

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING TRANSITIONS FROM FOSTER CARE TO PERMANENCY

Purpose Statement: *The purpose of this document is to provide clear and concise guidelines when teams are transitioning children from foster care to permanency.*

This document is based on the State of Alaska Community Care Licensing Regulation cited below.

7AAC50.200 Qualifications of administrator

(b) An administrator or foster parent must be of good character and reputation, have an understanding of the development of children, the ability to care for children, positive experience with working with persons of different cultures, and the skills to work with children, family members, division staff, community agencies and if applicable, staff of the facility.

Statement regarding therapeutic agencies:

Therapeutic foster parents are expected to cooperate with the OCS Plan of Care for Permanency. Therapeutic foster parents are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and act in a manner that supports the transition process. Refer your agency's licensing staff for information specific to your agency.

Transitions means change and change can be hard for everyone. While all parties have the right to be heard and their concerns addressed, the need for permanence for the youth need to take precedence.

Five things youth need from their team during a transition are:

1. **Voice, and some choice & control over the transition process.** Talk to the youth about how fast the move should happen. Take the time to build into the schedule visits to the new family as well as opportunities to say goodbye to important friends and family members. Youth should never be expected to move in with strangers or abruptly "ripped from one family and dropped in another."
2. Youth need to know that **their team is dedicated to working through conflicts in a professional way** and working toward a goal that is in the best interest of the youth. Managing team dynamics is hard. It is critical that conflicts be handled professionally with the best interest of the youth at the center of all decisions.
3. Once a plan for permanency is made, youth need **all team members to support the goal and work together to reach permanency** in the best way possible. The youth looks to the team for safety and will be hyper sensitive to fear, or reluctance, both verbal and non- verbal on the part of any team member. The youth has a difficult enough road ahead in joining a new family. They need the team to put aside differences and work cooperatively.
4. The youth need validation that though their relationship is changing with their foster provider, **their desire to maintain some level of connection with them will be honored.** Maintaining current positive connections with the youth will provide support and stability throughout the transition.
5. **Youth need to understand the reasons they entered foster care, the reasons they have to move and have an opportunity to grieve their losses and voice their feelings.** They need a team who is able to talk to them about these things.

Transition Agreement

Please review this document with the team prior to the transition meeting.

1. Prior to the transition, foster parent will meet with the pre-adoptive parent for an “ice breaker”, disclosure or comparable meeting at the agreed upon dates and times. These meetings take place without the youth.
2. Team members will respond to communications and comply with times and dates that were agreed upon during the transition meeting. Transportation during transition is a shared responsibility. Both foster and pre-adoptive parents are expected to comply with and participate with the agreed upon plan, such as be willing to provide some of the transportation needed for a successful transition. Attached is the agreed upon transition plan.
3. Team will demonstrate through words and actions their support and respect towards the one another, regardless of their personal feelings. Please refer to resource titled **Claiming and Signaling Behaviors** in your resource folder.
4. Both foster and the pre-adoptive parents will engage in a face-to-face check-in during pick-ups and drop offs of the youth and conduct them with kindness and respect.
5. The team shares the responsibility to help the youth understand the reason for the move and why their current family cannot provide permanency. The team should refer to this explanation when interacting with the youth to provide a consistent, clear message. The message needs to be honest, gentle and developmentally appropriate.
6. Maintaining important relationships is critical for the health and well-being of youth. This can include, teachers, former caseworkers, therapists, neighbors, and relatives.
7. The Youth’s Belongings: Per OCS Regulation 7 AAC 50.430 Programs: Provider will send all of the youth’s personal belongings that they had at the time of placement and what was accorded through the duration of placement. This would include but not limited to clothes, toys, books, games, and personal gifts. *Clothing should be in good condition and fit the youth appropriately.*
8. The youth’s belongings will be packed in a suitable container, boxes, suitcases, Rubbermaid tubs, etc. Trash bags are **not** acceptable. Providing these items is a shared responsibility of the foster parent and pre-adoptive parent.
9. Foster parents and team will communicate support and confidence in making this transition successful for the youth and help them work through challenges.
10. Grief based behaviors such as not answering calls or texts, failure to show up at agreed meeting times, stating the child is “sick” and keeping them from transition visits are extremely detrimental to a successful transition. Identify a team member who will check in weekly with the foster parent throughout the duration of the transition. In some cases, this could be the current foster family’s licensing worker.
11. From the introduction of the new family to the youth, to 2 weeks post placement with the new families, foster parents and pre-adoptive parents will send out weekly email updates that include **ALL** team members as to how the youth responded after each visit. Team members will respond and support as needed.
12. Escalation of behaviors is an expected and normal consequence of transitions. Pain, grief and loss are part of this process. Foster and pre-adoptive parents are expected to implement the strategies recommended by the team.
13. The timing of a transition should be based on *what is best*. not *what is easiest*. Any significant changes to the transition time must be approved by all team members. Transitions that happen too fast impede the grieving process. Transitions that are too slow heighten anxiety and stress in youth.

Team Contact Information

Name, Title and email	Preferred Contact Method (Please Circle)	Phone/Address/
	Email Text Phone	
	Email Text Phone	
	Email Text Phone	
	Email Text Phone	
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On Call Emergency Contact For Agency:

Section 1: Transition Plan (Preparation)

Name of Youth(s):

Date This Plan Was Developed:

Indicate time, date and location of “icebreaker” or disclosure meetings

Time, Date and Location:

Time, Date and Location:

Time, Date and Location:

1. If changes to the agreed upon plan need to change or problems arise, please contact:

Name:

Contact Information:

PREPARING THE YOUTH:

2. How will this move be explained to the youth?
3. Why can't the current family be the permanent family? How will this be explained to the youth?:
4. Who will initially talk to the youth about the pre-adoptive family through book or video?
Name:
Date of conversation:
5. Who will follow up with the youth to process the information about the move and the pre-adoptive family?
Name:
Date of conversation:

FAMILY SUPPORTS:

5. **Support for foster parent:** Identify a team member who will check in weekly with the *foster parent* throughout the duration of the transition. (This could be the current foster family's licensing worker.)
 - Name and Contact Info:
 - Licensing Worker
 - Dates & Time check-ins will occur
6. **Support for Pre-Adoptive Parent:** Identify a team member who will check in weekly with the *pre-adoptive parent* throughout the duration of the transition.
 - Name and Contact Information:
 - Licensing Worker:
 - Dates & Time check-ins will occur:

Section 2: Transition Plan (Moving)

7. When is the first face-to face between youth and family?
 - Date and Location:
 - Who will be part of this?
 - Recommended Activity:

8. What is the target final transition date? Either the weekend of January 25 or January 31st depending on Alex's comfort and readiness.

9. Does the youth need boxes or luggage for the move? *Yes No* (If yes: Identify who will provide them.)
Name:
When and how will this take place?

10. Are there any needs of the foster or pre-adoptive parents that have not been addressed (i.e. stipend for overnights, Release of Information Forms needed;

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS:

10. Tribal Connections: Indicate the youth's tribe and tribal connections as applicable.
N/A

11. Who are the people the youth wants to maintain connection with? Include name, relation and contact information.

Schedule of Transition Visits and Activities

List times, dates, location and person transporting for all scheduled transition activities including overnights and weekend visits. This can include closure activities such as saying goodbye to school friends, teachers, current foster family and receiving activities such as visiting new school, teachers, etc.

Time/Date/ Location	Activity	Person transporting/facilitating

Parent to Parent : Youth Information

Weekly Appointments/ Activities: Indicate activity, day and time

Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

Routines

When does your child wake up?

When does your child go to bed?

Describe Youth's Morning Routine:

Describe Youth's Evening Routine:

Fears:

Does your child have any fears: (dogs, dark, noises etc)?

How do you comfort or help your child calm?

How does your child respond to new situations?

What triggers your child?

What helps your child calm down?

Is your child on any medication? Please indicate the dosage and time:

Sleeping:

Type of bed your youth uses (i.e.: bunk, twin, double)

Does your child share a room?

Does your child use a nightlight?

Does your child wake up at night? If so, how often?

What happens when they wake up at night (walk around, cry, are they terrified)?

Toileting Practices;

Does your child have a tendency toward diarrhea? Constipation?

Does your child take medicine for this?

Does your child have problems with bedwetting?

Does your child soil his/her pants at night?

Does your child wet or soil him/herself during the day?

Strengths and Challenges

What are your child's strengths and likes?

What are his/her challenges?

School/ Education

What school does your child attend?

What grade are they in?

Who is their teacher?

Does youth attend Before/After School Program? If yes, identify program.

Does your child enjoy school?

Do they have friends? Who is your child's best friend?

Do they have an IEP?

What is your child's favorite subject?

What is their least favorite subject?

Service Providers:

Service	Name	Phone Address
Therapist:		
Doctor:		
Dentist:		
Teacher:		
Occupational Therapist		
Physical Therapist		
Psychiatrist/Med Mgmt		

Clothing: Please specify sizes:

Shirts:	Pajamas:	Dress:
Pants:	Jackets:	Shoes:

How is your child on the following?

- Obeying adults
- Following Rules
- Being Respectful
- Maintaining Attention
- Being Honest
- Making Friends
- Settling Disagreements
- Sharing

Bathing and Hygiene

Does your child enjoy bath time or getting his/her hair washed?

Does your child use any special lotions, soaps or other bath items?

How often does your child bathe?

Does your child prefer a bath or a shower?

Does your child do an adequate job of the following without adult supervision?

Bathing/Showering

Shampooing

Tooth Brushing

Does your child use deodorant?

Faith Practices:

Does youth attend church? Yes No

If yes, where?

Does the youth want to attend church?

Away from Home and Travel

Does your child enjoy car travel?

Does your child get carsick?

Has your child ever flown on an airplane?

Is your child used to going on outings (to the store or church)?

Has your child attended any daycare programs?

Any other information about your child that might be helpful to the new person caring for him or her?

**The Youth information portion of this packet was based on Transitions: Moving Children with Sensitivity by Kris Villaneuva, MSW, LCSW and Judy Miller, M. Ed. Information Packet, Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center.*