




DEPARTMENT NAME: Programs		
SUBJECT: Exit Interviews with Children in Foster Care		POLICY NUMBER: PD-005
APPROVAL: 	EFFECTIVE DATE: 10-16-2015	REPLACES : CFOP 175-61 QM-015

- 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:** CFOP 175-61 dated 8/21/97 was replaced with QM-015 and subsequent revisions dated 5/29/07 and 8/1/08. PD-005 is replacing all versions of QM-015.
- III. **CONTACT:** Programs Department Director
- IV. **PERSONS AFFECTED:** Children's Network of Southwest Florida and contracted providers.
- 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:** 65C-28.017 F.A.C.
- 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.
1. Children ages 5 through 17 must be interviewed if they have resided in the home or facility for 30 days or more.
 2. The interview must be conducted within five days of the child's exit from the home or facility.
 3. 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.
 4. 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.
 5. 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.
 6. Interviewers must record any observations about the child's physical appearance or emotional state (positive or negative) that seem significant to the interview process.
 7. 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.
 8. 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.
- B. 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:
1. 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:

- a. Positive responses may be shared during home visit or by letter or phone call.
 - b. Positive responses may be summarized in writing on a quarterly or read with the foster parent or facility.
2. If the child indicates the quality of care needs improvement, a careful assessment by the interviewer of the child's feedback should follow. An assessment involves consideration of the following:
- a. Child's responses to the interview questions;
 - b. Child's developmental level and special needs;
 - c. The foster parent(s)' response to the issue(s) raised;
 - d. Observations obtained from all staff who have visited in the home within the previous 6 months;
 - e. Feedback obtained from other foster children who may have exited the same foster home within the previous 6 months; and,
 - f. Feedback obtained from any other relevant sources, e.g., teachers, therapists, guardian ad litem, if applicable.
3. When a safety or quality of care issue raised by the child exiting from a foster home is supported by other information, a licensing concern shall be submitted by the case management organization and investigated by the licensing agency. Upon completion of the investigation, a staffing to include DCF licensing staff, CNSWFL licensing staff, the licensing agency, and the foster parent will be conducted to determine the need for corrective action. 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:
- a. the seriousness of the issue raised by the child
 - b. protection of the child's anonymity
 - c. any needs or concerns the foster parent or facility may have expressed
 - d. the frequency and/or chronic nature of the conduct or condition being addressed
4. When corrective action is necessary, written follow-up within a pre-determined time frame not to exceed 90 days must occur.

C. Documentation Requirements

The completed interview form, the case management organization's response, if any, and follow-up tasks must be handled as follows:

1. The completed interview form, department or contracted services provider response, if any, shall be placed in the child's case record.
2. 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.

A copy of the completed interview form and record of any follow up shall be maintained in the licensing file and a copy sent to the Children's Network licensing unit.

X. EXHIBITS:

- A. Youth Exit Interview for Ages 5-8
- B. Youth Exit Interview for Ages 9-18

YOUTH EXIT INTERVIEW For AGES 5-8

Date of Interview: _____

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____

Date Placed in Home/Placement: _____ Date of Removal from the Home/Placement: _____

Name of Foster Home Child Left: _____

Location Where Interview Took Place: _____

Person Conducting the Interview: _____

Reason Child left Placement:

Return Home _____ Kin/Non Kin Home _____ Permanent Placement _____ Reunification of Siblings _____

Request of Foster Family _____ Report on Home _____ Other (please explain): _____

	Rating (Please check one box)				Comments or Suggestions (Explain Disagree Ratings)
	Agree	Sometimes	Disagree	Not Applicable	
1.) I felt happy/comfortable in this home.					
2.) I had enough food to eat when I was in this home.					
3.) I had enough clothing that fit me when I was in this home.					
4.) I was taken care of when I was sick or had an accident when I was in this home.					
5.) When I asked I got to talk to:					
a) My Case Manager					
b) My Guardian Ad Litem.					
c) Other					
6.) I was happy/satisfied in this foster home.					
7.) Overall, I felt safe living in this foster home.					

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

9.) If you did something wrong, how were you punished and did you feel it was fair? If not why did you feel it was not fair? _____

10.) Observation of Child's Mood/Attitude During Interview: _____

Case Manager Signature Date

Case Manager Supervisor Signature Date

YOUTH EXIT INTERVIEW For AGES 9-18

Date of Interview: _____

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____

Date Placed in Home/Placement: _____ Date of Removal from the Home/Placement: _____

Name of Foster Home Child Left: _____

Location Where Interview Took Place: _____

Person Conducting the Interview: _____

Reason Child left Placement:

Return Home _____ Kin/Non Kin Home _____ Permanent Placement _____ Reunification of Siblings _____

Request of Foster Family _____ Report on Home _____ Other (please explain): _____

	Rating (Please check one box)				Comments or Suggestions (Explain Disagree Ratings)
	Agree	Sometimes	Disagree	Not Applicable	
1.) I felt happy/comfortable in this home.					
2.) I was treated with respect by the foster parents when I was in this home.					
3.) I had enough food to eat when I was in this home.					
4.) I had enough clothing that fit me when I was in this home.					
5.) I was taken care of when I was sick or had an accident when I was in this home.					
6.) When I asked I got to talk to:					
a) My Case Manager					
b) My Guardian Ad Litem.					
c) Other					
7.) Overall, I was satisfied with the care I received in this home.					
8.) Overall, I felt safe living in this home.					

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

10.) If you did something wrong, how were you disciplined and did you feel it was fair? If not why did you feel it was not fair? _____

11.) Observation of Child's Mood/Attitude During Interview: _____

Case Manager Signature Date

Case Manager Supervisor Signature Date