ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY
CFS OPERATIONS MANUAL

Effective Date: May 31, 1995 **Number: K-0901**
Revised: December 4, 2008
Revised: May 7, 2009

Voluntary Placements

Purpose

To provide guidelines on the voluntary placement (VP) of non-dependent children in out-of-home care.

Approved

This policy was approved by Mike Ryan, Director of CFS, on, May 7, 2009.
Signature on file.

Background

A child may be voluntarily placed into the care and custody of Children and Family Services (CFS) when the parent or guardian has requested assistance and has signed a voluntary placement agreement. The intent of a VP is to temporarily assist a parent/guardian who is otherwise unable to provide for a child's needs, while the parent/guardian works to establish conditions which facilitate reunification with the child.

The provision for time-limited VP is consistent with CFS mission to ensure child safety, make efforts to alleviate the need for Juvenile Court involvement, encourage family decision-making, and work collaboratively with families to preserve and strengthen them.

Legal Mandates

- Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11400(o) and (p)
- Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 16507.2–16507.6
- Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16514
- California Department of Social Services Manual of Policies and Procedures Division 31, Section 430

Definitions

None.

POLICY

OCSSA

VP Considerations

Prior to entering into a VP agreement, CFS will assist family members to make every attempt to maintain them together by offering supportive community resources and/or child welfare services, as appropriate.

VP will only be considered when the following conditions exist:

• Child is not presently a dependent of the Juvenile Court
• Parent/guardian(s) has requested assistance, is cooperative, and agrees to the need for out-of-home placement and the reason(s) for the placement
• Parent/guardian(s) is unable to arrange resources necessary for the care, supervision, and protection of the child without VP services
• There is reason to believe the case plan goals can be achieved within six months of the date of VP
• Current circumstance(s) is not one which necessitated prior Juvenile Court intervention

VP requires a written agreement between the parent/guardian and CFS which specifies:

• Legal status of the child
• Rights and obligations of the parent/guardian(s), child, and CFS

Per WIC Section 16507.3, the use of VP services is limited to a period not to exceed six months. Refer to Duration policy section below for further direction on this topic.

VP Referrals

VPs may be considered on Emergency Response (ER) referrals, during the Intake phase, or on open Voluntary Family Services (VFS) cases.

Circumstances which may qualify for VP services on a case-by-case basis include but are not limited to:

• Hospitalization of parent/guardian
• Family emergency needing temporary respite (e.g., parent caring for terminally ill relative in another state, etc.)
• Incarceration of a parent/guardian for less than six months
• Parent/guardian in residential substance abuse treatment
• Parent/guardian-child conflict requiring temporary separation
• Parent/guardian unable to accept return of child upon discharge from psychiatric hospital

VP Resources (WIC 16507.5)

VP of a child will be based on the family's needs and best interests of the child. A child in VP may be placed:

• In an approved home of a relative or a non-relative extended family member (NREFM)
• In a suitable licensed community care facility, including county licensed foster homes and group homes (**Note:** All decisions to place a child in a group home must be staffed prior to placement)
• With a Foster Family Agency (FFA) to be placed in a suitable foster home or other foster home which has been certified by the agency as meeting licensing standards
• In a home or facility in accordance with the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

OCSSA

Team Decision Making (TDM) Meetings

An Imminent Risk TDM will be conducted on all potential VPs, prior to approving and initiating the placement. The purpose of the TDM for a VP is to:

• Evaluate VP as an appropriate intervention
• Determine if family meets VP referral criteria listed above
• Assess family's level of cooperation
• Explore family strengths and needs
• Determine likelihood for reunification within six months
• Identify placement resources
• Obtain consensus for VP decision
• Discuss visitation arrangements, including scheduled vacations and potential need for respite care

Participants in the TDM meeting will include, but are not limited to:

• Parent/guardian requesting VP
• Support persons invited by the parent/guardian
• Assigned Senior Social Worker (SSW)
• VFS SSW
• Representative from Placement Coordination Services or Multi-treatment Transition Services (MTS) placement program
• Representative from Foster Care (FC) Eligibility program
• Potential placement resources
• Service providers currently working with the family
• CalWORKs representative

A contingency plan will be developed in case the original plan discussed during the initial TDM can not be implemented and back-up arrangements are necessary. For further direction on this process, refer to Contingency Plans section of CFS P&P Team Decision Making (D-0308).

A Placement Preservation TDM will be held when difficulties with a VP occur, the VP is at risk of failing, and it is necessary to determine whether or not the child's current placement can be preserved safely with additional community and/or CFS support.

Eligibility Responsibility

A representative from the FC Eligibility program will assess eligibility for funding on each child being considered for VP and complete paperwork, as needed.

Per Division 31-430.32, the parent/guardian will be provided with a written statement (located on the signature page of the case plan) from CFS informing that he or she may be responsible for a portion of the family reunification services costs associated with the VP. This will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The SSW will complete a *Child Support – Good Cause Claim for Non-cooperation* (*CW 51*) form with the parent/guardian, per direction provided in CWS/CMS Data Entry Instructions—CW51 – Child Support – Good Cause Claim for Noncooperation.

When the parent/guardian is receiving CalWORKS services, the SSW will consult with the CalWORKS case worker to determine whether the parent/guardian will remain eligible for ongoing services during the VP, per guidelines provided in Assembly Bill 429 (2001). The SSW will inform the parent/guardian of this determination prior to proceeding with the VP.

OCSSA

Placement Responsibility

A representative from the Placement Coordination Services or MTS Placement program will:

- Gather information on potential placement resources
- Complete a home assessment, when applicable
- Complete placement paperwork

For direction on how to enter placement information into CWS/CMS for VPs, refer to CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Creating A New Placement Home.

Icebreakers

When a VP is initiated, the placing social worker will facilitate an Icebreaker with the child's parent/guardian and out-of-home caregiver as outlined in Attachment 1—Icebreakers Protocol.

Medical Information

The assigned SSW will obtain the child's pertinent medical history and information from the parent/guardian using *Voluntary Placement Child's Medical/Education Information (F0630-25-574)*. The SSW will ensure that the caregiver receives this information in order to properly and safely care for the child. This includes but is not limited to:

- Immunization history
- Knowledge of medical insurance
- Name and phone number of child's primary care physician
- Allergies
- Past surgeries, hospitalizations, and significant medical illnesses

When the VP has been initiated due to a medical concern or medically related issues involving the child, the assigned SSW will consult with a Public Health Nurse (PHN) to determine what additional information is critical for the caregiver.

For additional information on processing the child's medical information, refer to the Procedure section below.

Each child who receives VP services will complete a Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) or equivalent medical examination within 30 days of placement. Subsequent examinations, when necessary, will comply with the CHDP periodic screening schedule. Any medical issues identified will receive appropriate follow-up, resources, and referrals. For further information on the CHDP program, refer to www.DHCS.ca.gov/services/CHDP.

Educational Information

The assigned SSW will obtain the child's educational information from the parent/guardian using *Voluntary Placement Child's Medical/Education Information*. This information will be provided to the assigned SSW's unit clerk for entry into CWS/CMS (for further information on this process, refer to CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Search, Update, or Enter Education & School/Ed Providers Instructions and CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Education Provider Information Request Form).

CDSSA

VP Case Plan

At the time of the VP, and at least every six months thereafter when applicable, a case plan will be developed in CWS/CMS with the input and concurrence of the parent/guardian. The VP case plan will include:

• Case plan goal (i.e., Return Home)
• Parent/guardian objectives and responsibilities
• Services to be provided by SSW
• Schedule of planned SSW contacts
• Schedule of parent/guardian visitation with child
• Acknowledgement by parent/guardian that he/she may be responsible for a share of Family Reunification costs associated with placement
• Signatures of agreement from parent/guardian and SSW

For direction on completing case plans, refer to EZ Mapping for CMS Case Plan – Update instructions, as applicable.

Notices

The assigned SSW will inform the parent/guardian of the need to provide at least 24 hours notice prior to removing the child from placement, when applicable.

The placing social worker will inform the caregiver of the need to provide seven days notice of intent to terminate placement, when applicable.

Placement Moves

When a caregiver moves but the child remains in VP with that caregiver, the assigned SSW is responsible for calling the Placement Hotline (714-704-8407) no later than 24 hours after the placement move or completing and emailing a *Placement Coordination Stop Payment Memo* (*F063-29-61*). A *PIC Notice* must then be completed by the assigned SSW and routed by the unit clerk within five calendar days of the date of the placement move.

Note: When a child moves from one VP to another with a different caregiver, the placing SSW is responsible for following the direction above.

For further direction on completing the PIC Notice, refer to CFS P&P Placement Change Notification (K-0209).

Duration

By the conclusion of the fifth month of VP services, the assigned SSW will assess the family's current circumstance and plan for reunification.

Per WIC Section 16507.5, when a child has been in VP for six consecutive months, the assigned SSW must do one of the following:

• Return the child to the physical custody of the parent/guardian and close the case
• Return the child to the physical custody of the parent/guardian and keep the case open for VFS services
• File a petition to initiate dependency proceedings in Juvenile Court. (For further direction on this process, refer to CFS P&P Dependency Intake [A-0502])
• Refer the child to a licensed adoption agency for consideration of adoptive planning
• Apply for a six-month extension of federally eligible VP services, per guidelines below

OCSSA

Extension of VP

Per WIC Section 16507.3, subject to the availability of federal funding, VP services for federally eligible children may be extended for an additional six months, for a total period not to exceed 12 months, only under the following circumstances:

• The custodial parent/guardian is in residential substance abuse treatment and is demonstrating progress that indicates that problems warranting VP are likely to be resolved within the extended time period
• The child is severely emotionally disturbed and requires residential treatment but is reasonably expected to be returned home within the extended time period

The extension of VP services will be subject to the approval of an interagency administrative review board. One member of the board will be a licensed mental health practitioner. The board will review the appropriateness and continued necessity of six additional months of VP services, the extent of parent/guardian compliance with the VP case plan, and the adequacy of services to the child and the child's family. If it is determined that the child can not be safely returned home by the 12th month of VP services, the assigned SSW will either file a petition to initiate dependency proceedings or refer the child for adoption.

The SSW will consult with a representative from FC Eligibility when an extension for VP will be considered.

REFERENCES

Hyperlinks

Users accessing this document by computer may create a direct connection to the following references by clicking on them.

• CFS P&P Dependency Intake (A-0502)
• CFS P&P Team Decision Making (D-0308)
• CFS P&P Out-of-Home Placements (K-0208)
• CFS P&P Special Medical Placements (K-0801)
• CFS P&P Placement Change Notification (K-0209)
• CFS P&P CalWORKS—CFS Collaboration (D-0502)
• Attachment 1—Icebreakers Protocol
• CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—CW51 – Child Support – Good Cause Claim for Noncooperation
• EZ Mapping for CMS Case Plan – Update Instructions
• CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Creating A New Placement Home
• CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Generating and Viewing Documents in a Case
• CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Qualifying Referral/Case Contact Instructions
• CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Ending Foster and Non-Foster Care Placements/Placement Episodes
• CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Search, Update, or Enter Education & School/Ed Providers Instructions
• CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Instructions
• CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Education Provider Information Request Form
• CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Family Engagement Efforts

CCSSA

Other Sources Other printed references include the following:

None.

REQUIRED FORMS

Online Forms Forms listed below may be printed out and completed, or completed online, and may be accessed by clicking on the link provided.

Form Name	Form Number
Voluntary Placement Agreement–Placement Request	SOC 155
Voluntary Placement Agreement–Placement Request (Spanish)	SOC 155SP
Voluntary Placement Agreement–Parent/Agency (Indian Child)	SOC 155C
Agency-Foster Parents Agreement	SOC 156
Agency-Foster Parents Agreement (Spanish)	SOC 156SP
Statement of Behaviors With Potential Risk and/or Safety Concerns	F063-25-86
Client/Resident Personal Property and Valuables	LIC 621
Client/Resident Personal Property and Valuables (Spanish)	LIC 621SP
Children and Family Services Notification of Transfer of Youth	F063-25-286
Standard Medication Order for over-the-Counter Medications	F0912-12-191
Identification and Emergency Information	LIC 601
Identification and Emergency Information (Spanish)	LIC 601SP
Centrally Stored Medication and Destruction Record	LIC 622
Centrally Stored Medication and Destruction Record (Spanish)	LIC 622SP
Child Support – Good Cause Claim for Noncooperation	CW 51
Appraisal Needs and Services	F063-28-286 & F063-28-287
Personal Rights Children’s Residential Facilities	LIC 613B
Personal Rights Children’s Residential Facilities (Spanish)	LIC 613B SP
Health and Education Passport Letter	F063-28-314
Health and Education Passport Letter (Spanish)	F063-28-314SP
Placement Coordination Stop Payment Memo	F063-29-61

CCSSA

Hard Copy Forms

Forms listed below must be completed in hard copy (including multi-copy NCR forms). ***For reference purposes only,*** links are provided to view these hard copy forms, where available.

Form Name	Form Number
Parental Contact Record	F0912-25-173
Children and Family Service Periodic Medical/Dental Exam Report	F063-28-336
CHDP Referral	PM 357
Authorization for Medical Care	F063-28-13
Voluntary Placement Information Checklist	F063-25-564
Resource Families Visitation Agreement (Voluntary Placement)	F063-25-565
Resource Families Visitation Agreement (Voluntary Placement) (Spanish)	F063-25-565SP
Team Decision Making Meeting Summary	F063-25-447
Team Decision Making Meeting Summary (Spanish)	F063-25-447Sp
Orange County Health Care Agency Informed Consent	F346-301.5
Voluntary Placement Child's Medical/Education Information	F063-25-574

CWS/CMS Forms

The following forms may **only** be obtained in CWS/CMS. ***For reference purposes only,*** links are provided to view these CWS/CMS forms, where available.

Form Name	Form Number
Foster Care Application Information (FCApp)	F063-28-307
Placement Information Change (PIC) Notice	F063-28-301

OCSSA

Brochures Brochures to distribute in conjunction with this procedure include:

Brochure Name	Brochure Number
CHDP Medical and Dental Exams for Children and Youth and Family Planning Services	(Available in Placement Coordination Unit)
Icebreaker Brochure	F063-25-400
Icebreaker Brochure (Spanish)	F063-25-400SP
CHDP Medical & Dental Health Check-ups	PUB 183
Special Education Rights for Children and Families	(Available in Placement Coordination Unit)
Attention Parents: Help Keep Your Children Healthy!	F272-20.2254
Caregiver and Children and Family Services' Partnership Coordination of Care Guidelines	F063-28-348
Caregiver and Children and Family Services' Partnership Coordination of Care Guidelines (Spanish)	F063-28-348SP
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)	(Available in Placement Coordination Unit)
Children's Records	F063-28-284
Following Exposure to Blood or Bodily Fluid	F063-28-332
Following Exposure to Blood or Bodily Fluid (Spanish)	F063-28-332Sp
Universal/Standard Care Precautions: Foster Care Nursing Recommendations	F063-28-331
Universal/Standard Care Precautions: Foster Care Nursing Recommendations (Spanish)	F063-28-331SP
Family Resource Centers	(Available in Placement Coordination Unit)
Psychotropic Medication Update	F063-25-457
Psychotropic Medication Update (Spanish)	F063-25-457SP

PROCEDURE

Required Actions	The following actions must be completed when VP of a non-dependent child is requested by a parent/guardian or when evaluating as an intervention in lieu of protective custody.	
Staff Responsible	**Step**	**Required Action**
Assigned ER or VFS Senior Social Worker (SSW)	**1.**	Receive request for temporary VP of a child by parent/guardian on an open Voluntary Family Services (VFS) case or identify as potential intervention on an Emergency Response (ER) referral.
	2.	Evaluate appropriateness of VP, utilizing criteria outlined in policy above.
	3.	Consult with Senior Social Services Supervisor (SSSS).
	4.	When considering VP with a relative, contact FC Eligibility supervisor to request pre-screening of financial eligibility.

OCSSA

	5.	When considering VP in a group home, conduct staffing with representatives from the MTS and Placement Coordination Services programs.
	6.	For mutual clients, contact CalWORKS to determine eligibility for services. Refer to CFS P&P CalWORKs-CFS Collaboration (D-0502) for more information on mutual clients.
	7.	For potential VP on an ER referral, contact VFS, FC Eligibility, and Placement Coordination Services programs to request representatives to attend TDM.
	8.	Schedule and attend TDM, per Team Decision Making Meeting policy section above.
	9.	Sign *Voluntary Placement Agreement-Placement Request (SOC 155 or SOC 155C)* with parent/guardian(s).
	10.	If representative from Placement Coordination Services did not attend TDM, call Diversion desk (935-7080) to request placement assessment. • Identify as VP • Provide information, as requested
Placing Social Worker	**11.**	Complete home assessment and background clearances.
	12.	Complete placement paperwork, including Foster Care Application (FCApp). Refer to CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Generating and Viewing Documents in a Case for direction on this process. **Note:** Specialized Family Services (SFS) to complete on children identified as having special medical needs.
	13.	Facilitate Icebreaker, per Icebreaker policy section above. Refer to CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Family Engagement Efforts.
Placement Coordination Clerical Staff	**14.**	Complete CWS/CMS VP data entry. Refer to CWS Data Entry Standards—Creating A New Placement Home for direction on this process.
Assigned ER or VFS SSW	**15.**	Develop VP case plan in CWS/CMS, per VP Case Plan policy section above. Ensure that auto text “vpsig” is included as bullet on the signature page. Refer to EZ Mapping for CMS Case Plan – Update for further direction on this process.
	16.	For ER referrals, complete referral paperwork and submit to Senior Social Services Supervisor (SSSS) for review, approval, and transfer to VFS, per standard procedure.

OCSSA

Assigned VFS SSW	**17.**	Obtain child's pertinent medical and education history and information from the parent/guardian. • Forward copy of *Voluntary Placement Child's Medical/Education Information (F063-25-574)* to Supervising Public Health Nurse (PHN) for review and assignment to PHN (building 127) • Provide educational information from *Voluntary Placement Child's Medical/Education Information (F063-25-574)* to unit clerk for entry into CWS/CMS
Supervising PHN/Designee	**18.**	Receive *Voluntary Placement Child's Medical/Education Information (F063-25-574)* from assigned SSW and assign to PHN for review, further assessment when deemed necessary, and data entry into CWS/CMS.
Assigned VFS SSW's Unit Clerk	**19.**	Receive educational information from assigned SSW and enter into CWS/CMS, per Educational Information policy section above. Refer to the following for further direction on data entry. • CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Search, Update, or Enter Education & School/Ed Providers Instructions • CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Instructions • CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Education Provider Information Request Form
Assigned VFS SSW	**20.**	Review information in *Health and Education Passport* with caregiver and provide copy of document to caregiver for reference. Ensure that caregiver is apprised of child's significant medical and education history.
	21.	Monitor case, per standard procedure, with an emphasis on consistent information sharing. Refer to CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Qualifying Referral/Case Contact Instructions for direction on this process.
	22.	When applicable, complete reassessment after five months of VP, following guidelines provided in Duration and Extension of VP policy sections above. **Note:** Upon removal from placement, notify Placement Hotline (714-704-8407) immediately and complete *Placement Information Change (PIC) Notice (F063-28-301)*. Refer to CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Ending Foster and Non-Foster Care Placements/Placement Episodes for direction on this process.
	23.	When a petition is filed on a child in VP, notify Placement Coordination Services to modify the placement paperwork.

OCSSA