



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Charlie Crist
Governor

Robert A. Butterworth
Secretary

DATE: June 21, 2007

Robert McHarry
District Administrator

TO: Robert McHarry
District Administrator

FROM: Mary Lynn Smith *ML*
Contract Manager

SUBJECT: Children's Network of Southwest Florida Operating
Procedure # QM-15, Exit Interviews

Attached for your review and approval is Children's Network's revised operating procedure for Exit Interviews. This procedure incorporates changes in 65C-28.017, F.A.C. that requires exit interviews for children leaving any licensed out-of-home placement, including facilities as well as foster homes. It is recommended this revised procedure be approved.

Your favorable consideration would be appreciated. If you should have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at x1490.

Attachment

APPROVED: ✓

DISAPPROVED: _____

DATE: 6/25/07

Robert McHarry

ROBERT MCHARRY
District Administrator

District Eight, P.O. Box 60085, Fort Myers, Florida 33906-0085

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency



Exit Interviews

Department Name Quality Management		
CHAPTER: CFOP 175-61 FAC 65C-28.017	SUBJECT: Exit Interviews with Children in Foster Care	POLICY NUMBER: QM-015
APPROVAL: 	EFFECTIVE DATE: Revisions 6-21-07	REPLACES (policy # and date): CFOP 175-61, dated August 21, 1997 QM-015 dated 12/9/05

I. **PURPOSE:** This policy outlines the Children's Network of Southwest Florida's process regarding interviews with children upon their exit from a licensed out of home care facility or home. The purpose of the interview is to gain the child's perspective concerning the safety and quality of care provided in the placement.

II. **REVIEW HISTORY:** Update 5/29/07

III. **CONTACT:** Quality Management Licensing Specialist

IV. **PERSONS AFFECTED;** Staff at the Children's Network of Southwest Florida and its subcontracted Case Management Organizations.

V. **POLICY:** This policy applies to all children, over the age of 5, who are in the custody of the Department of Children and Families/Children's Network of Southwest Florida and are exiting a licensed out of home placement where they have resided for a minimum of 30 days. The Case Management Organization assigned to the child is directly responsible for obtaining this exit interview from the child.

VI. **RATIONALE:** In order to assess the quality of care in the placement, it is necessary to get the child's perspective about his or her treatment in the home or facility.

VII. **CROSS REFERENCES:** This policy is accordance with Florida

Administrative Code 65C-28.017 and replaces the Department of Children and Families' operating procedure 175-61.

VIII. DEFINITIONS:

- a. Child Exit Interview: The process of directing a specific set of questions to a child who has exited a licensed out of home placement.
- b. Child Exit Interview Form: The specific set of questions designed for use with children from age 5 through 7 and age 8 through 18.

IX. PROCEDURES:

- a. The child exit interview is to be considered anonymous but not confidential. This means the interviewer tells the child that the information shared by the child will eventually reach the foster parent or facility, however, the child's name will not be attached to that information. Even though the foster parent or facility may be able to determine the child's identity, it is important for foster parents and facilities to have the information so that they know how children are responding to the care they provide.
- b. Children ages 5 through their 18th birthday must be interviewed if they have resided in the home or facility for 30 days or more.
- c. The interview must be conducted within five days of the child's exit from the home or facility.
- d. The interview shall not be conducted in the home or facility from which the child just exited. It must take place in a setting where the child feels comfortable and where the conversation can be considered private.
- e. If the child is resistant or unresponsive, the interviewer may gently persist but should reschedule the interview if the child becomes upset or exhibits other behaviors of concern.
- f. Interviewers must be careful not to influence or lead the child in answering the questions through positive or negative facial expressions, body language or comments. Thanking the child for answering the question will encourage the child to answer, but not bias the responses.
- g. Interviewers must record any observations about the child's physical appearance or emotional state (positive or negative) that seem

significant to the interview process.

h. If the child alleges abuse, neglect, or any maltreatment during the exit interview, the interviewer is mandated to make an immediate report to the Abuse Hotline.

i. A child whose exit from the placement is due to running away will be temporarily exempt from the exit interview. Upon the child's return, efforts must be made to interview the child.

5. Response and Follow-Up Requirement. The Case Management Organizations will designate staff to coordinate appropriate responses to both positive and negative feedback from the child exit interviews.

Guidelines are as follows:

a. If the child indicates the quality of care he/she received was above average or exceptional, this information should be purposefully shared with the foster parents or facility as positive reinforcement for their efforts. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways:

(1) Positive responses may be shared during home visit or by letter or phone call.

(2) Positive responses may be summarized in writing on a quarterly basis or read with the foster parent or facility.

b. If the child indicates the quality of care needs improvement, a careful assessment of the child's feedback should follow. An assessment involves consideration of the following:

(1) Child's responses to the interview questions;

(2) Child's developmental level and special needs;

(3) The foster parent(s)' response to the issue(s) raised;

(4) Observations obtained from all staff who have visited in the home within the previous 6 months;

(5) Feedback obtained from other foster children who may have exited the same foster home within the previous 6 months; and,

(6) Feedback obtained from any other relevant sources, e.g., teachers, therapists, guardian ad litem, if applicable.

c. When a safety or quality of care issue raised by the child exiting from a licensed out of home placement is supported by other information, the Case Management Organizations

must develop a corrective action plan. The Department is responsible for follow up action on Child Placing, Child Caring Agencies, and Group Home facilities. The type of corrective action can range from providing more intense supervision/support/training for the foster parent or

facility to a more formal corrective action plan, or a recommendation for revocation of the license, if appropriate. Decisions about the type and manner of response must take into account:

- (1) The seriousness of the issue raised by the child.
- (2) Protection of the child's anonymity.
- (3) Any needs or concerns the foster parent or facility may have expressed.
- (4) The frequency and/or chronic nature of the conduct or condition being addressed.

d. When corrective action is necessary, written follow-up within a pre-determined time frame not to exceed 90 days must occur.

6. Documentation Requirements. The completed interview form, the Case Management Organization's response, if any, and follow-up tasks must be handled as follows:

- a. The completed interview form, Department or contracted services provider response, if any, shall be placed in the child's case record.
- b. A copy of the completed interview form shall be provided to the licensing staff and placed in the out-of-home caregiver's licensing file.
- c. A copy of the completed interview form, Department or contracted service provider response, if any, and record of follow up shall be sent to the Region Program Administrator or Lead Agency Executive Director.
- d. A summary of exit interviews conducted shall be sent to the Department's Office of Family Safety as requested by that office.

X. EXHIBITS:

- A. Directions for the exit interview
- B. Form for children ages 5 – 8
- C. Form for children ages 9 – 18
- D. Complaint form

EXHIBIT A

Directions for Case Management Organization Representatives to complete exit interviews on foster children

- . • This foster child exit interview is only required when the child has resided in a licensed out of home placement for thirty(30) days or more.
- . • This is an interview that is to be conducted by a Case Management Organization staff member with the foster child. Explain to the child the purpose of the interview is to make sure children are living in safe placements, to help foster parents and staff do their best and to find a home they will feel good about.
- . • Prior to the interview, the representative will select the time and location of the interview. The interview should be done in a location that provides the staff member and child an opportunity to talk privately without placing the staff person at risk for allegations.
- . • The interview **cannot** take place in the home or facility the child has just exited.
- . • An audio tape of the interview may be made with the child's consent in order to facilitate a complete transcription of the child's responses.
- . • If the child is resistant or unresponsive, the interviewer may gently persist but should reschedule the interview if the child becomes upset or exhibits other behaviors of concern.
- . • Interviewers must be careful not to influence or lead the child in answering the questions through positive or negative facial expressions, body language or comments. Thanking the child for answering the question will encourage the child to answer but not bias the responses.
- . • Interviewers should record enough detail regarding a child's comments to ensure it is in the context of the child's age and individual circumstances regarding things such as bedtimes, chores, privileges, etc.
- . • Children who have medical or mental conditions that prevent them from being able to comprehend or answer all of the questions will be exempted from this interview process. However, efforts should be made to determine the quality of their care in any home they leave through other means, such as, unannounced visits to the home. This also is true for children under 5 years of age.
- . • Interviewers may record any additional observations about the child's physical appearance or emotional state (positive or negative) that seem important.
- . • If during the interview the child reports an event that would require a call to the Hotline, the interviewer, as a Case Management Organization employee, is mandated to report it to the Hotline.
- . • The representative should ensure that the original interview form is placed in child's case record with one (1) copy going into the licensing file for foster parents, one (1) copy going to the Lead Agency Quality Management Department, and (1) copy going to the Department if the child left a Child Caring Agency, Group Home, or Shelter.
- . • If there are potential licensing violations indicated in the exit interview, the form must also be forwarded to the DCF Licensing Specialist.

EXHIBIT B
YOUTH EXIT INTERVIEW
AGES 5-8

County of licensed placement	Agency
<input type="checkbox"/> Lee <input type="checkbox"/> Charlotte <input type="checkbox"/> Collier <input type="checkbox"/> Hendry/Glades	<input type="checkbox"/> LSF <input type="checkbox"/> FPS <input type="checkbox"/> CCA/DCF

Child's Name: _____

Child's ID # _____ DOB: ___/___/___

Person Conducting the Interview: _____ Work

Phone: _____

Name of Foster Home Child Just Left: _____

Date Placed: ___/___/___ Date Removed: ___/___/___ Date of Interview: ___/___/___

Reason Child left Placement:

- Reunified
 Adopted
 Independent Living
 Disrupted
 Other

	Rating (Please check one box)						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	So So	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	
<i>Please Respond Based on your Experience this Past Licensing Year</i>							Comments or Suggestions <small>(Please Explain Low Ratings:)</small>
1.) I was comfortable and happy in this foster home.							
2.) The children in the home were nice to me.							
3.) I had enough clothing that fit me to wear in this home.							
4.) They fed me healthy meals.							
5.) I liked the way we got ready for bedtime.							
6.) I was taken care of if I was sick or had an accident.							
7.) I was punished fairly when I did something wrong.							
8.) I think this is a good foster home for other children.							6
9.) I felt safe living in this home.							

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11.) The best thing you liked about living in the home was: _____

12.) The worst thing about the home was: _____

13.) If you did something right, what happened? _____

14.) If you did something wrong, what happened? _____

15.) When I asked, I got to call my: Case Manager GAL

Others _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

EXHIBIT C

YOUTH EXIT INTERVIEW
AGES 9-18

County of licensed placement		Agency	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lee	<input type="checkbox"/> Charlotte	<input type="checkbox"/> LSF	<input type="checkbox"/> FPS
<input type="checkbox"/> Collier	<input type="checkbox"/> Hendry/Glades	<input type="checkbox"/> CCA/DCF	

Child's Name: _____

Child's ID # _____ DOB: ___/___/___

Person Conducting the Interview: _____ Work

Phone: _____

Name of Foster Home Child Just Left: _____

Date Placed: ___/___/___ Date Removed: ___/___/___ Date of Interview: ___/___/___

	Rating (Please check one box)							Comments or Suggestions (Please Explain Low Ratings:)
	Strongly Agree	Agree	So So	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A		
<i>Please Respond Based on your Experience this Past Licensing Year</i>								
1. I was comfortable in this foster home.								
2.) The children in the home were nice to me.								
3.) The foster parents helped me to do activities that I liked to do.								
4.) They fed me healthy meals.								
5.) Bedtime was a pleasant experience.								
6.) The foster mother was nice to me.								
7.) The foster father was nice to me.								
8.) I think this is a good foster home for other children.								
9.) I felt safe living in this home.								
10.) The foster parents helped me to understand why I had to leave.								

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Reason Child left Placement:

Reunified Adopted Independent Living Disrupted Other

	Strongly Agree	Agree	So So	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
11.) The foster parents were concerned about me.						
12.) I was treated fairly by the foster parents.						
13.) The foster parents praised me when I was good.						
14.) The foster parents treated me fairly when I did something wrong.						
15.) I was treated like the other children in the home.						
16.) They let me bring all my belongings.						
17.) Living in this home helped me.						

18.) When asked, I was allowed to call my: Case Manager GAL
 Others _____

19.) The best thing about this home was: _____

20.) They showed that they cared about me by:

21.) When I was good they would reward me by:

22.) When I did something wrong they would discipline me by: _____

23.) What else would you like to tell me about this home?

24.) Was there anything the department could have done to make this placement better?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS / SUGGESTIONS:

EXHIBIT D

COMPLAINT REPORTING FORM

Name licensed Provider: _____

Date of incident: ___/___/___
___/___/___

Date of JOS entry:

Staff Member Completing Form: _____ Phone# _____

Nature of Complaint: ___physical environment ___discipline
___supervision ___background screening ___abuse / neglect ___client
care ___ other code violations

Has the Florida Abuse Hotline contacted? YesN/A

List of children in the home and role (birth child, adopted, foster,
other)

Complaint Narrative summarizing the issues about which you are
concerned:

List any actions you have already taken to address the situation if
appropriate:

Names & Phone Numbers of other possible witnesses or those that
may have information about these issues:

Supervisor Signature

____/____/____
Date

cc: DCF LICENSING SPECIALIST,
CHILDREN'S NETWORK OF SW FLORIDA, QM SPECIALIST