



John B. Mattingly
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM


Lorraine Stephens
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Division of Family
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To: Foster Care Provider Agency Staff

From: Lorraine Stephens, Deputy Commissioner 

Date: January 3, 2011

**Re: Transition to Foster Care Services:
Clarification on Connections Documentation Guidance**

Thank you for your collective efforts since January 2010 to implement the set of transition meetings upon a child's entry into foster care (Transition to Foster Care Services Procedure [#2010/02], issued on February 22, 2010). This memo serves to provide clarification and guidance regarding Connections documentation for the set of transition meetings.

The goals of the Transition Meetings are to share information expeditiously between DCP and foster care providers and to ensure that all parties who are working the family share an understanding of the behaviors and circumstances that brought their child into care; provide parents and caregivers with contact information for their case planner and the whereabouts of their child; and provide the opportunity for parents to visit their children as soon as possible. As you know, we believe that these meetings can ensure that critical information is transferred from child protective services to the foster care agency in the earliest days of a foster care placement, which helps to set the stage for early effective case practice with the family.

As outlined in the original procedure, the Division of Child Protection [DCP] and provider agencies were instructed to document this series of meetings in a Connections Progress note. We are providing further guidance and asking DCP and provider agencies to document these meetings via a specific progress note entry to ensure uniformity in documentation and to allow management reports to be run.

Upon issuance of this memorandum, providers should begin documenting this series of meetings via entry of a Connections Progress note "Type" and "Purpose" as outlined below. Child Protection staff are responsible for documenting the Transition Meeting in Connections. Foster Care Agency staff will be responsible for recording and documenting only the Parent to Parent Meeting and 1st Parent/Child visit in Connections Progress Notes.

NOTE: If child is not placed with a provider with a foster care program, CPS informs parent where their child is currently and arranges 1st visit, and if the child is removed on Friday or Saturday, Pre-Placement staff is responsible for this phone call and DCP will document 1st parent child visit.

As you enter the progress note, please use the following:

Type: Case Conference
Method: Face to Face
Purpose: see chart "A"

To accurately document and record the occurrence of the Transition meeting, Parent to Parent Meeting and 1st Parent/Child visit, **DCP and agency case planning** staff must indicate in the "Purpose" section of the progress note the following CNNX values:

CHART "A"

Meeting Type	Progress Note Type	Progress Note (Purpose) Values to be used
Transition Meeting	Case Conference	72-Hour Post Placement Child Safety Conference
PROVIDER AGENCY STAFF		
Parent to Parent Meeting	Case Conference Casework Contact	Initial
1 st Parent/Child Visit	Other Visitation Casework Contact	Initial

Since ACS can't modify CNNX, pre-existing fields in CNNX have been selected to document these meeting to ensure consistency in documentation.

* Transition Meeting: is documented in CNNX, **in the FSS Stage**, by Child Protection Staff.

** P2P Meeting & 1st Parent/Child Visit: is documented in Cnnx by Foster Care agency staff

*** 1st Parent/Child Visit: If child is not placed with a Provider with a foster care program, CPS informs parent where their child is currently and arranges 1st visit. If the child is removed on Friday or Saturday, Pre-Placement staff is responsible for this phone call

Please refer to the **Desk Aid "Documenting in CNNX Progress Notes Chart"** for relevant information as it pertains to the Transition Meetings Series and documentation requirements for both DCP and foster care agency providers.

As always, thank you for your ongoing collaboration.

**City of New York
Administration for Children's Services**

Procedure 2010/02

SUBJECT: Transition to Foster Care Services

APPROVED: John B. Mattingly



**DATE: February 22, 2010
January 3, 2011 (Revised)**

PAGE: 1 of 6 (1 attachment)

**IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY:
Children's Services Division of Child
Protection and Foster Care Provider
Agencies**

PURPOSE:

To ensure that when children enter foster care, parents/caretakers, including non-custodial parents, know what foster care agency and worker is responsible for their child(ren); parents have an early opportunity to meet face to face with child protection and foster care agency staff to discuss the behaviors and reasons for their child's removal; meet with the foster parents; and that children have an opportunity to visit with their parents early in the foster care placement, preferably at the time of the transition meeting.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all foster care provider agencies and the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Division of Child Protection (DCP). It applies whenever a child is placed into foster care as a result of an abuse/neglect investigation, when parents voluntarily place a child through a Voluntary Placement Agreement, or when a child is placed into the care of ACS as a destitute child. It does not apply when children are placed into the care of ACS as a Person In Need of Supervision (PINS) or juvenile delinquent.

POLICY:

The first few days of placement can be confusing and complicated for parents and their children. ACS and its providers are committed to ensuring that all parents and caregivers whose child is placed in the care of ACS know the whereabouts of their child, and the name and contact information of their case planner as soon as their child is placed. Furthermore, we are committed to ensuring that children have the opportunity to visit their parents, and that parents/caregivers have the opportunity to meet their child's foster parents, as soon as possible.

To meet these commitments, it is the policy of ACS that whenever a child is placed into the care and custody of ACS via an Article 10 remand, a voluntary placement, or as a destitute child:

1. ACS and its foster care providers will provide the parent with the name and contact information of the foster care agency worker responsible for their child within 24 hours of the child's placement with a foster care agency, and

2. The following meetings and visits will occur within two (2) business days of the child's legal placement into foster care (via Family Court remand order/signature of voluntary placement agreement/placement of a child into foster care as a destitute child) **OR** assignment of a foster care agency to the child's case, whichever event occurs last:
 - a. A Transition Meeting including a review of the reason for placement as well as a discussion of the roles of the Child Protective Specialist (CPS) and foster care agency staff,
 - b. A Parent to Parent meeting,
 - c. First parent-child visit.

CPS and foster care provider agencies should work to schedule the Transition Meeting, Parent-to-Parent meeting, and initial parent-child visit for the same day. Scheduling in this manner will reduce the number of visits the foster parent, child, and parent/caregiver must make to the foster care agency during the first week of placement. Sequential scheduling will also afford the CPS the opportunity to assist the child's transition into foster care since CPS will have an opportunity to talk to the child and foster parent before or after the Transition Meeting. However, if it is not possible to schedule all three events for the same day, then they may occur separately, as long as each event occurs within the timeframes listed above.

PROCEDURE:

I. Information Sharing During Placement Process-

Foster Care Agency Responsibility:

When a foster care agency accepts a child for placement, the foster care agency is responsible for sharing with the ACS Office of Placement (OPA) the name, title, and contact information for the foster care case worker who has case planning responsibility for the children and caregivers.

Office of Placement Responsibilities:

At the time of placement OPA is responsible for:

- Alerting DCP CPS, CPSS II, and the Child and Family Specialist (CFS) via email that the placement has been secured,
- Providing the name of the foster care agency, and the name and contact information of the foster care agency worker to the CPS,
- Providing to foster care agencies, in DocuShare, the following documents:
 - Child Placement Referral Form,
 - Child Adolescent and Strengths (CANS) or mini-CANS, if applicable,
 - Psychological assessments completed by Bellevue Mental Health team, if applicable,
 - Child Safety Conference Summary,
 - Any other assessments (psychological, psychiatric, psychosocial) that OPA has been provided for the child.
- Assigning the Connections case worker role to the foster care agency within 24 hours.
- Sharing any information that may influence a decision regarding whether an initial parent-child visit would make a child unsafe.

II. Transitional Work Required After Placement-

A. Initial contact with parents/caregivers:

Child Protective Specialist Responsibility:

For Article 10 placements, the child protective specialist assigned to the case is responsible for contacting the parent/caretaker within 24 hours of the child's removal/ separation from caregiver to inform the parent of:

- which foster care agency is caring for the child/ren, if placement has been secured,
- the name and contact information of the foster care case worker assigned to the case,
- the date and location of the Transition Meeting, and that the parent may bring up to 3 other family or community supports with them to the Transition Meeting. Families may not bring their attorney to this meeting.

If no placement has been identified for the child within 24 hours contact must still be made to arrange a parent/child visit (see Section D below), and parents must still be informed of the whereabouts of their child.

For Voluntary Placements, this contact is unnecessary since the parent will be made aware of the child's placement location at the time that they sign the voluntary placement agreement.

Pre-Placement Social Services

For weekend placements the Pre-Placement Social Services is responsible for this initial contact.

Foster Care Agency responsibility

The foster care agency with case planning responsibility must initiate contact with the birth parents during the first twenty-four (24) hours of their child's placement with the foster care agency to introduce the responsible foster care agency case worker to the parent.

B. The Transition Meeting:

The Transition Meeting is co-facilitated by the assigned foster care agency worker and the assigned Child Protective Specialist.

When scheduling the transition meeting, the location of transition meeting will depend on the type of foster care setting in which the child is placed. When the child(ren) is placed into a family foster care setting, the transition meeting will occur at the foster care agency office. In other circumstances (i.e., when there are multiple children in the family and they are placed with more than one foster care agency, when children are placed in a congregate care setting, or when children are placed outside the neighborhood of the case address) the meeting should take place at the foster care agency office, borough office, or community visitation center that is closest to the biological parent/caretaker's address.

Child Protective Specialist Responsibility

The borough office child protective specialist assigned to the case is responsible for scheduling the Transition Meeting with the foster care agency.

Foster Care Agency responsibility

The foster care agency is responsible for identifying an appropriate location for the meeting. The

foster care agency is also responsible for ensuring that the assigned case worker attends the meeting. If the child is placed in a residential setting, a child care staff member must attend the meeting in addition to the responsible case worker.

Meeting structure

During the meeting, the biological parents/caretakers, child protective specialist, and assigned foster care agency case worker will meet to:

- Ensure all parties are aware of reason for placement,
- Explain to the parent the ongoing roles of CPS and foster care worker moving forward, including who will do home visits, court appearances, service planning process, etc,
- Briefly review Court orders and petitions, if available,
- Briefly review plans to ensure child's educational stability.

C. Parent to Parent Meeting:

This meeting is child-centered and team oriented. It provides an opportunity for foster parents to understand the needs of the child(ren) placed in their home and allows the birth parents the opportunity to meet and develop a good working relationship with the foster parent who is caring for their child while in placement.

When the child is placed into a family foster care setting, participants include the biological parents/caretakers, foster care agency case worker and foster parent. When the child is placed in a congregate setting, participants include the biological parents/caretakers, foster care agency case worker and foster care agency child care staff.

The foster care agency is responsible for notifying the foster parent and/or child care staff of the date, time and location of the meeting, and for ensuring the foster parent's attendance. The meeting will:

- Focus only on the child's needs,
- Discuss child's likes and dislikes, behaviors, cultural and religious beliefs, favorite toys, friends, relatives as well as anything that will make the transition for the child as easy as possible,
- Give parent and foster parent an opportunity to get to know each other and begin the process of developing a good working relationship,
- Establish visitation plan.

This stage of the meeting will be facilitated by the foster care provider agency case worker but the discussion is mostly between the birth and foster parents. The objective of the effort is to best meet the needs of the child. The child protective specialist does not attend. If the foster parent is a kinship provider, the foster care agency must provide the foster parent with a copy of the OCFS Handbook for Relatives Raising Children to the foster parent at this meeting. Link:

www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5120.pdf A Spanish version can be found via the following link: www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5120-S.pdf

Note: when a child is placed into an Office of Mental Health (OMH), hospital, or other non-child welfare setting a Parent-to-Parent Meeting is not required.

D. Initial parent-child visit:

Parent-child visits and phone contact must be established whenever a child enters into foster care. The **only exception** to this requirement is if the visit or phone contact is specifically prohibited by the Court. Parent-child telephone contact should also be supported, but is not a substitute for an in-person visit.

The goal of the visit is to support continuity of the parent/child relationship and to communicate the expectation of continued parenting responsibility, while supporting the parent to immediately begin to address the behaviors and reasons for their child's removal, and to allow for a casework assessment of the likelihood of reunification to begin as soon as possible.

Division of Child Protection responsibility

If a placement is not found for the child quickly and the child remains at the ACS Children's Center, Pre-Placement Social Services at the ACS Children's Center is responsible for arranging the initial parent-child visit.

Foster care agency responsibility

The foster care agency receiving case planning responsibility must arrange the initial parent-child visit. In cases in which children from the same family are placed with more than one foster care agency, the agency who is receiving case planning is responsible for arranging the initial parent-child visit in coordination with the assigned borough office CPS.

After the initial visit, case/child planners are to make visits according to the Minimum Casework Contact Requirements for Foster Care Cases.

Note: If one or more parent is incarcerated, every effort must be made to explore the option of holding the visit at the jail or prison. If this is not possible, the parent must be offered the option of calling into the visit.

E. Cases for which DCP has case planning responsibility:

If the Division of Child Protection is assigned case planning for the case (i.e., the child is in the hospital or OMH setting at the time of remand, the child is being placed into a setting that does not take case planning responsibility, etc.), then the CPS with case planning responsibility remains responsible for coordinating the initial and ongoing parent child visits.

When the child is placed with an ACS provider, (i.e., Diagnostic Reception Center, DRC, or maternity shelter), CPS is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the transition meeting and Parent to Parent meeting that includes the parent, representatives of the provider agency, and the CPS worker, must still occur, following the guidance outlined previously in this procedure.

When the child is placed in a non-child welfare setting (i.e., a hospital or OMH setting), neither a Transition Meeting nor a Parent-to-Parent meeting are required.

F. Documentation:

Recording, monitoring and tracking of this series of meetings will occur via entry of a Connections Progress note. Child Protection staff is responsible for documenting the Transition

Meeting in Connections. Foster Care Agency staff will be responsible for recording and documenting only the Parent to Parent Meeting and 1st Parent/Child visit in Connections Progress

Note: Meetings are to be documented in the CONNECTIONS Family Services Stage (FSS) progress notes.

Using the instructions for entering a progress note, the following is how this series of meetings should be entered:

Type: Case Conference
Casework Contact
Method: Face to Face
Purpose: see chart "A"

CHART "A"

Meeting Type	Progress Note Type	Progress Note Purpose
Transition Meeting*	Case Conference	72-Hour Post Placement Child Safety Conference
Parent to Parent Meeting**	Case Conference Casework Contact	Initial
1 st Parent/Child Visit***	Other Visitation Casework Contact	Initial

Since ACS can't modify CNNX, pre-existing fields in CNNX have been selected to document these meeting to ensure consistency in documentation

Please Note:

- * Transition Meeting is documented in CNNX FSS by Child Protection Staff.
- ** P2P & 1st Parent/Child Visit is documented in CNNX by Foster Care agency staff
- *** 1st Parent/Child Visit: is documented in CNNX by Foster Care Agency staff; **however**, if child is not placed with a Provider with a foster care program within 24 hours, CPS notifies parent where their child is currently and arranges 1st visit. If the child is removed on Friday or Saturday, Pre-Placement staff is responsible for this phone call and DCP will document.

Please refer to the attached **Desk Aid "Documenting in CNNX Progress Notes Chart"** for relevant information as it pertains to the Transition Meetings Series and documentation requirements for both DCP and foster care agency providers.

This policy went into effect February 22, 2010 and the revised documentation portion is in effect January 3, 2011. Guidance given in this policy regarding timing of visitation and Parent-to-Parent meetings replaces any guidance on these matters that was issued in any previous policy, procedure, memorandum, or statement.

For more information please contact Michael Hopson, Senior Writer, Policies and Procedures Unit, at 212-341-2858.

Documenting in Connections Progress Notes:

Transition Meeting, Parent to Parent Meeting, 1ST Parent/Child Visit

A. Transition Meeting Documented in CNX **DOCUMENTED BY DCP ONLY**	B. Parent to Parent [P2P] Meeting Documented in CNX: **DOCUMENTED BY FOSTER CARE AGENCY STAFF ONLY**	C. First [1st] Parent/Child Visit Documented in CNX: **DOCUMENTED BY FOSTER CARE AGENCY or DCP **
Type: Case Conference	Type: Case Conference Casework Contact	Type: Other Visitation Casework Contact
Method: Face to Face		Method: Face to Face
Purpose: 72-Hour Post Plcmnt CSC	Method: Face to Face	Purpose: Initial
Family Participants: Check all attendees	Purpose: Initial	Family Participants: Check all attendees
Location: Where did Transition Meeting take place? (Dropdown)	Family Participants: Check all attendees	Location: Where did the visit take place? (Dropdown)
Event Date: Date of meeting	Location: Where did P2P Meeting take place? (Dropdown)	Event Date: Date of visit
Event Time: Time of meeting	Event Date: Date of meeting	Event Time: Time of visit
Other Participants: Was anyone else present? (Dropdown)	Event Time: Time of meeting	Other Participants: Was anyone else present? (Dropdown)
	Other Participants: Was anyone else present? (Dropdown)	

Chart A

Chart B

Meeting Type	Progress Note Type	Progress Note (Purpose) Values to be used
Transition Meeting	Case Conference	72-Hour Post Placement Child Safety Conference
PROVIDER AGENCY STAFF		
Parent to Parent Meeting	Case Conference Casework Contact	Initial
1 st Parent/Child Visit	Other Visitation Casework Contact	Initial

Staff	Progress Note (Other Participant) Values to be used
ACS Staff	
ACS Worker (Any – CPS, Case Manager)	Case Manager
ACS Supervisor	District/Agency Staff
Provider Agency Staff	
Provider Agency Worker	Case Planner
Provider Agency Supervisor	Supervisor
Child Planner or other agency Staff	Caseworker

As you can see from both charts, the choices in CNX do not exactly match our needs. We have chosen to use fields that already exist to ensure consistency in documentation.

Transition to Foster Care from the Division of Child Protection - DESK AID

Purpose of the Transition Meeting Series

- When children enter foster care, parents/ caretakers need to know who is caring for their child
- Children and parents do best when there is early and consistent visitation
- Shared parenting helps children to feel stable
- Sharing full information early on helps everyone to plan appropriately with the child and family
- Timing: Ideally all 3 meetings take place together, within 2 business days of Family Court Remand/placement & assignment with a foster care agency a foster, whichever occurs later.

Transition Meetings

What Types of Cases Require the Transition Meeting?

- Article 10 Remand, Voluntary Placements or a destitute child. *[PINS cases, no TM required per policy]*

Who Attends the Transition Meeting?

- CPS, Foster care case planner/child planner, parent.

Who Leads the Transition meeting Discussion?

- While the transition meeting may occur at the foster care agency, the discussion is led by the Child Protective Specialist with input from the foster care case planner

What is Discussed at the Transition Meeting?

- Ensure all parties are aware of reason for placement.
- Explain to the parent role of CPS completion of investigation, ongoing court appearances
- Explain to the parent role of the foster care worker moving forward, home visits, agency visits; service planning process, etc.
- Briefly review Court orders/petition, if available
- **The Transition meeting is NOT a continuation of the Child Safety Conference. The foster care worker will inform parents that their concerns can be further addressed after the meeting.**

How Long Does the Transition meeting Last?

- 20 – 30 minutes.

CPS Responsibilities for Scheduling Transition Meeting:

- CPS calls/contacts parent within 24 hours of the child's separation from the parent, to:
 - Notifies parent[s] the agency caring for their child and provides parent[s] contact information for their case planner
 - Call and coordinate date and time of Transition Meeting with the provider agency and birth parents

Provider Agency Responsibilities in Scheduling the Transition Meeting:

- Agency case planner must call/contact parent within 24 hours
- Agency case planner secures meeting location**
- Agency case planner calls/coordinates with foster parent the scheduled time and location of transition meeting and the P2P & 1st parent/child visit to ensure child(ren) attendance. **[Note: Foster Parent does not participate in the Transition Meeting or 1st parent child visit. They must participate in the P2P].**

**Location of Transition Meeting:

- If child was placed in family setting, meeting should take place at foster care agency office location closest to parent's address

- If child was placed out of CD, in residential care, or for split placements, meeting should take place at location closest to parent's address (foster care agency office, congregate care setting, borough office, or community location)
- If child remains at the Children's Center, Pre-placement staff there is responsible to arrange the initial parent-child visit.

After Completion of Transition Meeting the CPS Worker leaves Agency Case Planner begins P2P and 1st Parent/Child Visit.

Parent to Parent (P2P)

Who Attends the P2P Meeting?

- Foster care case/child planner, parent, foster parent
- Facilitated by the Provider Agency Case Worker/Planner but discussion is mostly between the birth and foster parents.

Location of P2P Meeting

- Same location as the transition meeting if held

What is Discussed at the P2P Meeting?

- The objective is to best meet the needs of the child; identify child's likes and dislikes
- Give parent and foster parent an opportunity to get to know each other
- Discuss and establish visitation plan

First [1st] Parent/Child Visit

Who Attends the Parent/Child Visit?

- Foster care case planner/child planner, parent and child(ren)

Location of the Parent/Child Visit

- Same location as the Transition Meeting & P2P if held sequentially.
[Note: If child is not placed with a Provider with a foster care program within 24 hours, CPS calls parent to tell them where their child is currently and arrange 1st visit. If the child is removed on Friday or Saturday, Pre-Placement staff is responsible for this phone call and DCP will document.]

What are the Goals of the Parent/Child visit?

- Support continuity of the parent/child relationship
- Communicate the expectation of continued parenting responsibility, while supporting parent[s] to immediately begin to address the reason's for their child's removal,
- Begin casework assessment of the likelihood of reunification to begin as soon as possible.

This series of Transition Meetings is essential to begin assessments and should serve as the springboard for early engagement and service goal planning. From this point, planning goals and assessments made by the foster care agency should be shared at the 20-day conference and included in the 30-day FASP.