



CDSS

WILL LIGHTBOURNE  
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
GOVERNOR

April 14, 2014

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-07-14

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL COUNTY PROBATION OFFICERS  
ALL CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGERS  
ALL TITLE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES

SUBJECT: TRANSITIONAL CARE: CWS ACTIVITIES BETWEEN REMOVAL AND INITIAL PLACEMENT AND BETWEEN PLACEMENTS

The purpose of this All County Information Notice (ACIN) is to ensure that Child Welfare Services agencies (CWS) utilize best practices during transitional care. Transitional care refers to the activities related to the provision of care of a child between detention and placement or between placements. Transitional care includes the activities occurring at CWS operated Receiving Centers which may also be identified or referred to as Assessment Centers. For the purpose of this ACIN, these centers will be referred to as "Receiving Centers." Whether transitional care activities are conducted in a Receiving Center or a CWS office, CWS agencies should ensure that care of the child is conducted in a safe environment where they are cared for by safe and suitable staff.

**Placement and Assessment**

Upon determination that a child cannot be safely maintained in his/her own home, the CWS agency ensures that assessment of the child considers his/her strengths and needs when selecting an appropriate placement. During this assessment period, the county CWS agency ensures that the child is provided adequate care and supervision by suitable staff who have been assessed for their ability to provide quality care in a safe and child friendly environment.

When children are removed from their families as a result of an abuse and/or neglect or when they are moving between placements, transitional care activities are structured to minimize, as much as possible, the stress experienced by the child. A trauma informed

system should recognize and respond to the varying impact of traumatic stress on children.<sup>1</sup> The CWS agencies are encouraged to develop policies and procedures for Transitional Care activities that are consistent with trauma informed practices in order to minimize the stress of the removal or placement change on the child.

CWS agencies should ensure that adults having regular contact with children during transitional care activities have a criminal record clearance on file pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 1522. CWS agencies should ensure that the physical environment where the child remains during this time is one that adequately protects the health and safety of the child including, but not limited to, adhering to local zoning, safety and building ordinances.

Current licensing standards (Health and Safety Code Section 1502) require that any care lasting 24 hours or more must occur in a licensed facility. Whether transitional care activities are conducted at a CWS office or in a Receiving Center, these provisions apply and CWS agencies assess the child's needs to find the most appropriate foster care setting as quickly as possible. Assessments also ensure that preferential considerations are utilized to select the placement.

### **Receiving Centers**

Receiving Centers provide a comfortable child-friendly place for a child who has been removed from his/her home while the caseworker is assessing the child and locating placement resources that can most effectively meet the child's individual needs. Receiving center staff often provide a wide array of services that include:

- Ensuring a physically safe environment.
- Providing age appropriate and healthy meals.
- Caring for the child's personal hygiene needs.
- Providing an age-appropriate, secure, clean, and quiet place to rest/nap.
- Child-specific information gathering for emergency placement.
- Providing comfort, familiarity and help settling in which includes offering the child a favorite toy or blanket to comfort the child.
- Nurturing and reacting to the child's trauma and stress.
- Understanding the child's perspective by empathizing and connecting to child.
- Assisting each child in understanding the reason for placement if appropriate.
- Support of the child's relationships and family connections.

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, Charles, & Pence, Donna (2013). *Trauma-Informed Systems and Practices: Spotlight on the Investigation and Assessment*. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Chadwick Center for Children and Families.

If county medical staff or collaborative partners are available, CWS agencies are encouraged to coordinate medical care prior to placement to include:

- Initial medical screening to determine the child's level of wellness.
- Urgent medical care if needed.
- Consultations with the caseworker regarding the child's specific health issues/concerns.
- Coordination with placement caretaker and other medical providers for case management and follow up.
- Medication assistance.

### **Regulation Revision**

The CDSS is in the process of revising the Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Division 31 through the regulatory process to incorporate safety standards during transitional care activities. The regulations will ensure that the safety provisions noted above are adhered to whether transitional care occurs in a CWS office, a Receiving Center or other location.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact the Child Welfare Policy and Program Development Bureau at (916) 651-6160.

Sincerely,

### ***Original Document Signed By:***

KEVIN GAINES, CHIEF  
Child Protection and Family Support Branch

c: CWDA