

**BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR A RECEIVING
STATE'S SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN PLACED
BY A SENDING STATE VIA THE ICPC**

ICPC SUPERVISION REPORT

QUALITY CASEWORKER VISITS

Speaker

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Best Practice Guidelines for a Receiving State's Supervision of Children Placed by a Sending State via the ICPC

Guiding Principle: Children placed out-of-state with a placement resource in another state will be supervised by the receiving state in the same manner and in accordance with the same standards that children under the jurisdiction of the receiving state are supervised.

Key elements of effective supervision by a receiving state:

- Supervision begins after the placement has been approved by the ICPC office in the receiving state, and the sending state has provided the receiving state with a form 100B indicating that the child has been placed with the approved placement resource.
- First face-to-face contact with the child in the child's home will occur as soon as possible and no later than 30 days from the date that the receiving state is notified that the child has been placed.
- Face-to-Face contacts with the child and with the child's care-giver(s)/placement resource(s) will occur with the same frequency and in the same manner that face-to-face contacts occur for children under the jurisdiction of the public child welfare agency in the receiving state. At a minimum, face to face contacts will occur at least once per month, as required by Section 422 of the Federal Social Security Act. In part, this federal law requires that ***“children are visited on a monthly basis and that the caseworker visits are well-planned and focused on issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children”***.
- Face to face contacts with children will occur ***at the child's residence*** as often as possible.
- Face to face contacts with children will be made by the caseworker in the receiving state who is assigned to supervise the placement.
- Keeping in mind that the sending state bears ultimate financial responsibility for meeting the needs of the child and supporting the child's placement, the supervising worker in the receiving state will assist the child and the child's care-givers in accessing services and supports that are available and can be provided

by the receiving state, such as health care, mental health services, public assistance, educational services, etc..

- When visiting with the family in person or by phone, the supervising worker in the receiving state will do what is possible, and what is appropriate to the role of a supervising worker, to keep the family focused on the achievement of the child's case plan goals established by the child welfare agency in the sending state and to assist the family in the achievement of those goals.
- At least once every ninety days the supervising caseworker in the receiving state will prepare a written report with regard to the child's placement, and will send a copy of the report to the ICPC office in his or her state. At a minimum the report will include the following:
 - Dates and locations of face-to-face contacts with the child
 - A summary of the child's current circumstances, including a statement regarding the on-going safety and well-being of the child in placement, and a description of any safety concerns
 - Where applicable, a summary of the child's school performance (include copies of IEP documents, educational evaluations, report cards, or other school records if available)
 - A summary of the child's current health/medical/mental health status, including the dates of any medical/dental appointments and the identity of the healthcare provider seen (include copies of evaluations, reports or other pertinent records)
 - A description of any unmet needs and any recommendations for meeting identified needs
 - Where applicable, the supervising caseworker's recommendation regarding any of the following:
 - continuation of current placement
 - return of custody to parent and termination of sending state's jurisdiction
 - finalization of adoption
 - granting of guardianship to existing care-givers
- The supervising caseworker and other child welfare authorities in the receiving state will act on reports of child abuse and neglect involving children placed from out-of-state in the same manner that reports of child abuse or neglect are acted upon when children from the receiving state are involved.

Excerpted from a September 2006 publication of the National Conference of State Legislatures, entitled Child Welfare Caseworker Visits with Children and Parents

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/caseworkervisits.htm>

Quality Caseworker Visits

So what comprises a quality caseworker visit? There certainly are key elements that quality visits should include. For example, they should be:

- Scheduled to meet suggested national or prescribed state standards and the needs of children and families.
- Primarily held in the family home (biological and foster) and at times convenient for children and both biological and foster parents.
- Planned in advance of the visit, with issues noted for exploration and goals established for the time spent together.
- Open enough to offer opportunities for meaningful consultation with and by children and parents.
- Individualized; for example, providing separate time for discussions with children and parents. This provides the opportunity to privately share their experiences and concerns and to ensure that domestic violence or other issues that might not be disclosed when other family members are present are identified and addressed, as needed.
- Focused on the child and family's case plan and the completion of actions necessary to support children and families in achieving the goals established in their plans.
- Exploratory in nature, examining changes in the child's or family's circumstances on an ongoing basis.
- Supportive and skill-generating, so that children and families feel safe in dealing with challenges and change and have the tools to take advantage of new opportunities.

Although these and other caseworker visit practices are important, the overall focus of the visits is most important. For caseworker visits to be successful, the focus should shift from examining only the performance of families (for example, did the parent attend the substance abuse treatment offered?) to assessing both the performance of the agency and caseworker (for example, did the agency ensure that the treatment matched the needs, age and gender of the intended recipient and was

available at a time and location appropriate to their schedule?) and how well the family is functioning relative to the support and services provided by the agency.

This fundamental shift in perspective promotes caseworker engagement in a continuous quality improvement loop similar to that which most child welfare agencies are now implementing. Their goals for a visit with a family are casework goals and goals related to a family's progress. Moreover, child welfare agencies should monitor the link between the achievement of the caseworker's goals and the achievement of family goals. When assessing a visit, caseworkers might ask the following general questions (as well as others specific to the family visited):

- Did I spend sufficient time planning the visit, did I meet the goals established for the visit, and what were the positive outcomes for the family associated with meeting my goals?
- What worked well during this visit, and how might I share my successful approaches with other agency staff? How will I track patterns in the success of specific approaches so that I might report those to my supervisor for possible incorporation into the agency's case practice procedures?
- What types of challenges did I experience during the visit and how might I have addressed those better? Are there specific areas in which I need additional guidance or training?
- What did I learn through the visit that needs to be addressed (family needs/goals and caseworker performance goals)?

Each question is designed to create a new level of self-examination among caseworkers—a continuous quality examination that will lead to improvements in individual caseworker and agency performance. Legislators can support state child welfare agency administrators in creating this shift in perspective and operation through the analysis of overarching child welfare system successes and challenges.