other relevant information that will be useful in implementing the child's IEP. Government Code §7579.1©

Inform of psychological / diagnosis behavioral, i.e. risk factors, family history.

E. Mental Health Information

1. Therapy

The former caretaker must provide the new caretaker with the child's therapist's (if any) name, next appointment (if any) and frequency of appointments.

In addition, the therapist can be a resource to the child during the transition. For the new caretakers, the therapist can be a resource to understand the child's behavior and the child's projected emotional responses to certain triggers or situations.

2. Medications

The former caretaker must provide the new caretaker with current medications (in their original labeled containers), previous medication history, name of prescribing psychiatrist, next appointment and frequency of appointments.

F. Information About Child

Include:

- Daily Routine, schedule
- Preferences for foods, hobbies, toys.
- Time of day child is at his or her best
- Community involvement and extra curricular activities
- Effective behavioral interventions

II. Transfer of Child's Property

- The transferring of the child's property is to occur at the time of transition or no more than twenty-four (24) hours later
- The sending caretaker is responsible for packing and making the child's property available.
- The child's County Social Worker is to coordinate transfer of property.

III. Preparation of Child for Transfer

A. Pre-Verbal Children

1. Written Transition Plan

A transition plan should be written and agreed to by all parties in light of point 3b below (see attached example transition plan).

2. Location of First Visits

Initial visits between future and former caretakers are to occur at the child's former placement. Consider time of day, when the child is at his/her best (i.e., child's scheduled nap time and scheduled visits.)

3. Gradual Transfer

- The transfer is to occur gradually at a pace that is in the best interests of the child.
- Generally, several visits should occur over a short period of time with no overnight visits, which would be confusing to the non-verbal child.
- The transition period is dependent on the child's length of stay with former caretaker and degree of attachment.

4. Activities of Visits

- Include nurturing activities during the visits such as feeding, bathing, diaper changing, and play.
- Former caretaker should start an activity (such as feeding), and transfer the activity to new caretaker.
- The former caretaker should accompany the child to the new caretaker's residence and repeat activities as outlined in points a and b above.

5. Day of Transfer

The day of transition should include the child seeing his former caretaker packing his or her belongings and then physically handing him or her over to his or her new family who takes the child to their home.

The following will be considered regarding the timing of the transfer:

- a) Best day of the week
- b) Best time of day

6. Post-Transition Plan

A plan should be established as to what future contact a child should have with his or her former caretakers, if any. Establishing attachment with the new family should be paramount in this plan. The degree of intimacy of the contact should be considered. Types of contact could include meeting away from the home or meeting at the new caretaker's home.

B. Verbal Children

1. Written Transition Plan

A transition plan should be written and agreed to by all parties (see attached example transition plan).

2. Communication With the Child

a. Explain the Transfer

If a TDM has not transpired, then the most supportive person in the child's life will assist the child in understanding the reason for the move, and helping the child work through thoughts and feelings about the move.

b. Prepare for Transition

The former caretaker or support person will verbally prepare the child for the transfer before any pre-placement visits. Discussions between the former caretaker and the child will include:

- Assisting the child with questions he or she may have
- What the daily routines in the new facility/home will be like
- What the neighborhood environment will be like
- Who will be in the family/facility
- Regular activities that the family/facility will participate in
- Family/facility rules

c. Prepare for Pre-Placement Visits

- The child will be asked where he or she would like the first visit to occur (at former or new placement).
- If the child has no preference, the initial meeting between the child and the new caretaker will take place at the child's former placement.
- The child's preferences and comfort level will be considered ahead of time as to what activities will take place during the visit, as well as how long the visit will be.
- After each pre-placement visit, the former caretaker/support person will discuss the experience with the child.

3. Initial Visit(s)

- The child's former caretaker or support person will accompany child and be present at this initial visit.
- Activities could include dinner with the family, time at a park, etc.
- One or more overnight visits for older children are generally advisable, and should occur after one or more shorter visits.

4. Communication About Pre-Placement Visits Between Adults

Any important /relevant information from the visits will be communicated among all concerned parties.

5. School Placement

As per AB490, the child's school preferences will be considered and school placement will be identified prior to change of placement. The social worker will notify the school district(s) when the new placement is identified (10-day requirement for Special Education students)

6. Day of Transfer

The former caretaker or support person will transport and participate in establishing the child in the new environment.

The following will be considered regarding the timing of the transfer:

- a) Best day of the week
- b) Best time of day

7. Post-Transition Plan

8. Relationships to provide closure for the child
Protocol will be developed