

# S-221 CHILDREN'S FILES AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION



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

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(previously SE-23)

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## **Policy**

Child Welfare Workers must keep complete and up-to-date files on children during their placement.

Children aged 12 and over are entitled to know about their files and to consult them. They must also give their consent when other people ask to have access to their files.

Their files must be kept in a file cabinet. Child Welfare Workers may not take files out of the office without first obtaining the supervisor's consent.

## **Procedure**

### **1. File contents**

The following information and documents must be kept in the pertinent sections of each child's file:

- Family history: admission assessment, social histories;
- Psychological and psychiatric documents;
- Medical, dental and optometric files;
- School documents;
- Serious incidents reported to the Ministry;
- Disclosure authorization: school, medical, psychological, psychotropics, general;
- Court orders - child's legal status, agreements;
- Plan of care/programming: LAC, programming, annual plan of care, plan of care reviews, Child Welfare Worker's statutory reports and their reviews;
- Summary of contacts: of Child Welfare Workers and other professionals such as integration officers;
- Correspondence;
- Official documents: health card number, social insurance number, birth certificate, etc.;
- Child's personal documents: photos, correspondence from the child's parents;
- Supervised visits: summary of contacts;
- All documents related to the child.

### **2. File checks**

A child's welfare worker must ensure that all documents are updated and placed in the file by the team assistant before the Ministry's annual review of the files of children placed by the Ministry.

### 3. Access to files by children, parents and foster parents

A placed child, his parents or his foster parents who wish to read his file must apply to the child's welfare worker and explain their reasons.

The child's welfare worker must follow up on this request within 30 days.

Parents may read their child's file. If the child is over 12, he must give his written consent.

Foster parents may read the files of children living with them. If the child is over 12, he must give his written consent.

Before giving access to a child's/youth's file, the Child Welfare Worker must consult with his supervisor. He must read the file in advance and remove any information that might identify third parties or make copies of certain documents and cross out that information. The Child Welfare Worker must inform the child of this.

After the age of 12, youths under Valoris' care may access their own files. If a youth is under 18, his Child Welfare Worker or another designated employee must accompany him and read the contents of his file to him and/or explain it to him.

If a child is over 18, he may consult his file himself while having a Child Welfare Worker available and accessible to answer his questions or to find documents.

Parents and/or youths may ask for copies of certain non-confidential documents. Some documents, such as psychological and psychiatric assessments and other documents of which Valoris is not the author, must be obtained directly from their authors, subject to the appropriate consents.

## 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:
  - 0204-02: *Contents Of Foster Child Files*;
  - 0204-05: *Access to Information-Foster Child*;
  - 0204-04: *Security of Information*;
- S-103: Confidentiality;
- S-104: Disclosure of confidential information to a Third Party.