

BUTLER COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

POLICY NO.: 2.4	SUBJECT: CLIENT CONTACT POLICY
OAC: 5101:2-38-01, 2-37-02, 2-38-05, 2-42-65, 2-48-17	EFFECTIVE DATE: 9/30/02
	REVISION DATE: 3/23/04, 9/07, 3/08, 4/09
	REVIEW DATE: 3/22/05, 9/07, 3/08, 4/09

PURPOSE: To ensure frequent, consistent, and ongoing face-to-face contact between the caseworker and the child(ren), parent(s) or guardian, and substitute caregiver (when applicable) according to Ohio Administrative codes and standards of best practice. Ongoing contact is essential for assessing the health, safety, and well-being of the children and families being served. Consistent contact between the caseworker and client facilitates a stronger relationship and promotes client participation.

Each family has differing needs and safety considerations, which may require adjusting the frequency of worker involvement. The need to deviate from the general guidelines will be addressed by the worker and supervisor during case staffing. The general frequency for client contact when a child is in placement is listed below. The section following is a chart form of client contact for all cases.

POLICY:

- A. Contact by an agency representative for children entering a new placement should be as follows:
 - 1. At least one visit shall occur in the substitute care setting during the first week of placement, not including the first day of placement.
 - 2. At least one visit shall occur in the substitute care setting during the first four weeks of placement, other than during the first week of placement.
 - 3. Ongoing contact is listed in the chart below.

- B. Contact by an agency representative for children entering Residential Treatment, should be as follows:
 - 1. Agency representative shall at a minimum phone the Residential Treatment Center within twenty four hours of placement.
 - 2. Agency representative shall at a minimum phone the Residential Treatment Center within ten days after a placement.
 - 3. Ongoing contact is listed in the chart below.

- C. Contact by an adoption assessor for children entering an adoptive placement, should be as follows:
 - 1. An Assessor shall contact the adoptive parents within four days of placement by telephone to determine how the placement is progressing.
 - 2. An assessor shall make a face-to-face home visit with the adoptive parent(s) and child no later than seven days following the adoptive placement. Post-placement visits shall continue to be held by the assessor in the home within thirty days from each of the last preceding visits.

- D. When a child is placed in a BCCS treatment foster home, the BCCS foster care specialist shall follow the guidelines in the foster care policy manual for visits and contacts which are in addition to the child's workers required contacts.
- E. Monthly contact must not exceed 31 days from the last visit.

Case Type	Contact	Frequency	Location
<u>Voluntary</u>	Child	Once a month Face to Face (F/F). In-home safety plan - weekly F/F . Out-of-home safety plan - weekly contact either F/F or by telephone, with every other week F/F.	Home Home At least 1X per month in the substitute care setting.
	Parent/Guardian	Once a month F/F in the home In-home safety plan – weekly F/F. Out-of-home safety plan – once a month F/F.	Home Home At least one contact every two months. Must be in the parents' home.
	Persons responsible for action steps in safety plan	Weekly contact either F/F or by telephone.	Home or other
<u>Court Ordered Protective Supervision</u> Per court order or as listed in chart, whichever is more frequent.	Child	One visit per month in the home	Home or other
	Parent/Guardian	Same as above	Home or other
	Party to Case Plan	As applicable	As applicable
<u>Temporary Care & Custody</u> Every month. Must be in the home	Child	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Parent/Guardian	Monthly F/F	Home or other Every other month in the home.
	Out-of-Home Care Provider	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Party to Case Plan		As applicable
<u>Permanent Care & Custody</u> Every month. Must be in the home	Child	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Out-of-Home care Provider	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Party to Case Plan	As applicable	As applicable
<u>Planned Permanent Living Arrangement</u> Every month. Must be in the home	Child	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Parent/Guardian	TBD	TBD
	Out-of-Home Care Provider	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Party to Case Plan	As applicable	As applicable

<u>Group Home and Residential Treatment</u> Every month. Must be in the home	Child	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Parent/Guardian	Refer to custody status	Refer to custody status
	Out-of-Home Care Provider	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Party to Case Plan	As applicable	As applicable
<u>Adoptive Placement</u> Every month. Must be in the home	Child Adoptive Parent All other members of the household	Monthly F/F Monthly F/F At least every sixty days.	Adoptive Home Adoptive Home Adoptive Home

E. It is the responsibility of the worker to ensure that the required contact is documented and includes the required items listed below (as applicable to the case).

F. Client contact should address the following (as applicable to the case):

1. Family assessment strengths & concerns (review/update)
2. Safety plan
3. Case plan goal, objectives, and progress
4. The child's developmental progress (educational, social, physical, emotional, etc.)
5. Interaction between the child and the parent/guardian
6. Upcoming events (semi-annual review, court hearings, etc.)
7. Behaviors and progress in the home
8. Behaviors and progress in school
9. Progress and/or barriers related to referred services
10. Employment issues
11. Basic needs
12. Family Concerns
13. Child's adjustment to placement and behaviors in the home
14. Family visitation update
15. Medical/dental appointments
16. Life book

G. During any contact with the family, the worker should be discussing who is in the family, who their friends are, who they depend on for support, etc. along with addresses and phone numbers. This information is most helpful in the event a child is removed from the home. Family members and friends can be participants in a safety plan and/ or be a resource for placement of the child if needed. This information should be entered into SACWIS under the associated persons.

H. Documentation of Client Contact: It is the expectation that face to face client contacts are entered into the SACWIS activity log within 24 hours of returning to their workstation. All other activity log entries should be no further back than 30 days. Contact made by Network representatives for children in placement will be entered into SACWIS by an assigned staff member in the financial unit when the monthly Network reports are received. BCCS caseworkers will use the following to document client contact:

- a. Visitation records.
- b. Sacwis activity log.

- I. In situations where the family is absent for a scheduled visit, or the worker has been unable to make the required contact, the worker follows the missed appointment with a phone attempt to reschedule, an unscheduled home visit, or letter. If the family does not respond, or the worker is unable to make contact, the worker must consult with the unit supervisor to determine if:
 1. Another phone contact, letter transmittal, or unannounced home visit should be made.
 2. Law enforcement should be contacted for assistance.
 3. Court action should be initiated.

The following are the Ohio Administrative Code requirements for client contact:

OAC 5101:2-38-01 Requirements for PCSA case plan for in-home supportive services without a court order.

- (R) The agency shall make face-to-face contact with each parent, guardian or custodian, and child participating in and being provided services through the JFS 1444 no less than monthly to monitor progress on the case plan objectives. At least one contact every two months must be made in the child's home.
- (S) If the initial attempt of face-to-face contact pursuant to the above paragraph of this rule is unsuccessful, the agency shall attempt a minimum of two additional face-to-face contacts within the calendar month.

OAC 5101:2-37-02 PCSA requirements for Safety Planning.

- (N) The PCSA shall monitor safety plans to ensure that the action steps are controlling the identified safety threats. The monitoring plan requires the following:
 - (1) To monitor an in-home safety plan, the PCSA shall conduct weekly home visits. During the home visits, the PCSA shall make face-to-face contact with each child, parent, guardian, or custodian involved.
 - (2) To monitor an out-of-home safety plan, the PCSA shall have weekly contact with the children or persons responsible for an action step either by telephone or face-to-face. The PCSA shall have face-to-face contact with each child involved every other week.
 - (3) To monitor a legally authorized out-of-home placement safety plan, the PCSA shall have face-to-face contact with the child, parent, guardian, or custodian pursuant to paragraphs (R) and/or (S) of rule 5101:2-38-05 of the Administrative Code.

OAC 5101:2-38-05 PCSA case plan for children in custody or under court-ordered protective supervision.

- (R) For court-ordered protective supervision cases, the agency shall make face-to-face contact with each parent, guardian or custodian, or if applicable, pre-finalized adoptive parent and child participating in and being provided services through the case plan no less than monthly to monitor progress on the case plan objectives. At least one contact every two months must be made in the child's home.
- (S) For cases with children in custody, face-to-face contact with the child shall be made pursuant to 5101:2-42-65. Face-to-face contact with the parent, guardian or custodian or if applicable, pre-finalized adoptive parent participating in and being provided services through the case plan shall be made no less than monthly to monitor progress on the case plan

objectives. At least one contact every two months must be made in the parent's, guardian's, custodian's, or if applicable, pre-finalized adoptive parent's home.

- (T) If the initial attempt of face-to-face contact pursuant to paragraphs (R) and/or (S) of this rule is unsuccessful, the agency shall make a minimum of two additional attempts to complete the face-to-face contacts within the calendar month.
- (U) The agency may suspend home visits with the parent, guardian or custodian of a child in agency custody when conducting visits in the home presents a threat to the safety of the caseworker. A written justification to suspend visits in the home shall be documented in the case record and shall include all of the following:
 - (1) Identification of the specific threat to the caseworker's safety and the person who poses the threat;
 - (2) Documentation of other measures taken to assure worker safety prior to suspension of home visits;
 - (3) The anticipated length of time that home visits are to be suspended; and
 - (4) The signature of the executive director or his designee authorizing suspension of home visits.
- (V) When home visits are suspended pursuant to paragraph (U) of this rule, the agency shall conduct monthly face-to-face visits with the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child in a location which assists in ensuring the safety of the caseworker.

OAC 5101:2-42-65 Agency visits and contacts with children in substitute care.

- (A) The PCSA or PCPA holding custody of a child who is placed in a substitute care setting shall comply with the provisions set forth in this rule regarding agency visits and contacts with the child and the substitute caregivers to discuss and assess the adjustment of the child during placement and to determine the need for continued substitute care placement pursuant to rule 5101:2-42-68 of the Administrative Code.
- (B) For a child placed in a relative or non-relative approved home pursuant to rule 5101:2-42-18 of the Administrative Code or a foster home or group home certified in Ohio, the agency shall:
 - (1) Conduct at least one face-to-face visit with the child and substitute caregiver within the substitute care setting during the first week of placement, not including the first day of placement.
 - (2) Conduct at least one face-to-face visit with the child and the substitute caregiver within the substitute care setting during the first four weeks of placement, not including the visit during the first week of placement.
 - (3) Conduct at least one face-to-face visit with the child and the substitute caregiver monthly with at least one of the visits occurring in the substitute care setting within each six-month period.
 - (4) In a foster home which has two or more foster caregivers on the certificate, assure that each foster caregiver receives at least one of the face-to-face visits referenced in paragraphs (B)(1) to (B)(3) of this rule in each two-month period.
- (C) For a child placed in a treatment or medically fragile foster home certified in Ohio in which the foster caregiver is providing care for a child for whom a special, exceptional, or intensive

needs difficulty of care payment is made pursuant to rule 5101:2-47-21 of the Administrative Code, the agency shall:

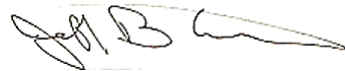
- (1) Conduct at least one face-to-face visit with the child and substitute caregiver within the substitute care setting during the first week of placement, not including the first day of placement.
 - (2) Contact the caregiver at least once each week to monitor the child's progress.
 - (3) Conduct face-to-face visits with the caregiver and child at least once every two weeks with at least one of the visits occurring in the treatment or medically fragile foster home each month.
 - (4) In a foster home which has two or more foster caregivers on the certificate, assure that each foster caregiver receives at least one of the face-to-face visits referenced in paragraphs (C) (1) to (C) (3) of this rule in each two month period.
- (D) For a child placed in a children's residential center (CRC) certified in Ohio, the agency shall:
- (1) Contact the CRC within ten days of placement.
 - (2) Conduct face-to-face visits with the child at least every other month, with at least one visit in each six month period occurring in the CRC.
- (E) For a child who is sixteen years of age or older and placed in an independent living arrangement certified in Ohio in which his is fully responsible for his individual living environment, the agency shall:
- (1) Conduct one face-to-face visit with the child in the living environment within seven days of placement.
 - (2) Conduct monthly face-to-face visits with the child with at least two visits in each six month period occurring in the living environment.
- (F) For a child who is placed through the "Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children" into a substitute care setting outside of Ohio, the agency shall:
- (1) Request the out-of-state children services agency (CSA) to provide needed supervision and services to the child as identified in the child's case plan. Supervisory reports shall be requested no less than quarterly.
 - (2) Contact the substitute care placement setting within ten days of the child's placement and at least every other month thereafter.
 - (3) At least once every six months, conduct a face-to-face visit with the child. The agency may request the supervising CSA in the other state to conduct this visit.

OAC 5101:2-48-17 Pre-finalization services.

- (A) Within four days after an adoptive placement, an assessor from the agency responsible for supervision the adoptive placement shall contact the adoptive parent(s) by telephone to determine how the placement is progressing. An assessor shall make a face-to-face home visit with the adoptive parent(s) and child no later than seven days following the adoptive placement.
- (B) The assessor shall make face-to-face post placement visits in the adoptive parent(s) home with the adoptive parent(s) and the child throughout the finalization period.

- (1) The post placement visit shall occur no later than thirty days after the assessor's last face-to-face home visit with the adoptive parent(s) and the child. Post placement visits shall continue to be held by the assessor in the home within thirty days from each of the last proceeding visits.
 - (2) The assessor shall make face-to-face contact at least every sixty days with all other household members.
- Although the OAC allows for child visits to take place out of the home, every other month, BCCS requires that each child be seen in the home each month.

Approval Date: 9/1/09



Jeff Centers, Executive Director