

# Big Bend Community Based Care Policy & Procedure

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**Series:** 200: Placement Services

**Policy Name:** Placement of Children

**Policy Number:** 202

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**Regulations:** 39.0138, F.S.  
65C-13.002, F.A.C.  
65C-13.014(2)(b), F.A.C.  
65C-30.011, F.A.C.

## Referenced Document:

200-200 x 1, Guiding Principles on the Placement of Children

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## Policy

It is the policy of Big Bend Community Based Care, Inc. (BBCBC), to ensure that children are placed in a timely manner in the least restrictive and most appropriate setting in which they can be successful.

## Procedures

### A. Licensed Out-of-Home Care Placement.

1. The BBCBC Intake Placement Specialist (Intake Placement staff) will be the point of contact (POC) for Child Protective Investigators (CPI) and Dependency Case Managers (DCM) when seeking placements in licensed foster homes, group homes or facilities. Intake Placement staff will be available twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.
  - a. At first contact, Intake Placement staff will complete a *Placement Information Form (PIF)* (located in CoBRIS). The CPI or DCM will provide demographic information and all available necessary and pertinent information regarding the child's situation and immediate needs. This should include family, developmental, medical, behavioral and emotional information as appropriate. This information will assist Intake Placement Staff in selecting a safe and appropriate placement.
  - b. For subsequent placements, Intake Placement staff, in consultation with the CPI or DCM, will document current needs and updated information regarding the child's behavior, medical issues and other relevant factors as available on an updated PIF.
    - i. When applicable, Intake Placement staff will also notify the licensing agency of the home the child is being removed from to communicate the change in placement.
2. When contacted by a CPI or DCM, Intake Placement Staff will also document on the PIF the information made available by the CPI or DCM regarding the "reasonable efforts" made by the CPI or DCM to prevent removal or movement and identify a non-custodial parent, relative or non-relative placement.

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3. Intake Placement staff will make immediate efforts to locate an appropriate licensed care setting by contacting foster homes or facilities. Intake Placement staff will continue to communicate with the CPI or DCM regarding the status of identifying a placement.
  - a. Any potential substitute care providers will be given all relevant information about the child. In particular, they must be given abuse and neglect information, medical history available at time of placement, any behavior concerns regarding the child, whether a child has a history of sexual abuse as either a victim or perpetrator and the child's potential to victimize other children.
  - b. When a Child Placement Agreement (Behavior Management Plan or Care Precaution) is being implemented, Intake Placement staff will share the specific requirements of the plan with potential providers, and will document such related to the placement that is ultimately utilized.
    - i. Intake Placement staff will monitor to ensure that a copy of the written Child Placement Agreement is signed by the CPI or DCM and caregiver at the time of placement is obtained within thirty (30) days.
4. Once a placement has been identified, Intake Placement staff will contact the CPI or DCM and provide all information needed to facilitate the placement, including contact information for the placement and any special considerations or conditions. However, Intake Placement staff will consider the most expeditious way to get the child to their destination and may make alternate arrangements on a case-by-case basis.
5. The CPI or DCM will provide all documents available and required as a part of the Child Resource Record (CRR) to all substitute caregivers. Intake Placement staff will e-mail a copy of the PIF to licensed foster parents for their information and also for inclusion in the CRR. In instances where foster parents are unable to receive e-mail, Intake Placement staff will give a copy of the PIF to the CPI or DCM for delivery to the foster parent.
6. After the placement has been made, BBCBC Intake Placement Specialist will follow up with the identified placement provider the next business day to ensure that the child's immediate needs are met. If additional services are needed the Intake Placement Specialist will work with the CPI or DCM to address any unmet need.
  - a. Intake placement staff maintain ongoing communication with the placement provider as well as with the investigator or case manager who has primary responsibility for the case. When a placement expresses a need regarding a child, intake placement staff take steps to ensure that the appropriate responsible individual is notified and that the needs are addressed. Similarly, when a DCM or CPI expresses a concern about some aspects of a provider's service such as communication or cooperation, Intake Placement staff assist in addressing those concerns, enlisting the help of Foster Home Management personnel as necessary.
  - b. Intake Placement staff will forward licensed foster parents a link to the transactional Placement Survey within one (1) week of a child's placement, and will forward a link to the transactional Exit Survey approximately one (1) week after a child's departure.
7. Intake Placement staff will document the following:
  - a. Efforts made to place the child in the least restrictive, most family like setting able to meet the individual needs of the child.

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- b. Efforts made to place all siblings together, when possible and appropriate. The client record will specifically describe the reason for placing any siblings separately.
  - c. Efforts made to place a child in close proximity (same county) to the parent and other significant family members.
  - d. Efforts made to place the child in the same school setting (same school district or zone) to minimize disruption to the child's education.
8. The CPI is responsible for securing a shelter court order within twenty-four (24) hours of taking the child into custody.
9. Within two (2) business days of a request to place a child in an initial licensed placement, Intake Placement staff will complete a request for a non-relative search to be performed, for the purpose of identifying potential non-licensed placement alternatives.
- a. Searches will be performed at the earliest opportunity by Eligibility Staff or Intake Placement Staff.
  - b. Eligibility Staff or Intake Placement staff or their designee may initiate contact with any individuals identified as having possible connections to the child in order to determine potential willingness to provide care.
  - c. Search results and any information obtained from contact with potential caregivers will be provided to the child's primary assigned DCM or CPI as it is obtained.
  - d. Results of DCM/CPI efforts to identify non-licensed placements will be reviewed as part of Permanency, MDT and Conditions for Return Staffings.

## **B. Relative/Non-Relative Placement.**

1. Relative placement is defined as placement of a child with any person meeting the definition of "relative" outlined in Chapter 39, F.S. Specifically, "a grandparent, great-grandparent, sibling, first cousin, aunt, uncle, great-aunt, great-uncle, niece, or nephew, whether related by the whole or half blood, by affinity, or by adoption. The term does not include a stepparent."
2. Non-relative placement is placement of a child with an unrelated adult who is not licensed as a substitute care provider. When a child must be removed by the CPI or DCM from the home of the parent(s) or caregiver(s), relative and non-relative placement must be explored thoroughly and aggressively before children are placed in foster care. If there is a non-custodial parent, that parent should be contacted and interviewed first and is the placement of choice unless the safety and well-being of the child would be endangered. A diligent search must be conducted and documented for any parent whose whereabouts are unknown. The case file must contain documentation that non-custodial parents have been contacted and that other relative and non-relative alternatives to a licensed care placement have been explored.
3. Although the CPI is responsible for initial reasonable efforts in identifying and locating non-custodial parents, relatives or non-relative placements, the case manager assumes this responsibility once the case has been formally accepted by the CMO. Diligent search efforts will be ongoing until all known potential resources have been explored and documented.

- C. Overnight Stays.** An "overnight stay" occurs when a child spends four or more hours between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. in a given setting or settings other than a licensed placement.

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Under no circumstances shall any overnight stay occur in an office, conference room, or other setting that is not a licensed facility. Intake Placement staff should be contacted by the DCM or CPI immediately in any instance where an overnight stay is expected to occur and prior to any overnight stay occurring.

1. In the event that Intake Placement staff are unable to locate an appropriate licensed placement for a child in time to prevent an overnight stay in a non-licensed setting, an Intake Placement Supervisor will immediately begin arranging for the child or children to stay in an emergency shelter facility.
  - a. Should use of a CMO's dedicated shelter become necessary, the on-call Intake Placement Supervisor shall contact the Intake Placement Utilization Management Director to request use. The Intake Placement Utilization Management Director will assess the child's needs as well as attempts made by the Intake Placement Specialist to identify a placement other than the dedicated emergency shelter.
  - b. If it is determined that no typical licensed placement or other emergency shelter facility is available, arrangements will be made to utilize the dedicated emergency shelter. The BBCBC Intake Placement Utilization Management Director will notify the CEO or COO regarding the need to utilize one of the emergency shelters prior to making arrangements for an overnight stay. In the event that a dedicated shelter is utilized, two adults shall be present to supervise the child or children at all times.
2. BBCBC Intake Placement Specialists will document their efforts to ensure that overnight stays at one of the dedicated emergency shelter occurs only as a last resort. Continued efforts will be made to identify an appropriate placement other than the emergency shelter at the earliest possible time.
3. In the event of exigent circumstances beyond the control of BBCBC, such as a natural disaster or damage or destruction to an existing licensed facility where children are placed, the Chief Executive Officer reserves the right to find shelter for the children on an emergency basis as needed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children even if such shelter is temporarily in a non-licensed facility or placement. However, in no event, even under exigent circumstances, shall an overnight stay occur in an office or conference room.