

20. Change of placement

- Federal law and Oregon policy emphasize selecting the least restrictive placement that can meet a child's needs. While making every effort to find an appropriate placement at the time of the child's initial removal from the home, there will be occasions when the substitute care placement selection is not appropriate, or immediate placement during an emergency did not allow for adequate time to assess a child's relatives or other persons known to the child who can be certified and can provide substitute care. Even when this occurs, continue the assessment process to certify the family as soon as possible.
- Sometimes relatives, as they become known to the caseworker, become available as a placement resource.
- Sometimes the initial placement is done in an emergency, and the caregiver does not provide ongoing substitute care.
- Sometimes the initial placement, though intended as a long-term resource, is not appropriate for the child.
- Sometimes a child's needs and services are identified that cannot be met in the current placement, or other circumstances arise that require a change of placement.
- Sometimes the results of the CANS screening identify a child's needs which cannot be met in the current placement.

Procedure

- The caseworker is responsible for supporting a child's substitute care placement and making every effort to maintain the child in his or her current substitute care placement when that placement is in the child's best interests and can meet the child's identified needs.
- Caseworker activities that support a placement include:
 1. Sharing information with and obtaining information from the substitute caregiver regarding the care of the child. Share information with the substitute caregiver throughout the child's substitute placement at each 30-day contact. Good, ongoing communication supports the substitute caregiver's expertise and role as a safety service provider, as well as providing the caseworker with information on what the child needs to maintain the child in the current placement.

2. Upon receiving the results of the CANS screening, during the first contact with the substitute caregiver, discuss the needs and strengths of the child, and develop a supervision plan when the child needs enhanced supervision. Refer to Chapter IV, Section 6, regarding developing supervision plans based on the results of a CANS screening.
 3. When a substitute caregiver is having difficulty with care giving responsibilities, consider a Placement Support Plan. Refer to Chapter VII, Placement Resources, for procedures on implementing a Placement Support Plan.
 4. Caseworker participation in treatment planning is required when a child enters a residential treatment service.
 5. Caseworker participation with the child is required through regular contact, active listening, problem-solving and being responsive to a child's needs.
- Sometimes a caseworker can maintain a placement through small actions. For example, helping a child transition into substitute care with frequent phone calls from the caseworker, providing extra visits or other contact with parents or other family members, making an extra effort to secure a child's favorite toy, a visit with the child's teacher, or other activity may help build trust and/or help a child during a period of adjustment.
 - There will be those times, however, when the combined attempts by the caseworker and the substitute caregiver do not result in a successful substitute care placement. In those circumstances, seek and secure another placement for the child. Unless a child's safety is compromised, the caseworker should provide the current substitute caregiver with a 10-day notice of the intent to move the child. Certified foster homes also should provide the caseworker with 10-day notice when requesting removal of a child from their home, whenever this is possible.
 - Except in emergency placement into another substitute care placement, the caseworker first conducts an assessment of the strengths and needs of the child through a review of the CANS results and other assessments or evaluations and matches those strengths and needs with the skills and abilities of the prospective substitute caregiver. A thorough assessment will guide the caseworker in determining appropriate substitute care placement options. In an emergency, use the information available at the time to make as thorough an assessment as possible.
 - Staff the case with the supervisor for consultation on appropriate placement resources.
 - Pursue a subsequent placement after determining the appropriate placement options and follow the placement procedure options of this manual.

The Supervisor's Role

- Consult with the caseworker on seeking and securing an appropriate substitute care placement.
- Review with the caseworker what is known regarding the child's strengths and needs.
- Work with the substitute caregiver as appropriate.
- Consult with Salem Foster Care Program or Residential Treatment Program staff on placement options when needed.