



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

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(previously SE-06)

Policy

Placement of a child under Valoris care must be seen initially as a temporary and short-term measure. The main goal always consists of returning the child in his family of origin. As such, a plan for returning the child to his parents must be drawn up upon his admission.

Therefore, as far as possible, staff shall encourage parents to continue to take part in making decisions that affect their child's life during his placement with Valoris. Staff and foster parents must help develop and consolidate positive relationships and interactions between parents and their children.

The Agency must foster the continuity of the bonds between children and their families by arranging for regular contacts between them. Parents must be encouraged to attend school and medical meetings concerning their children.

Of course, this policy does not apply in cases where a court has withdrawn or limited parents' access rights or when their involvement might pose a risk to a child or his foster family.

Procedure

1. Preplacement or placement

To lessen the traumatizing effect of separation and the concerns a child might have concerning his placement, the Child Welfare Worker must encourage the parent(s) to accompany the child to the foster family during the preplacement or placement visit. The presence of the parents, when that is possible, is the starting point for their active and continuing participation in their child's life during his placement.

Before placement, the parents must be consulted about their child's religious practices, education and interests (art, music, games), medical and dental care, daily routines and eating habits, and that information must be communicated to the foster family.

The Child Welfare Worker must explain to the parents the importance of giving the child his clothes, family photos and personal effects, and he must encourage them to cooperate. The Child Welfare Worker must reassure the parents regarding the foster parents' ability to take good care of their child and must inform them of what is expected of them as regards their respect of the foster family.

2. Integration of the child into the foster family and the community

The parents must be consulted regarding their child's religious practices and medical and dental care so that he may receive care and services from professionals who know him. For example, we prefer that children continue to receive care from their family doctor and dentist.

If a child must attend a new school, the Child Welfare Worker may ask the parents for their opinions and/or assistance in enrolling the child in a school in his foster family's community. A Child Welfare Worker may not move a child from one school board to another without the authorization of the parents. Parents must know what school their child is attending, be informed of his progress and be invited to attend meetings with teachers, if they so desire.

3. Plan of Care

In the case of children placed temporarily under our care, either through a temporary agreement (T.C.A.) or as a CAS ward, the family's welfare worker must help the parents achieve goals favouring the child's return to his parents' home as quickly as possible.

The child's care plan must be drawn up in consultation with the parents and must include conditions for consolidating and/or maintaining relationships between the child and his parents as well as the responsibilities assigned to the parents as regards their child: contacts with him, accompanying him to the doctor/dentist, etc.

The parents must be consulted before any major decisions are taken concerning the child and we must respect their values.

The Child Welfare Worker and the foster parents must encourage the parents to get involved in important events in their child's life: birthday, first communion, Christmas holidays, Easter, purchase of clothing, etc.

Foster parents must never discourage or forbid a child from seeing his parents. They must not object to the child talking about his parents or expressing his feelings towards them. Foster parents must never judge the parents or debase them in the eyes of placed children.

4. Supervised and unsupervised contacts of parents with their children

The Child Welfare Worker shall encourage the parents to visit and communicate with their child by letter or phone, in accordance with the conditions of the care program, unless that is inadvisable or a condition of a court order.

The parents shall be responsible for their own travel expenses. Please see policy and procedure S-602 Transportation of passengers by volunteer drivers.

The Agency may cover the costs of long-distance calls if they are made by or for the child to his family.

5. Child's legal surname

The Agency and the foster parents must use the child's legal surname and encourage him to do so also:

- at school and in school files;
- on job applications;

- in his medical files;
- on his driver's licence;
- in court hearings.

The supervisor might, in consultation with the foster parents, exceptionally authorize the child to use the foster parents' surname, if he believes that is in the child's best interest.

In order to avoid a feeling of disloyalty towards his parents, the child must be encouraged by the foster parents to express himself freely with them without deteriorating his emotional bonds with his parents.

6. Life Book

The foster parents must keep or encourage older placed children to keep a **Life Book**. It might contain photos of his biological family and other photos or important documents. During his placement, the child, assisted by his foster parents, shall update it by adding photos of his foster family, school materials such as certificates, report cards, letters, souvenirs, birthday and Christmas cards and notes by the foster parents on his development and progress.

This book shall be given to the child or his parents when he returns home or changes foster families.

Definitions, annexes and references

Definition

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

References

- *Foster Care Licensing Manual*, Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1999:
 - 0203-02: *Child's Own Family*
 - 0302-02: *Child's Own Family*
- S-602 Transportation of passengers by volunteer drivers