

S-220 END OF PLACEMENTS



In this document, the non implicit gender applies to both men and women.

Version 2 effective February 25, 2008

(previously SE-22)

Policy

Ending the placement of a child under Valoris' care following a **temporary care agreement** must be approved by a supervisor following a case discussion to determine that the risk to the child has been reduced sufficiently and that this decision is in the child's best interest.

The placement of a child under Valoris' care following a court order may not be terminated until the court reviews the child's status. The child may return to his parents' home for a trial period (a maximum of a few weeks) before the court review to determine if a return home plan may be considered. A ward of the Crown aged 16 or over may not decide to terminate his placement unless the court terminates the wardship order.

Before or at the time of his departure, staff must put support measures in place, if possible, to improve the possibility of the child's return home to his family and the community succeeding.

Procedure

1. Voluntary care agreement

The decision to return a child/youth to his family or another responsible person must be made during a case discussion involving the child's welfare worker, if applicable, his supervisor, the family's welfare worker and his supervisor. The decision must take into account the assessment of the risk for the child of returning home, the progress made by his parents and the return conditions. This matter may also be discussed with the Permanency Planning Committee.

Staff shall plan the child's reintegration and return home, providing support services to the parents and the child to increase the probability of his successful reintegration into his family.

The family's welfare worker shall become responsible for any interventions, if the family's file remains open, as soon as the child is officially returned to his family and the temporary care agreement is terminated. In exceptional cases, the child's welfare worker may continue to visit the child at his parents' home or elsewhere even though his placement is officially over and his file is closed. However, the family's welfare worker shall be responsible for the entire file during reintegration. That must be done with the parents' consent or under a court order.

When a parent decides to end a placement agreement before it expires, the family's welfare worker and his supervisor must consult with the child's welfare worker and his supervisor to decide if it is possible for the child to return home, taking the child's risk assessment and best interests into account. Otherwise, apprehending the child must be considered.

2. Society and Crown wardship

A youth may apply to have his placement terminated without the Agency's agreement. He must, however, be supported in this process. A child welfare worker may encourage a youth to return to his family of origin and be in agreement with the plan to terminate his wardship.

The decision to ask the court to terminate a Crown wardship is a major step and must also be made during a case discussion with the Permanency Planning Committee. This case discussion shall involve the child's welfare worker, his supervisor and the members of the Permanency Planning Committee. When the parents have retained their right of access to their child, a short trial period may be tried before initiating the legal process. The Ministry must be informed of these procedures in writing.

A ward of the Crown whose parents do not have access rights may never contact his family in an attempt to return home until this order has been reviewed by the court.

3. Actions to take before and at the end of placements

The child's welfare worker or another authorized employee must:

- personally accompany the child upon his return to his parents' home or elsewhere;
- give the child all his clothes and personal items: sports equipment, photos, life book, souvenirs, school items;
- advise the parents or guardians of all planned medical and dental appointments, if applicable;
- discuss the child's placement experience with him as required by the preplacement contact rules. **Underline this discussion in his intervention notes to clearly show that this rule has been complied with;**
- give the child or his parents/guardians his health card, his birth certificate and his immunization record;
- advise the parents that they must reapply for the *Child Tax Benefit*;
- complete electronic case closure to reflect the child's return home to his parents or other authorized adults and give it the supervisor for approval;
- advise the school of the child's return home to his parents or his departure from school, if applicable;
- if the child must change schools, plan his registration with his parents;
- complete the required documentation before closing the child's file.

4. End of placements of youths aged 16 and over

If possible, a youth (voluntary care agreement) who decides to leave the Agency's care to live independently must receive the necessary preparation and support from his child welfare worker:

- information needed to obtain financial support and an apartment;
- independence preparation training;
- references to community agencies to obtain furniture and other services.

Since Crown wardships only end at age 18, if a 16-year old ward of the Crown decides to leave Valoris' care, his child welfare worker must advise his supervisor and the Ministry. The child welfare worker must explain to him that Valoris will remain responsible for him until he is 18 unless he takes steps to have his status legally reviewed by the court. The child welfare worker must continue to work with the young person and make the required statutory visits until the court changes his legal status.

Like any responsible parent, Valoris would like to take care of and support young people under its responsibility until they reach adulthood or even longer. Despite the fact that a 16-year old youth no longer wants the assistance of his legal guardian, Valoris will not take any steps to end the wardship of a youth under 18. The only exceptions are cases where Valoris agrees with a plan to return him home to his family and that decision is endorsed by the Permanency Planning Committee.

Definitions, annexes and references

Definition

Parents: Includes biological parents, adoptive parents, step-mother, step-father or all other persons responsible for the child previous to Valoris' involvement.

References

- *Foster Care Licensing Manual*, Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1999;
- *0202-07: Learning about Placements after a Child Leaves (1999)*.