

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  
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# Health Services In Foster Care



# Q&A

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## **ACS POLICY AND PHILOSOPHY**

In order to facilitate a family to family philosophy in the provision of health services to children, the agency shall engage foster parents and biological parents in the planning, delivery and coordination of health services for the child, while the child is in care as well as when the child is discharged home.

## **WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF ACS HEALTH SERVICES?**

- Initial Assessment
- Comprehensive Assessment
- Health promotion and disease prevention
- Health education

## **INITIAL ASSESSMENT**

All children entering foster care must be medically cleared for placement by a nurse in the Field Office or at Emergency Children's Services, or at a health care site such as a hospital or clinic. Each child should be assigned a Primary Care Provider responsible for coordinating and managing all health services required by the child while in foster care.

A health history must be established and an initial health screening must be completed.

## **COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH ASSESSMENT**

This is an examination to identify current health status, treat current health conditions and recommend acute or chronic follow up services including necessary mental health services.

This should take place as soon as possible after placement but no later than 30 days after placement. If there is documentation that the child had a physical exam less than 90 days prior to entering care, this requirement may be waived.

The Comprehensive Health Assessment must include:

- Complete unclothed physical examination.
- An assessment of child's immunization status and provision of immunizations.
- Age appropriate vision and hearing assessments.
- Developmental screening (using a formal tool for all children 5 years and under).
- Mental health/behavioral screening for all children over 5 years old.
- Laboratory tests: age appropriate and in accordance with health history or specific conditions.
- Dental screening and/or referral
  - ◆ Every child 2 years and younger shall have their mouths examined at each medical exam and referred for dental care when necessary.
  - ◆ Children over 2 years will have an annual dental exam by a dentist and receive needed dental care.
- Screening for child abuse and maltreatment must be documented at each visit. All health providers are mandated reporters.

## **HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION**

As follow-up to each Comprehensive Exam, staff must:

- Determine if findings require specialty health referrals.

- Ensure the receipt of completed health forms.
- Contact all health providers to obtain information on necessary follow-up care and treatment.
- Offer assistance to foster parents or child care workers in arranging for follow-up care and transportation as necessary.
- Participate in coordination of health services.

## **WELL CHILD CARE**

Routine and Periodic Health Assessments will occur:

- At birth or 2-4 days for a child discharged less than 48 hours after birth.
- At 1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months and 12 months.
- At 15 months, 18 months and 24 months.
- 2-6 years: Every 6 months and as necessary.
- >6 years: Annually and as necessary.

## **HEALTH EDUCATION**

- Informs foster children/foster parents/biologic parents of health requirements for children.
- Encourages appropriate health seeking behavior.
- Assists in obtaining routine or specialty care.

## **BENEFITS OF HEALTH EDUCATION:**

- ◆ Improved access to health services
- ◆ Early diagnosis and treatment
- ◆ Increased longevity and healthier people
- ◆ Improved quality of life