



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott  
Governor

Mike Carroll  
Secretary

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**DATE:** July 18, 2016

**TO:** Regional Managing Directors  
Community-Based Care Lead Agency CEOs

**THROUGH:** David L. Fairbanks, Deputy Secretary *DF*

**FROM:** JoShonda Guerrier, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare *JSG*  
Vicki Abrams, Assistant Secretary for Operations *VA*

**SUBJECT:** CFOP 170-11, Chapter 6: Normalcy; Chapter 7: Babysitting;  
Chapter 8: Vacation and Out of Town Travel  
**Effective date: July 25, 2016**

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this memorandum is to provide notification that new child welfare operating procedures for all staff of the Department, Community-Based Care lead agencies and subcontracted providers involved with children in out-of-home care of all ages have been finalized and will be effective July 25, 2016. This memo highlights significant changes that will go into effect upon publication.

**BACKGROUND:** The effort to establish a comprehensive set of child welfare operating procedures for the Hotline, Child Protective Investigations, and Ongoing Services case management staff began early last year. Additional effort has been made to incorporate prior policies addressed by memorandum into operating procedure. These chapters of CFOP 170-11 (Placement) is the result of contributions from the Quality Parenting Initiative community and subsequent feedback from Community-Based Care lead agencies via the Florida Coalition for Children.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 of CFOP 170-11 supersede four DCF memos: Normalcy for Children in Custody of the Department (August 31, 2005); Sharing Case Records/Information with Foster Parents (October 29, 2010); Online Social Networking Policy (February 22, 2012); and Normalcy, Babysitting, Vacation, and Emergency Care for Children in Out-of-Home Care (March 5, 2013). These clarifications to policy include the following highlights:

- Clarification of decision making related to normal childhood activities.
- Clarification and change of expectations related to use of babysitters by out-of-home caregivers:
  - Babysitting does not include overnight care or daily childcare.

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



- o Babysitting does not have to occur in a licensed setting and background screening is not required.
  - o Caregivers may allow a family or person who is well known to them to provide care for children placed in their care overnight.
  - o Substitute caregivers chosen by the caregiver for babysitting will be background screened for all stays exceeding three (3) nights. When the substitute caregiver is utilized due to unexpected circumstances, background screening will be initiated within one (1) business day.
  - o The assigned child welfare professional shall consult with the supervisor and other involved parties, such as the Guardian ad Litem, when the overnight stay needs to exceed seven (7) nights. When relevant, agreement by all parties shall be documented by the child welfare professional in Florida Safe Families Network.
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- Clarification regarding vacations and out of town travel.

To review this document in its entirety, please use the following links on the Department's Home Page or Center for Child Welfare websites, respectively:

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/asg/Publications.shtml>

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/HorizontalTab/DeptOperatingProcedures.shtml>

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please share this memorandum with all DCF, CBC/Lead Agency personnel and Case Management Organizations as appropriate and ensure that the new procedures are implemented effective July 25, 2016.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** If you require additional information or have any questions, please contact Courtney M. Smith, Permanency and Well-Being Manager, Office of Child Welfare at (850) 717-4660 or Courtney.Smith@myflfamilies.com.

cc: Grainne O'Sullivan, Statewide Director, Children's Legal Services  
Regional Family and Community Services Directors  
Alan Abramowitz, Guardian Ad Litem Executive Director  
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