

Missing or Absent from Care Children/Nonminor Dependents

0100-570.11 | Revision Date: X/XX/2026

Overview

This policy guide specifies the requirements and procedures to assist in the quick return of children/Nonminor Dependents who are missing or absent from care.

Table of Contents

Missing or Absent from Care Children/Nonminor Dependents	1
Overview	1
Version Summary	2
POLICY	3
Child/Nonminor Dependent is Missing from Placement	3
Interstate Compact on Juveniles	4
Children on Active Parole/Probation	4
PROCEDURE	4
Child/Nonminor Dependent is Missing or Absent from Placement or from the Home of a Parent	4
Case-Carrying CSW Responsibilities.....	4
Outreach Unit (ROU) Responsibilities	7
Office ARKS Liaison Responsibilities	8
A Missing/Absent from Care Child/NMD is Found or Returns	9
Case-Carrying CSW/DI Responsibilities.....	9
Runaway Outreach Unit (ROU) Responsibilities When a Child/NMD is Found or Returns	11
A Child is in Custody or Residing in Another State and a Warrant has been Issued.. 11	
Case-Carrying CSW/DI Responsibilities.....	11
Returning a Missing/Absent from Care Child From Another State or County Who is Not Under Child Welfare/Juvenile Court Supervision	12
ER/MART CSW Responsibilities.....	12
SCSW Responsibilities	13
ARA or Designee Responsibilities	13
RA or Designee Responsibilities	13

Returning a Missing/Absent from Care Child from Another State or County Who is Not Under Child Welfare/Juvenile Court Supervision to a Surrounding County	14
CSW Responsibilities	14
SCSW Responsibilities	15
ARA or Designee Responsibilities	15
RA or Designee Responsibilities	15
Returning a Child on Active Parole/Probation to Another State or California County	15
ER/MART CSW Responsibilities.....	15
Court Terminating Jurisdiction	16
CSW Responsibilities	16
APPROVALS	17
SCSW Approval.....	17
ARA Approval.....	17
RA Approval.....	17
FORMS	17
Attachments.....	17
Forms	17
CWS/CMS	17
LA Kids.....	17
REFERENCED POLICY GUIDES	18
Referenced Policy Guides.....	18
STATUTES.....	18
Statutes.....	18

Version Summary

This policy guide has been updated from the 8/15/2025 version to include active efforts when an Indian child is missing from care per [ACL 24-18](#). The definition ‘missing from care’ was added, per [WIC 16501.35\(c\)\(1\)](#). The placement of the missing child/NMD being kept open was updated from 7 to 14 calendar days, per [WIC 16010.7](#).

POLICY

Child/Nonminor Dependent is Missing from Placement

A child/NMD is “missing from foster care” when the whereabouts of a child subject to an order of foster care placement are unknown to the county child welfare agency, per [WIC 16501.35\(c\)\(1\)](#). When a child/NMD is missing or absent from placement, the case-carrying CSW must make all diligent efforts to find the child/NMD on an ongoing basis until the child/NMD is found or court jurisdiction is terminated. A child/NMD's dependency status must be maintained even though the child/NMD may refuse to cooperate with the child protection agency, runs away from their placement and/or their whereabouts are unknown for an extended period of time. The decision to terminate jurisdiction is solely the court's decision and CSWs are not to make a recommendation to terminate jurisdiction. The only exception to this is when a child turns 18 or passes away.

CSWs are not to seek a protective custody warrant for any Nonminor Dependent eighteen (18) years or older when they leave their placement including a Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP), and when their current whereabouts are unknown. However, if there is a competency issue or a reasonable suspicion that the NMD is a victim of harm or foul play, a Missing Person's Report should be filed immediately with local law enforcement. In addition, DCFS must show the court that reasonable search efforts have been made to find the NMD whose whereabouts are unknown.

The personal property of a missing NMD must be stored for a minimum of one year. If the NMD's location remains unknown after that time, the Department may seek a court order authorizing the disposal of the NMD's property.

Interstate Compact on Juveniles

The findings and purpose of the Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ) states in part that Juveniles who are not under proper supervision and control, or who have absconded, escaped or are Missing/Absent from Care, are likely to endanger their own health and welfare, as well as the health and welfare of others. The cooperation of the States participating in this compact is therefore necessary to provide for the welfare and protection of juveniles and of the public with respect to:

1. Cooperative supervision of delinquent juveniles on probation or parole.
2. The return, from one state to another, of delinquent juveniles who have escaped or absconded.
3. The return, from one state to another, of non-delinquent juveniles who have run away from home; and
4. Additional measures for the protection of juveniles and of the public, which any two or more of the party states may find desirable to undertake cooperatively.

In carrying out the provisions of this compact the participating States must be guided by the non-criminal, reformative and protective policies which guide their laws concerning delinquent, neglected, or dependent juveniles generally. It must be the policy of the States participating in this compact to cooperate and observe their respective responsibilities for the prompt return and acceptance of juveniles and delinquent juveniles who become subject to the provisions of this compact.

Children on Active Parole/Probation

The Los Angeles County Probation Department is responsible for the placement and transportation of a child on active parole/probation, if appropriate, including arranging for the other state/county to pick the child up or transport the child to their home state. All active Probation cases are handled by the Division of Juvenile Justice; Interstate Division, 4241 Williamsborough Drive, Suite # 127, Sacramento, Ca. 95823. The contact number is (916) 262-1374 or 1379. Email address is: California-prob@cdcr.ca.gov

PROCEDURE

Child/Nonminor Dependent is Missing or Absent from Placement or from the Home of a Parent

Case-Carrying CSW Responsibilities

1. Direct the caregiver to immediately and/or as appropriate make a Missing Person Report to law enforcement. Under no circumstance should contact with law enforcement be delayed more than twenty-four (24) hours. Direct the caregiver to obtain the report number and record from the law enforcement agency to which the report was made. If the youth is a NMD in a SILP and, if the circumstances of their disappearance warrant such

action, the CSW is to file a Missing Person Report with law enforcement, obtain the report number and document the information in the Contact Notebook. Circumstances warrant this action if based on the totality of the circumstances, the CSW suspects the NMD did not voluntarily leave foster care or is at risk of substantial harm.

2. Direct the caregiver to inquire among neighbors, peers, school, etc. if they know the whereabouts of the child. If the NMD is placed in a SILP with roommates, ask the roommate(s) if they know the whereabouts of the NMD. Ask the caregiver to immediately report any information obtained about the missing child/NMD.
3. Immediately notify the child's parent/Indian custodian, if available, or legal guardian that the child has run away or is missing and inquire if they know the whereabouts of the child. Do not contact the parent, custodian or legal guardian if there is an order or other facts showing the parent or legal guardian should not be contacted (i.e. termination of parental rights, no contact order, etc.)
 - a. If the parent's/custodian a home visit as soon as possible but no later than the next business day from the date of learning the child has run away or is missing.
 - b. Ask the parent/custodian or legal guardian to contact the department immediately if they receive any information about the child's whereabouts.
 - c. Ask the parent/custodian or legal guardian for a phone number where they can be reached.
4. Contact the caregiver by the next business day and confirm the Missing Person Report was filed with law enforcement. Obtain the report number and document the information in the Contact Notebook.
5. CSW will ensure that a Missing Person Report is filed within twenty-four (24) hours of notification. A Missing Person Report can be filed at any police or sheriff's department. Penal Code 14211(a). The report does not have to be taken at the police station closest to where the child went missing.
6. If law enforcement refuses to accept a Missing Person Report:
 - In the Contact Notebook enter the date the attempted report was made, the name and badge number of the law enforcement personnel refusing/unwilling to accept the Missing Person Report.
 - If a Missing Person Report was not taken, in the Contact Notebook enter the date/time that law enforcement directed you or the caregiver to make the Missing Person Report.
 - Immediately notify and consult with the SCSW about law enforcement's refusal to accept the report.
 - If after attempting to file a Missing Person Report, law enforcement still refuses to take a report, notify the SCSW and ask for help. If law enforcement still refuses to take the report, the SCSW shall notify the ARA/RA.
7. Within twenty-four (24) hours of learning that a child/NMD is missing or absent:
 - a. For children age 17 and under, complete the [DCFS 729](#) Protective Custody Warrant Request and forward it to the SCSW for approval.
 - Note: By submitting the protective custody warrant request, the Court and every attorney on record is notified that the child has run away or is missing.
 - b. Forward a copy of the approved DCFS 729 and a color photograph of the child (black and white photos are accepted if color is not available) to the office ARKS

- Liaison. Photographs must be sent via e-mail or by mail along with the warrant request.
- c. For Nonminor Dependents, complete the [DCFS 729B](#) and forward it to the SCSW for approval. Forward the approved DCFS 729B to court immediately and document in CWS/CMS.
 - d. Forward a copy of the approved DCFS 729B and a color photograph of the NMD (black and white photos are accepted if color is not available) to the office ARKS Liaison. Photographs must be sent via email or by mail along with the DCFS 729 B.
 - e. Provide the office ARKS Liaison with any additional information requested
 - f. Notify the child's/NMD's attorney using the [DCFS 5402](#), that the child/NMD has run away or is missing. This process acts as a referral to the Runaway Outreach Unit (ROU) where it will be assigned to a Secondary ROU CSW who will then assist the case carrying CSW in locating, placing and stabilizing the Missing/Absent from Care child/NMD.
 - g. If applicable, notify the child's/NMD's **tribe or** tribal representative, tribal law enforcement and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA).
 - h. If applicable, notify the child's/NMD's dependent sibling age 10 years or older, unless notice would put that sibling's safety and well-being at risk.
8. If the child/NMD has been abducted or kidnapped, adhere to all notifying procedures in [Child Abduction and Recovery](#).
 9. If the child is on Probation, notify the DPO and request that a bench warrant be obtained.
 10. Submit the FCSS Automated [DCFS 280](#) to end the placement payment:
 - Within ~~7~~ **14** calendar days from the date the child/NMD is missing or from placement.
 11. Notify the out-of-home caregiver of the payment termination date, in writing, verbally, in person or by telephone. Document the date and manner by which notice was provided to the foster care provider in the Contact Notebook.
 12. Placement may be kept open and payment continued for up to ~~seven (7)~~ **14** calendar days from the date the child/NMD is missing or absent from placement if:
 - The caregiver shows a willingness to have the child/NMD returned to their home; and
 - The CSW agrees that it would be suitable and safe for the child/NMD to do so. [Refer to Placement Preservation Strategy](#).
 13. If the CSW agrees to keep the placement open, the bed hold authorization must be in writing. CSW must use [DCFS 4009](#), Bed Hold Agreement and Payment Authorization form.
 14. As soon as possible, but no later than 5 business days upon receiving notice the child/NMD is missing from the placement, ensure the following:
 - Secure all their clothing and belongings from the placement by having either the caregiver deliver the child's/NMD's possessions to the office or the DCFS office designee pick-up the child's/NMD's possessions from the caregiver.
 - Store the child's/NMD's belongings in the appointed area in the regional DCFS office.

- Keep the child's/NMD's clothing and belongings for a minimum of one year, or until the child/NMD is found, or the court directs DCFS how and when to dispose of the child's/NMD's belongings.
15. If law enforcement requests help to find the missing child/NMD, provide help.
 16. Provide office ARKS liaison with any requested information.
 17. Thoroughly document all efforts to find the child/NMD in CWS/CMS and include the information in the next status review report.
 18. Team with and share information with ROU CSW regarding any updated additional information.

Outreach Unit (ROU) Responsibilities Once the case is assigned to the ROU, they will be responsible for the following:

1. Immediately document all Missing/Absent from Care information into the National Center of Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) child welfare portal. DCFS has an MOU with NCMEC that allows for sharing of information. Refer the child to the NCMEC by completing an [online referral](#) or by calling (800)843-5678.
 - a. The following information is required by NCMEC to generate a report:
 - Child's full name
 - Child's date of birth, gender, height, weight
 - Photo of child
 - Date child went missing
 - City and State from where child went missing
 - Guardian information including agency name and telephone
 - Law enforcement information including agency name, telephone, and police report number of law enforcement agency with which the missing person report was filed.
 - b. The following information is requested by NCMEC, if available (per [AB 161](#)):
 - A description of the child's or youth's physical features, such as height, weight, sex, ethnicity, race, hair color, and eye color.
 - Endangerment information, such as the child's or youth's pregnancy status, prescription medications, suicidal tendencies, vulnerability to being sex trafficked, and other health or risk factors, to the extent such information is released in compliance with other applicable laws.
 - Information about whether the child or youth is or may be an Indian child, including the name of the child's Tribe.
2. On a monthly basis, conduct social media site searches, actively searching the case records for possible leads to locations for the child's/NMD's whereabouts; conduct educational and social welfare investigations and provide secondary research to locate Missing/Absent from Care children/NMDs.
3. Contact the L.A. County Sheriff Department's Locate Team to determine whether it has jurisdiction over the case and may be able to help locate the child/NMD.
 - LASD's Locate Team prioritizes cases that are known or suspected CSEC.
4. Conduct a thorough search to attempt to locate the child/NMD, as information is provided, but no less frequent than on a monthly basis. Searches should include, but not be limited to, the following efforts:

- a. Conduct a [SENECA](#) search and make inquiries to parties suitable to the situation, for example:
 - parents
 - legal guardians
 - non-relative extended family members
 - siblings
 - former out-of-home caregivers
 - relatives
 - child's friends
 - roommates
 - former CSWs
 - law enforcement
 - child's former and/or current school
 - child's former and current service providers
 - any other person who might have any knowledge about the child's whereabouts, i.e. mentors, advocates, mental health providers, former therapist and religious clergy.
 - b. Ask that caregiver and/or parent/ legal guardian make inquiries to the above individuals and that contact be made with the department immediately if any information about the child's/NMD's whereabouts is obtained.
 - c. Continue to make inquiries with above noted parties weekly until the child is found. Follow all leads as new information is received about the location of the child.
 - d. Physically check all places where the child/NMD is likely to be.
 - e. Search known social media accounts and reach out to the child/NMD online to try and make contact.
 - f. Search social media accounts of known acquaintances, review friend lists and comment sections.
 - g. Conduct an internet search by the child's/NMD's name, phone number(s), and photo.
 - h. Complete a CWS/CMS, LRS and any other relevant database search.
 - i. For NMDs these efforts must continue until the court is notified in a Judicial Review process or Ex-Parte application that the NMD's whereabouts are unknown and the court terminates jurisdiction.
5. Maintain regular communication with NCMEC and law enforcement agencies, including tribal law enforcement, if applicable.
 6. When an Indian child is missing from care, collaborate with the tribal representative on efforts to locate the child and ensure that the Tribe is regularly updated regarding the child's status, per [ACL 24-18](#). Document all these active efforts in the Contact Notebook.
 7. Document all contacts and efforts made on a monthly basis to find the child/NMD in the Contact Notebook. The Checklist for Locating children/NMDs may be used as a template that can be cut and pasted into the Contact Notebook to document efforts.

Office ARKS Liaison Responsibilities

1. By the following business day from the receipt of the [DCFS 729](#), enter the information accurately into ARKS.
2. Review Justice Partner Portal (Odyssey) regularly to confirm the court issued a protective custody warrant (for children ages 17 and under) and record the date the warrant was issued into ARKS. A Minute Order is not necessary to enter missing episodes into ARKS; however, please follow up with Odyssey on a daily basis to ensure one was issued and upload the information once it is obtained.
3. Contact the case-carrying CSW and secondary case-carrying ROU CSW monthly or as often as possible to get an update about efforts made to find the child/NMD in the past month. Record all efforts to find the child/NMD into ARKS.

A Missing/Absent from Care Child/NMD is Found or Returns

Case-Carrying CSW/DI Responsibilities

1. Within 24 hours of being notified the child/NMD has returned or has been found:
 - a. If the parent or legal guardian has been told of the Missing/Absent from Care episode, notify them of the return
 - b. Contact the law enforcement agency where the Missing Person's Report was filed to ask that the Missing Person's Report be withdrawn. Follow up with Law Enforcement to assure the report has been withdrawn.
 - In instances where a child is picked up by law enforcement and delivered to a CSW's office only to have the child is missing or absent again within minutes or hours, the CSW will have to file a new Missing Person Report because law enforcement would have removed the child from the database when the child was recovered and returned to DCFS. The new incident would be considered a new incident and would require a new report. Nevertheless, the protective custody warrant (PCW) does not need to be altered. The existing PCW can remain.
 - c. Contact the ROU CSW who will then contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) case manager assigned to the case to notify them that the child/NMD has been returned or found. Document the information surrounding the circumstances of the child/NMD's return or location.
2. Within one business day of learning the child/NMD has returned or has been found:
 - For children ages 17 and under, complete the [DCFS 729A](#) to recall the protective custody warrant. Note that protective custody warrants should be immediately recalled upon a child turning 18 even if the youth has not been returned or found.
 - Forward the DCFS 729A to the SCSW for approval.
 - Upon approval, send the DCFS 729A to Juvenile Court Services Liaison and the ARKS Liaison for removal from the Department's Abducted Missing/Absent from Care Kids System.
 - Notify the assigned ROU CSW that the child/NMD has been located.
 - If applicable, the ROU will also notify the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Locate Team that the child has been located.
 - For NMDs whose case is still open, submit an Ex Parte Application and Order letting the Court know the NMD has returned.

3. Notify the child's/NMD's attorney using the [DCFS 5402](#), within 48-72 hours, that the child/NMD has been found or returned.
4. Debrief (Refer to [Missing/Missing/Absent from Care Child/NMD De-Briefing Form](#) for an example of debriefing questions) with the child/NMD in a private and comfortable areas as soon as possible but no later than three (3) business days after the child/NMD returns to care, while teaming with the ROU CSW to explore the following:
 - Address immediate needs, including whether the child/NMD has any medical problems, is on any medication, or should be medically examined.
 - Determine the primary factors that contributed to the child/NMD running away or being absent from care.
5. Respond to factors identified above in the subsequent placements, to the extent possible.
 - a. the child/NMD returns to the same placement, team with the child/NMD and the caregiver to identify underlying or unmet needs and possible services or supports to meet those needs and prevent the recurring behavior.
 - b. Develop a Safety Plan to prevent child/NMD from running away or being absent from care in the future. [Harm Reduction Approach](#) strategies may be employed to holistically address the child/NMD's needs while not blaming when a child/NMD returns to unsafe situations. The child/NMD's multidisciplinary team must be aware of the totality of a child/NMD's needs and make efforts to meet them, focusing on short-term incremental gains which can lead to long term stability and safety.
6. Determine the child/NMD's experiences while absent from care. (i.e. where did they stay, with whom, how did they provide for their needs, such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, as well as experiences with drug use, sexual activity, abuse, etc.)
7. Determine whether the child is a possible victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSEC) Document the activities and information described above for federal reporting purposed in the Contact Notebook. If there is reasonable suspicion that the child has been a victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation while absent from care, contact the Child Protection Hotline to report child abuse.
8. For NMDs, notify them that leaving their placement without letting the CSW know could result in being terminated from the [Extended Foster Care \(EFC\)](#) program. Record the interview in the Contact Notebook.
9. Assess all immediate needs, including, if the child/NMD should be medically examined to detect and/or treat possible injuries, illness, exposure to sexually transmitted diseases and arrange for such examination or testing. Assess the child/NMD's mental health status, as well, to determine if a mental health assessment is necessary.
10. Submit a [DCFS 280](#) to restart placement payment (if applicable.)
11. If the youth is a NMD and is in a [SILP](#), reassess the NMD's readiness for a SILP at this time.
12. When possible [holding a team meeting](#) to explore the child/NMD's underlying or unmet needs and the necessary services and support to meet those needs. Meeting participants should include; primary and secondary CSWs on the case, mentors and/or advocates, mental health clinicians and WRAP Around providers, caregivers, [tribe/tribal representatives if applicable](#), and anyone the child/NMD deems significant in their case planning process.

13. If the child/NMD cannot return to their previous placement, explore with the child/NMD the possibility of placing them with a suitable relative, NREFM, licensed foster family home, or other licensed facility that would best meet the child/NMD's needs. This new placement should take into account the unmet needs surfaced during the "Debrief Interview."
14. If the [Missing/Absent from Care child/NMD must be replaced](#)/put in another placement, complete and submit the [DCFS 6011](#), Notice of Replacement Report as the "Notice of Replacement" for the court.
15. Tell the CSAT Team of the child/NMD's return to address their possible need for mental health services. Through the CSAT, Missing/Absent from Care children are screened for mental health services following their return from the Missing/Absent from Care episode. Following consultation with the DCFS CSAT Team, if it is determined that the Child Welfare [Mental Health Screening](#) Tool (MHST) is required:
 - Complete the MHST and send to the CSAT in-box
 - If the Child Welfare MHST is positive, the [DCFS 179MH](#), [DCFS 179PHI](#), and [DCFS 174](#) must also be sent with the MHST to the CSAT's in-box with the heading, Missing/Absent from Care.

Runaway Outreach Unit (ROU) Responsibilities When a Child/NMD is Found or Returns

- Contact the primary CSW/ SCSW to inform them that the child/NMD has been found/ returned and discuss next options.

A Child is in Custody or Residing in Another State and a Warrant has been Issued

Case-Carrying CSW/DI Responsibilities

1. Warrants issued by the juvenile court are not enforceable outside the State of California. However, law enforcement in other states will usually cooperate in sending a child back to Los Angeles County.
2. Within twenty-four (24) business hours, contact the law enforcement agency in the other state to discuss the circumstances of the child's Missing/Absent from Care status and resulting warrant.
3. If law enforcement in the other state agrees to honor the warrant:
 - a. Ask for the Telex number of the law enforcement agency so the warrant can be sent to them.
 - b. Contact the Sheriff's Countywide Warrant System (CWS) at (562) 465-7838 to ask that the warrant be sent out of state. The receiving law enforcement Telex number must be given.
4. [Arrange transportation](#) for the child's return to California and for an attendant to accompany the child if appropriate. Consult with the ROU CSW assigned to the case; they can also help in returning the child to DCFS' custody.
5. If law enforcement in the other state refuses to honor the warrant, consult with the SCSW. Contact the local Los Angeles County law enforcement agency for help.

Returning a Missing/Absent from Care Child From Another State or County Who is Not Under Child Welfare/Juvenile Court Supervision

ER/MART CSW Responsibilities

1. If DCFS is the responding child welfare agency, debrief with the child regarding the missing/absent from care incident, including whether the child should be medically examined.
2. Determine the primary factors that contributed to the child running away or being absent from care, including where and from whom they ran away.
3. Determine the child's experiences while away from care (i.e. where did they stay, with whom, how did they provide for their needs, such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, as well as experiences with drug use, sexual activity, abuse, etc.)
4. Determine if the child is a possible victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE.) If it is determined that the child is a victim of CSE contact the Child Protection Hotline (CPH.)
5. Immediately contact law enforcement in the other state or California Home County to determine if a Missing Person's Report/protective custody warrant was filed.
6. Cross check with other Child Welfare Agencies for an open case.
7. If the child is from another California County and alleging child abuse and neglect, contact the Child Welfare Agency where the child resides.
 - a. Make a child abuse report.
 - b. Make arrangements for the child's return to their home county or other state.
8. Share the information gathered on questions 2-4 with the California Home County or other state.
9. Document the activities and information described above for federal reporting purposes in the Contact Notebook.
10. If appropriate, contact the child's parents or legal guardians and inquire as to whether the parents or legal guardians have the means to pay to transport the child back home.
11. If the child refuses to return home, a WIC 300 petition must be filed on the Child/NMD's behalf.
12. If the decision is not to file a petition but return the child to their home state or California Home County, and the means of transportation is not immediately forthcoming, place the Child/NMD in foster care or as otherwise authorized by the Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ), until transportation back home can be arranged. For out of state children, contact the Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ), and place the child as authorized by ICJ.
 - A petition must be filed unless the child is returned to their home state within five (5) calendar days or California Home County within twenty-four (24) hours.
 - Notification should be given to the ICJ office in Sacramento, when an Out of State Missing/Absent from Care child/NMD is found in Los Angeles County. Notification shall be made after 24 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) if the child has not been returned to their State or County of origin.
 - The following ICJ contact numbers are to be used:

ASSIGNMENT	PHONE/EMAIL
Transfers	(916) 531-6522 Jose.villalobos@cdcr.ca.gov
Returns	(916) 712-4056 Michael.farmer@cdcr.ca.gov

13. Consult with SCSW to determine if an attendant/CSW is needed to accompany the child.
 - In making a decision to [accompany a child](#) who may have special or unique needs, provide SCSW with all information and supporting documents.
14. Complete the [DCFS 304](#)
 - a. Summarize the request for transportation.
 - b. Include case name, number, child's name, age, travel dates, car rental and attendant information, if any.
15. Forward the completed DCFS 304 to SCSW for approval.
 - Provide any necessary supporting documentation, as appropriate.
16. [Arrange transportation](#) for the child's return to their home state or California Home County and for an attendant to accompany the child, if appropriate.
17. Make arrangements to have the parent's/law enforcement representative/child welfare agency representative to be present to meet the child at the airport/bus station.
18. [Document all contacts](#) in the Contact Notebook.

SCSW Responsibilities

1. Review the [DCFS 304](#) and check for completeness and accuracy.
 - a. If approved and the attendant is not a CSW, sign the DCFS 304.
 - If the DCFS 304 is incomplete or inaccurate, return it to the CSW for corrective action.
 - b. If the attendant is a CSW, forward the DCFS 304 to the ARA for approval.
2. Upon receipt of approved DCFS 304, return a copy to the CSW.
3. Forward the original DCFS 304 to the travel coordinator.

ARA or Designee Responsibilities

1. Review the [DCFS 304](#) and check for completeness and accuracy.
 - a. If approved and the attendant is not a CSW, sign the DCFS 304.
 - If the DCFS 304 is incomplete or inaccurate, return it to the SCSW for corrective action.
 - b. If the attendant is a CSW, forward the DCFS 304 to the RA for approval.
2. Return a copy of the approved DCFS 304 to the SCSW.

RA or Designee Responsibilities

1. Review the [DCFS 304](#) and check for completeness and accuracy.

- a. If the DCFS 304 is incomplete or inaccurate, return it to the ARA for corrective action.
2. Sign the DCFS 304 as appropriate.
3. Return a copy of the approved DCFS 304 to the SCSW.

Returning a Missing/Absent from Care Child from Another State or County Who is Not Under Child Welfare/Juvenile Court Supervision to a Surrounding County

When returning a Missing/Absent from Care child to surrounding counties, contact the Child Welfare Agency in that county and make arrangements for them to assume custody within 24 hours rather than placing the child in a foster home.

CSW Responsibilities

1. Contact the Child Welfare Agency in the child's home state or California Home County and advise them that the child has been located.
2. Inquire as to what procedures they have in place for getting transportation for the child to return home.
3. If the other jurisdiction cannot pick the child up immediately, initiate a Courtesy Hold, and place the child in foster care pending transportation back home.
 - A petition must be filed unless the child is returned to their home state within five (5) calendar days or California Home County within twenty-four (24) hours.
 - Notification should be given to the ICJ office in Sacramento, when an Out of State Missing/Absent from Care child is found in Los Angeles County. Notification shall be made after 24 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) if the child has not been returned to their State or County of origin.
 - The following ICJ contact numbers are to be used:

ASSIGNMENT	PHONE/EMAIL
Transfers	(916) 531-6522 Jose.villalobos@cdcr.ca.gov
Returns	(916) 712-4056 Michael.farmer@cdcr.ca.gov

4. If the Child Welfare Agency in the other state or California County needs additional time to make arrangements for the child's transportation, advise them that they will pay the cost of the child's placement.
5. Complete the [DCFS 304](#)
 - Summarize the request for transportation.
 - Include case name, number, child's name, age, travel dates, car rental and attendant information, if any.

6. Forward the completed DCFS 304 to SCSW for approval and provide any necessary supporting documentation, if appropriate.
7. Arrange transportation for the child's return to their home state or California Home County and for an attendant to accompany the child, if appropriate.
8. Make arrangements to have the parent's/law enforcement representative/child welfare agency representative to be present to meet the child at the airport/bus station.
9. [Document all contacts](#) in the Contact Notebook.

SCSW Responsibilities

1. Review the [DCFS 304](#) and check for completeness and accuracy.
 - a. If approved and the attendant is not a CSW, sign the DCFS 304.
 - If the DCFS 304 is incomplete or inaccurate, return it to the CSW for corrective action.
 - b. If the attendant is a CSW, forward the DCFS 304 to the ARA for approval.
2. Upon receipt of approved DCFS 304, return a copy to the CSW.
3. Forward the original DCFS 304 to the travel coordinator.

ARA or Designee Responsibilities

1. Review the [DCFS 304](#) and check for completeness and accuracy.
 - a. If approved and the attendant is not a CSW, sign the DCFS 304.
 - If the DCFS 304 is incomplete or inaccurate, return it to the SCSW for corrective action.
 - b. If the attendant is a CSW, forward the DCFS 304 to the RA for approval.
2. Return a copy of the approved DCFS 304 to the SCSW.

RA or Designee Responsibilities

1. Review the [DCFS 304](#) and check for completeness and accuracy.
 - a. If the DCFS 304 is incomplete or inaccurate, return it to the ARA for corrective action.
2. Sign the DCFS 304 as appropriate.
3. Return a copy of the approved DCFS 304 to the SCSW.

Returning a Child on Active Parole/Probation to Another State or California County

ER/MART CSW Responsibilities

1. Call the other jurisdiction's Probation Department and confirm that the child is an active probation ward with an outstanding warrant.
2. If an open case is found, ask for a copy the court order.
3. Upon receipt, send the court order to Intake and Detention Control (IDC) at Los Angeles County Probation Department.

4. Contact IDC at Los Angeles County Probation Department and make arrangements for Probation to take custody of the child.
5. If necessary, contact the Probation Department (562) 445-6413 for assistance in making a determination of Probation Involvement.
6. Document all contacts in the Contact Notebook.
7. Notification should be given to the ICJ office in Sacramento, when an Out of State Missing/Absent from Care child is found in Los Angeles County. Notification shall be made after 24 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) if the child has not been returned to their State or County of origin. The following ICJ contact numbers are to be used:

ASSIGNMENT	PHONE/EMAIL
Transfers	(916) 531-6522 Jose.villalobos@cdcr.ca.gov
Returns	(916) 712-4056 Michael.farmer@cdcr.ca.gov

Court Terminating Jurisdiction

When a child has run away from placement and is under the age of eighteen (18), the dependency court jurisdiction can be terminated only in extraordinary circumstances and only when the court finds it is in the child's best interest to do so. The CSW cannot recommend termination of jurisdiction.

CSW Responsibilities

1. If the NMD is a suspected victim of harm or foul play and not voluntarily absent from care, CSW should confirm that a Missing Person's Report is on file in the DOJ Missing and Unidentified Persons System before dependency is terminated.
2. Present the facts of the case to the court, including factors as they relate to WIC 391. Such factors include; but are not limited to:
 - The child has recently reached their majority age.
 - The child is living with a parent or relative out-of-state and the CPS worker from the other state reports the child is doing well and/or the other state refuses to honor California's warrant.
 - Required services have been offered and the child/NMD refuses services; or
 - After reasonable efforts by the Department, the child/NMD cannot be located.
 - If the NMD's whereabouts are unknown and they are refusing services, notify the NMD of their options under Extended Foster Care (EFC).
3. For NMDs who have left placement and their whereabouts are unknown, document efforts to locate and inform them of their options under [Extended Foster Care \(EFC\)](#). If the NMD is not located and/or is refusing services, the CSW must walk-on a report or wait until the next scheduled status review hearing (if it is scheduled within 30 calendar days) to request termination of jurisdiction unless unusual circumstances exist such as:
 - The NMD is seriously developmentally delayed or;

- The NMD has been diagnosed with a serious mental illness and it is reasonable to assume they are incompetent; or
 - It is suspected the NMD is a victim of harm or foul play (e.g. abducted or held against their will) and not voluntarily absent from care.
4. The decision to terminate jurisdiction must be handled on a case by case basis, taking into consideration factors such as family support, Regional Center support, etc. If there are any questions on how to provide the court with the necessary information to terminate jurisdiction, consult with County Counsel.
 5. When the minute order terminating jurisdiction is received, provide a copy of the minute order to the Office ARKS Liaison to update the ARKS database.

APPROVALS

SCSW Approval

- DCFS 304

ARA Approval

- DCFS 304

RA Approval

- DCFS 304

FORMS

Attachments

[Missing/Missing/Absent from Care Child/NMD De-briefing Form](#)

Forms

CWS/CMS

DCFS 6011, Notice of Replacement Report

LA Kids

[DCFS 174](#), Family Centered Referral Form

[DCFS 179-MH](#), Parental Consent for Child's Assessment & Participation in Mental Health and/or Regional Center Developmental Services

[DCFS 179PHI](#), Authorization for Disclosure of Child's Protected Health Information (PHI)

[FCSS Automated 280](#)

[DCFS 304](#), Case Related Travel Request

[DCFS 729](#), Protective Custody Warrant Request

[DCFS 729A](#), Protective Custody Warrant Recall Request

[DCFS 4009](#), Bed Hold Agreement and Payment Authorization

[DCFS 5402](#), Notice Of Child's Attorney Re: Child's Case Status

REFERENCED POLICY GUIDES

Referenced Policy Guides

[0070-516.15](#), Screening and Assessing Children for Mental Health Services and Referral to the Coordinated Services Action Team (CSAT)

[0100-535.25](#), Extended Foster Care (EFC) Program

[0100-560.40](#), Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP)

[1200-501.20](#) Child Abduction and Recovery

[0300-503.55](#), Protective Custody Warrants

[0400-503.10](#), Contact Requirements and Exceptions

[Management Directive 14-02](#), Travel Policy, Travel Advance and Expense Reimbursement

STATUTES

Statutes

[Assembly Bill \(AB\) 2108](#) - Requires social workers to provide notice no later than 24 hours from receipt of information that the child/NMD dependent is missing from foster care to parents, legal guardians, Indian custodian and their attorneys, child/NMD's attorney, CASA and sibling dependent age 10 or older and the court of jurisdiction.

[All County Letter \(ACL\) 25-67 \(September 16, 2025\)](#) – requires each county to submit updated protocols for review and approval and additional reporting. Adds new communication

requirements with law enforcement agencies and NCMEC regarding children missing from care. Includes CWS/MCS instructions for “Runaway” or Missing, Absent from Care.

[ACL 24-18](#) (March 15, 2024) – requirements to make active efforts to support Indian children and their families.

[ACL 16-15](#) (April 28, 2016) – includes instructions regarding policies and procedures counties must develop to locate youth who go missing from foster care.

[All County Information Notice \(ACIN\) I-59-18](#) (September 14, 2018) Harm Reduction Approach- Provides an introduction to the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Harm Reduction Series and how the approach can be utilized while serving Child/NMD abused through Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

[ACIN I-13-17](#) (April 25, 2017) – includes the safety and support plan and the debriefing form.

[Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 340](#) - Provides details as to when a petition can be filed for the protection of a minor and as to when a protective custody warrant can be issued without filing a petition under Section 300 if the court finds probable cause.

[WIC Section 16501.35](#) - States that county child welfare agencies and probation departments shall implement policies and procedures to help identify victims of commercial sexual exploitation, receive training to provide specific services to victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and shall develop and implement specific protocols to expeditiously locate any child missing from foster care and whenever a dependent minor has run away from his or her court ordered placement, a protective custody warrant may be issued immediately for the minor.

[WIC Section 391\(c\)](#) - Provides details for the termination of jurisdiction over a nonminor.

[WIC Section 1400](#) - Provides detailed information regarding the Interstate Compact for Juveniles.

[WIC 16010.7](#) – Placement preservation strategy must be implemented in an attempt to save a child’s placement. CSW shall serve written notice at least 14 calendar days prior to the change in placement.