

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

Guidance #2007/02

SUBJECT: Revised Casework Contacts for Families with Children in Foster Care

APPROVED: John B. Mattingly 

**DATE: October 23, 2007
(Revised 3/30/10)**

PAGE: 1 of 3

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY:
Foster Care Provider Agency; All Staff
Children's Services; Family Permanency Services Staff

PURPOSE:

This memorandum describes Children's Services minimum casework contact requirements for children *in their placement location (formerly known as home-based casework contacts)* and for face-to-face contacts for all parents/relatives.¹

Substantive casework contacts for children and families are essential to effective casework practice. Casework contacts for children in their placement location are important opportunities for foster care casework staff to identify concerns, resolve issues and expedite permanency for children. This policy applies to all families and children in receipt of foster care services and is effective immediately.

SCOPE:

Consistent with Children's Services policy, OCFS regulations were revised to expand and define the *purpose* of casework contacts in three categories: contact with the child's parents or relatives, contact with the child, and contact with children with the permanency goal of "another planned living arrangement with a permanency resource or adult care." OCFS also defined the role of the case manager in directing casework contacts. All other family casework contact requirements remain as outlined in the memorandum entitled "*Family Casework Contact Requirements and Safety Assessments for Families with Histories of CPS Indicated Cases Receiving Services from Protective, Preventive and Foster Care Providers*" issued on April 7, 2000, until further notice.

¹ As stipulated in the regulations issued by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) on August 15, 2006, 18 NYCRR 441.21 AND 18 NYCRR 443.4. Those OCFS regulations did not change the local Children's Services casework contact requirements in any other category except the part noted above.

POLICY:

Minimum Casework Contacts Required with a Child in Placement Location:

- Foster care case planners must conduct **one (1) placement location** visit per month for the first three months of placement and **at least two (2) casework contacts** with the child in his/her placement location **every 90 days** thereafter.

Prior to the 2006 revision of State regulations case planners were required to make only one (1) home-based casework contact with the child every 90 days.

- If a youth is 18 years of age or older and is attending an educational or vocational program 50 miles or more outside the local social service district, casework contacts may be made by telephone or mail.

Please note that OCFS changed the designation of “home-based” contacts to be “placement location” contacts.

Minimum Casework Contacts with Parents/Relatives of a Child with a PPG of “Discharge to Independent Living and Discharge to Adult Residential Care”

OCFS increased the requirements for face-to-face contacts for all parents/relatives without regard to PPG designation. ACS has, therefore, increased its casework contacts standard for children with a permanency goal of “Discharge to Independent Living” and “Discharge to Adult Residential Care” to the following:

- After the first 3 months of placement: **One casework contact per quarter) of which one must be in the home**

Previous casework contact policy allowed for 1 casework contact per quarter with no minimum home-based contact required.

The Purpose of the Casework Contacts:

The information below highlights OCFS language regarding the purpose of casework contacts with the parent or relative, with the child, as well as for “children with a permanency planning goal of another planned living arrangement with a permanency resource or adult residential care.”

A. With the parents or relatives:

Children's Services policies and procedures have always supported safety and risk assessment when conducting casework contacts with the parents or relatives. OCFS regulations explicitly state that all foster care staff must continue to assess "whether the child would be safe if he or she was to return home, and the potential for future risk of abuse or maltreatment if he or she was to return home."²

B. With the Child:

OCFS articulates explicitly that the purpose of casework contacts with the child is to "assess the child's current safety and well-being, to evaluate or re-evaluate the child's permanency needs and permanency goal, and to guide the child towards a course of action aimed at resolving problems of a social, emotional or developmental nature that are contributing towards the reasons why such child is in foster care." This is consistent with Children's Services expectation and policy.

C. For children with a permanency planning goal of another planned living arrangement with a permanency resource or adult residential care:

OCFS articulates explicitly that all casework contacts with the children with permanency planning goals (PPG) of "another planned living arrangement with a permanency resource or adult residential care," are for the purposes "of mobilizing and encouraging family support of the youth's efforts to function independently, and to increase his/her capacity to be self-maintaining; evaluating the ability of the parents or relatives to establish or reestablish a connection with the youth and serve as a resource to the youth; and, where appropriate, encouraging an ongoing relationship between the parents or relatives and the youth."³

The OCFS regulatory revision in 2006 did not introduce new language regarding the purpose of casework contacts with the child's caretakers.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this policy, please contact Melody Grissom, Deputy Director, Policy and Procedure Unit at (212)-341-2848.

² Refer to 18 NYCRR 441.21 for complete purpose of casework contacts with parents or relatives

³ 18 NYCRR 441.21

CONTACTS with CHILD Including Trial Discharge Contacts

ANY Permanency Planning Goal	Casework Contacts		First 3 months	Quarterly Thereafter
	Total# of casework contacts		2 per month	3 per quarter (minimum 1 per month) **
	Total #of casework contacts which must be in placement location		1 per month	2 per quarter *

CONTACTS with FOSTER PARENT or CHILD CARETAKER

ANY Permanency Planning Goal	TOTAL Casework Contacts		First 3 months	Quarterly Thereafter
			2 per month	3 per quarter (minimum 1 per month)
	Total #of casework contacts which must be in placement location (completed in addition to placement location contacts with child)		1 per month	1 every quarter

Contacts with CHILD'S DISCHARGE RESOURCE: Cases with NO History of CPS Indication Including Trial Discharge Contacts

ANY Permanency Planning Goal	TOTAL Casework Contacts		First 3 Months	Quarterly Thereafter
			2 per month	3 per quarter (minimum 1 per month)
	# of casework contacts which must be home-based		1 per month	1 every quarter
When newborn is present in the home minimum required as stated above apply. Worker must see newborn during these contacts. *** Provide additional contacts as needed based on safety and risk assessments or provide more as needed				

CONTACTS with CHILD'S DISCHARGE RESOURCE: Cases with History of CPS Indication Including Trial Discharge Contacts

Permanency Planning Goal (PPG)	TOTAL Casework Contacts		
<u>DISCHARGE TO PARENT</u>	2 per month (1 casework contact must be home-based)		
<u>DISCHARGE TO ADOPTION if the child is not Freed</u> <u>DISCHARGE TO PRIMARY RESOUE PERSON *</u> <u>DISCHARGE TO RELATIVE</u>	When newborn is present in the home: 2 per month for first 6 months (at least 2 casework contacts must be home-based) Provide additional contacts as needed based on safety and risk assessments or provide more as needed		
<u>DISCHARGE TO INDEPENDENT LIVING</u> <u>DISCHARGE TO ADULT RESIDENTIAL CARE</u>	Casework Contacts	First 3 Months	Quarterly Thereafter
	Total# of casework contacts	2 per month	3 per quarter (minimum 1 per month)
	# of casework contacts which must be home-based	1 per month	1 per quarter
	#of home-based casework visits when newborn is present	2 per month for first 6 months (both casework contacts must be home-based)	

* While these casework contact standards are required at a minimum by Children's Services, foster care agency staff are encouraged to conduct more frequent casework contacts as necessary based on the provider's ongoing assessment of child safety and risk. Additionally, these casework contact standards continue to be required at a minimum by Children's Services during the trial discharge period for at least 6 months for youth with a goal of APPLA and at least 3 months for children with any other PPG designation. Youth discharged with a goal of APPLA require supervision until 21st birthday as outlined in Schedule B. Casework contacts for youth age 18 and older attending an educational or vocational program 50 miles or more outside of the local social service district may be made by telephone or other means.

** NYC ACS advises providers to maintain regular home-based contacts in order to prevent gaps in contact for periods of 30 – 60 days.

*** Please refer to the NYC ACS memorandum issued on June 16, 2008 entitled "Safety Planning for Newborns or Newly Discovered Children Whose Siblings are in Foster Care", Guidance #2008/06 to guide your work when a child is born and has siblings in foster care.

Permanency Planning Goal Information	
PPG as it appears in CCRS	PPG as it appears in Connections
DISCHARGE TO PARENTS (01)	1a-Return to Parent 1b-Return to Non-Parent
DISCHARGE TO ADOPTION (04)	2a-Placement for Adoption [Upon Filing Petition to Terminate Parental Rights] 2b-Placement for Adoption [Upon Voluntary Surrender]
DISCHARGE TO PRIMARY RESOURCE PERSON (02)	3a-Referral for Legal Guardianship or Custody [Relative] 3b-Referral for Legal Guardianship or Custody [Non-Relative]
DISCHARGE TO RELATIVE (12)	4-Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative [Non-Guardianship/Non-Custodian]
DISCHARGE TO INDEPENDENT LIVING (03)	5a-Placed in Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
DISCHARGE TO ADULT RESIDENTIAL CARE (05)	5c-Placed in Another Planned Living Arrangement

NYC ACS Five Key Commitments as a Child Caring Agency

- *No child we come into contact with will be left to struggle alone with abuse or neglect.*
- *No family who needs and wants help to keep their children safe will be left without the help it needs.*
- *Every child we come into contact with will get the help (s)he needs to be healthy and achieve his/her full educational and developmental potential.*
- *No child in our care will leave us without a caring, committed, permanent family.*
- *Every team member at Children's Services and each of our partner agencies can expect guidance, respect, and emotional support to achieve our goals. Every child, family, community member, and foster parent we come into contact with will be treated with the same concern and respect.*