

## BUTLER COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

POLICY NO.: <b>2.4</b>	SUBJECT: <b>CLIENT CONTACT POLICY</b>
OAC: 5101: 2-38-01 (R), (S), 2-37-02 N, 2-38-05 (T), (U), (V), (W), (X), 2-42-65 (A), (B), (C), (E), 2-48-17 (A), (B), (C), (E).	EFFECTIVE DATE: 9/30/02
	REVISION DATE: 3/23/04, 9/07, 3/08, 4/09, 3/10, 1/12, 8/14, 2/17
	REVIEW DATE: 3/22/05, 9/07, 3/08, 4/09, 3/10, 1/12, 5/14, 2/17, 5/17

**PURPOSE:** To ensure frequent, consistent, and ongoing face-to-face contact between the caseworker and the child(ren), parent(s) or guardian, and substitute caregiver (when applicable) according to Ohio Administrative Codes and standards of best practice. Ongoing contact is essential for assessing the health, safety, and well-being of the children and families being served. Consistent contact between the caseworker and client facilitates a stronger relationship and promotes client participation.

Each family has differing needs and safety considerations, which may require adjusting the frequency of worker involvement. The need to deviate from the general guidelines will be addressed by the worker and supervisor during case staffing. The general frequency for client contact when a child is in placement is listed below. The section following is a chart form of client contact for all cases.

**POLICY:**

- A. Contact by an agency representative for children entering a new foster care placement or relative/kinship care placement should be as follows:
  - 1. At least one visit shall occur in the substitute care setting during the first week of placement, not including the first day of placement.
  - 2. At least one visit shall occur in the substitute care setting during the first four weeks of placement, not including the visit during the first week of placement.
  - 3. Ongoing contact is listed in the chart below.
  
- B. Contact by an agency representative for children entering Residential Treatment, should be as follows:
  - 1. Agency representative shall at a minimum phone the Residential Treatment Center within twenty four hours of placement.
  - 2. Agency representative shall at a minimum phone the Residential Treatment Center within ten days after a placement.
  - 3. Ongoing contact is listed in the chart below.
  
- C. Contact by an adoption assessor for children entering an adoptive placement, should be as follows:
  - 1. At a minimum, one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made during the first seven days of the placement, not including the first day of placement.

2. At a minimum, one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the home adoptive home shall be made during the first thirty days of placement, not including the visit during the first seven days of placement.
3. After the first 30 days, at a minimum of one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made monthly.

D. When a child is placed in a BCCS treatment foster home, the BCCS foster care specialist shall follow the guidelines in the foster care policy manual for visits and contacts which are in addition to the child's workers required contacts.

<b>Case Type</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Location</b>
<u>Voluntary</u>	Child	Once a month F/F	Home
	Parent/Guardian listed on the case plan.	Once a month F/F	Home
<u>In home Safety Plan</u>	Child	Weekly F/F	Home
	Parent/Guardian	Weekly F/F	Home
	Persons Responsible for Action Steps	Weekly F/F	Home or other
<u>Out of Home Safety Plan</u>	Child	Weekly contact either F/F or by telephone, every other week must be F/F	Home
	Parent/Guardian	Once a month F/F	At least one contact every two months must be in the parent's home.
	Persons responsible for action steps in safety plan	Weekly contact either F/F or by telephone.	Home or other
	Child	Once a month F/F	Home
<u>Court Ordered Protective Supervision – In Home</u>	Child	Once a month F/F	Home
	Parent/Guardian	Once a month F/F	Home

Per court order or as listed in chart, whichever is more frequent.			
	Party to Case Plan	As applicable	As applicable
<u>Court Ordered Protective Supervision – Out of Home</u>  Per court order or as listed in chart, whichever is more frequent. <u>See page one for required contacts during the first month of placement.</u>	Child	Once a month F/F	Substitute care setting
	Parent/Guardian	Once a month F/F	Every other month in the home
	Out-of-Home Care Provider/Relative/Kinship Caregiver.	Once a month F/F Any adult household member with any type of caregiver role regardless of custody status will receive at least one f/f contact. All other adult household member will receive f/f contact every other month.	Substitute care setting
	Party to Case Plan	As applicable	As applicable
<u>Temporary Care &amp; Custody</u>  Every month must be in the home. See page one for required contacts during the first month of placement.	Child	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Parent/Guardian	Monthly F/F	Home or other Every other month in the home
	Out-of-Home Care Provider/Kinship Caregiver.	Monthly F/F Any adult household member with any type of caregiver role regardless of custody status will receive at least one f/f contact. All other adult household member will receive f/f contact every other month.	Substitute care setting
	Party to Case Plan	As applicable	As applicable
<u>Permanent Care &amp; Custody</u>  Every month must be in the home. See page one for required contacts during the first month of placement.	Child	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Out-of-Home care Provider	Monthly F/F Each caregiver on the certificate must receive at least one of the f/f in each two-month period.	Substitute care setting
	Party to Case Plan	As applicable	As applicable
<u>Planned Permanent Living Arrangement</u>	Child	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Parent/Guardian	TBD	TBD

Every month must be in the home. See page one for required contacts during the first month of placement.	Out-of-Home Care Provider	Monthly F/F Each caregiver on the certificate must receive at least one of the f/f in each two-month period.	Substitute care setting
	Party to Case Plan	As applicable	As applicable
<u>Group Home and Residential Treatment</u>  Every month must be in the home. See page one for required contacts during the first month of placement.	Child	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Parent/Guardian	Refer to custody status	Refer to custody status
	Out-of-Home Care Provider	Monthly F/F	Substitute care setting
	Party to Case Plan	As applicable	As applicable
<u>Adoptive Placement</u>  Every month must be in the home. See page one for required contacts during the first month of placement.	Child Adoptive Parent All other members of the household	Monthly F/F Monthly F/F At least every sixty days.	Adoptive Home Adoptive Home Adoptive Home

- E. It is the responsibility of the worker to ensure that the required contact is documented and includes the required items listed below (as applicable to the case).
- F. Client contact should address the following in addition to OAC requirements (as applicable to the case):
1. Family assessment strengths & concerns (review/update)
  2. Safety plan
  3. Case plan goal, objectives, and progress
  4. The child's developmental progress (educational, social, physical, emotional, etc.)
  5. Interaction between the child and the parent/guardian
  6. Upcoming events (semi-annual review, court hearings, etc.)
  7. Behaviors and progress in the home
  8. Behaviors and progress in school
  9. Progress and/or barriers related to referred services
  10. Employment issues

- 11. Basic needs
- 12. Family Concerns
- 13. Child's adjustment to placement and behaviors in the home
- 14. Family visitation update
- 15. Medical/dental appointments
- 16. Life book

- G. During any contact with the family, the worker should be discussing who is in the family, who their friends are, who they depend on for support, etc. along with addresses and phone numbers. This information is most helpful in the event a child is removed from the home. Family members and friends can be participants in a safety plan and/ or be a resource for placement of the child if needed. This information should be entered into SACWIS under the associated persons.
- H. Documentation of Client Contact: It is the expectation that all client face to face contacts are entered into the SACWIS activity log within 3 business days. All other client contacts and dictation are to be entered into the SACWIS activity log within 5 business days. Contact made by Network representatives for children in placement will be entered into SACWIS by an assigned staff member when the monthly Network reports are received. BCCS caseworkers will use the following to document client contact:
  - a. Visitation records.
  - b. Sacwis activity log.
- I. In situations where the family is absent for a scheduled visit, or the worker has been unable to make the required contact, the worker follows the missed appointment with a phone attempt to reschedule, an unscheduled home visit, or letter. If the family does not respond, or the worker is unable to make contact, the worker must consult with the unit supervisor to determine if:
  - 1. Another phone contact, letter transmittal, or unannounced home visit should be made.
  - 2. Law enforcement should be contacted for assistance.
  - 3. Court action should be initiated.

The following are the Ohio Administrative Code requirements for client contact:

**OAC 5101:2-38-01 Requirements for PCSA case plan for in-home supportive services without a court order. Effective Date: October 1, 2009**

- (R) The agency shall make face-to-face contact with each parent, guardian or custodian, and child participating in and being provided services through the JFS 1444 no less than monthly to monitor progress on the case plan objectives.
  - (1) The agency shall have at least one contact every two months in the child's home.
  - (2) The agency shall document home visits, attempts, and all contacts in the case activity log.
- (S) If the initial attempt of face-to-face contact pursuant to the above paragraph of this rule is unsuccessful, the agency shall make a minimum of two additional attempts to complete the face-to-face contact within the calendar month.

**OAC 5101:2-37-02 PCSA requirements for Completing the Safety Plan.**

**Effective Date: October 1, 2009**

- (N) The PCSA shall monitor safety plans to ensure the action steps are controlling the identified safety threats. The monitoring plan requires the following:
- (1) To monitor an in-home safety plan, the PCSA shall conduct weekly home visits. During the home visits, the PCSA shall make face-to-face contact with each child, parent, guardian, or custodian involved.
  - (2) To monitor an out-of-home safety plan, the PCSA shall have weekly contact with the children or persons responsible for an action step either by telephone or face-to-face. The PCSA shall have face-to-face contact with each child involved every other week.
  - (3) To monitor a legally authorized out-of-home placement safety plan where custody has been given to the agency or a relative or kin, the agency shall have face-to-face contact with the child, parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker residing in the home of the alleged child victim pursuant to 5101:2-38-05 or 5101:2-42-65 of the Administrative Code.

**OAC 5101:2-38-05 PCSA case plan for children in custody or under court-ordered protective supervision. Effective Date: October 1, 2009**

- (T) For court-ordered protective supervision cases, the agency shall make face-to-face contact with each parent, guardian or custodian, or if applicable, pre-finalized adoptive parent and child participating in and being provided services listed in the case plan no less than monthly to monitor progress on the case plan objectives. At least one contact every two months shall be made in the child's home.
- (U) For cases with children in custody, the agency shall make face-to-face contact with the child pursuant to 5101:2-42-65 of the Administrative Code. Face-to-face contact with each parent, guardian or custodian or if applicable, pre-finalized adoptive parent participating in and being provided services listed in the case plan shall be made no less than monthly to monitor progress on the case plan objectives. At least one contact every two months shall be made in the parent's, guardian's, custodian's, or if applicable, pre-finalized adoptive parent's home.
- (V) If the initial attempt of face-to-face contact pursuant to paragraph T) of this rule is unsuccessful, the agency shall make a minimum of two additional attempts to complete the face-to-face contacts within the calendar month.
- (W) The agency may suspend home visits with the parent, guardian or custodian of a child in agency custody if conducting visits in the home presents a threat to the safety of the caseworker. A written justification to suspend visits in the home shall be documented in the case record and shall include all of the following:
- (1) Identification of the specific threat to the caseworker's safety and the person posing the threat.
  - (2) Documentation of other measures taken to assure worker safety prior to suspension of home visits.
  - (3) The anticipated length of time home visits are to be suspended.
  - (4) The signature of the executive director or his or her designee authorizing suspension of home visits.

- (X) If home visits are suspended pursuant to paragraph (W) of this rule, the agency shall conduct monthly face-to-face visits with the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child in a location assisting in ensuring the safety of the caseworker.

**OAC 5101:2-42-65 Agency visits and contacts with children in substitute care.**

**Effective Date: June 22, 2009**

- (A) The public children services agency (PCSA) or private child placing agency (PCPA) that holds custody of a child shall comply with the provisions set forth in this rule regarding caseworker visits and contacts with the child and the substitute caregivers to ensure the child's safety and well-being, and to assess whether the placement and services continue to meet the child's needs in accordance with the case plan.
- (B) The PCSA or PCPA caseworker responsible for the child's case shall conduct the visits and contacts and assess the placement and services, except that:
  - (1) The PCSA or PCPA may delegate another caseworker or supervisor employed or contracted by the PCSA or PCPA to conduct one or more of the required visits on behalf of the assigned caseworker.
  - (2) The PCSA or PCPA, as part of a managed care agreement pursuant to rule 5101:2-1-01 of the Administrative Code, may contract with another agency to have the managed care caseworker assume responsibility for the child's case and caseworker visits required by this rule.
- (C) The minimum frequency of visits shall be as follows, with individual time for the child as appropriate to his or her ability to communicate:
  - (1) For a child placed in a relative or non-relative home approved pursuant to rule 5101:2-42-18 of the Administrative Code or a foster home or group home certified pursuant to rule 5101:2-5-03 of the Administrative Code:
    - (a) One face-to-face visit with the child and substitute caregiver within the substitute care setting during the first week of placement, not including the first day of placement.
    - (b) One face-to-face visit with the child and the substitute caregiver within the substitute care setting during the first four weeks of placement, not including the visit during the first week of placement.
    - (c) Monthly face-to-face visits with the child and substitute caregiver within the substitute care setting, which may include visits referenced in paragraphs (C)(1)(a) and (C)(1)(b) of this rule, provided that at least one of the visits occurs within each month.
    - (d) In a foster home which has two foster caregivers on the certificate, assure that each caregiver receives at least one of the face-to-face visits referenced in paragraphs (C)(1)(a) to (C)(1)(c) of this rule in each two-month period. If a

caregiver is out of the home for the entire two month period (e.g. military leave or extended hospital stay) the caregiver is exempt from the visits for that time period.

- (2) For a child placed in a treatment or medically fragile foster home certified in Ohio in which the foster caregiver is providing care for a child for whom a special, exceptional, or intensive needs difficulty of care payment is made pursuant to rule 5101:2-47-18 of the Administrative Code:
  - (a) One face-to-face visit with the child and substitute caregiver within the substitute care setting during the first week of placement, not including the first day of placement.
  - (b) One contact each week with the caregiver to monitor the child's progress.
  - (c) One face-to-face visit with the substitute caregiver and child every two weeks within the treatment or medically fragile foster home, with each substitute caregiver receiving one face-to-face visit in a two month period when there are two licensed substitute caregivers for the home.
- (3) For a child placed in a children's residential center (CRC) certified in Ohio:
  - (a) One contact with the CRC within ten days of placement.
  - (b) Monthly face-to-face visits with the child, within the CRC.
  - (c) The caseworker within the CRC, performing casework duties, shall not conduct visits on behalf of the PCSA or PCPA.
- (4) For a child who is sixteen years of age or older and placed in an independent living arrangement certified in Ohio in which he or she is fully responsible for his or her individual living environment:
  - (a) One face-to-face visit with the child within the living environment within seven days of placement.
  - (b) Monthly face-to-face visits with the child, within the living environment, which may include the visit referenced in paragraph (C)(4)(a) of this rule.
- (E) For a child who is placed through the "Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children" into a substitute care setting outside of Ohio:
  - (1) Request the out-of-state children services agency (CSA) to provide needed supervision and services to the child as identified in the child's case plan and to submit written supervisory reports on a monthly basis.
  - (2) Contact the substitute care placement setting within ten days of the child's placement and at least every other month thereafter.
  - (3) Conduct monthly face-to-face visits with the child within the substitute care setting. The PCSA or PCPA may request the supervising CSA in the other state to conduct these visits.



**Effective Date: June 15, 2009**

- (A) Visits and contacts shall be conducted by the assessor within the public children services agency (PCSA) or private child placing agency (PCPA) who is responsible for the child's case, or another assessor employed or contracted by the PCSA or PCPA who has been delegated to act on behalf of the assigned assessor in his or her absence.
- (B) The frequency of visits with the child and the adoptive parent(s) shall be as follows:
  - (1) At a minimum, one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made during the first seven days of the placement, not including the date of placement.
  - (2) At a minimum, one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made during the first thirty days of placement, not including the visit during the first seven days of placement.
  - (3) After the first thirty days, at a minimum of one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made monthly.
- (C) The frequency of visits with any other household member shall be as follows:
  - (1) At a minimum, one face-to-face visit in the home with any household member whose permanent residence is the adoptive home shall be made every sixty days.
  - (2) At a minimum, two face-to-face visits in the home prior to finalization with any household member whose permanent residence is the adoptive home although he or she may temporarily reside elsewhere. No less than sixty days between visits.
- (E) For a child who is placed through the "Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children" into an approved adoptive home outside of Ohio:
  - (1) Request the out-of-state children services agency (CSA) to conduct visits with the adoptive family in the home as identified in this rule and to submit written supervisory reports on a monthly basis.
  - (2) At a minimum, one face to face visit shall be conducted by the assessor within the PCSA or PCPA who is responsible for the child's case, or another assessor employed or contracted by the PCSA or PCPA who has been delegated to act on behalf of the assigned assessor in his or her absence once every six month period prior to the finalization of the adoption.
  - (3) The assessor shall observe and document the interaction between the adoptive child, the adoptive parent and all other household members pursuant to this rule.

Approval Date:

William Morrison, Executive Director