



Series: Operating Procedures **COA: PQI 4.04**
CFOP: 175-61

Procedure Name: Exit Interviews with Children in Shelter or Foster Care

Procedure Number: OP-1061

Revision #/Date: (2)12/15/08

Effective Date: 04/15/05

Applicable to: All CBCB Staff and Contract Providers

SUBJECT: Exit Interviews with Children in Shelter/Foster Care

PURPOSE: To outline CBC of Brevard policy regarding interviews with children upon their exit from a foster or shelter home. The purpose of the interview is to gain the child's perspective concerning the safety and quality of care provided in the home.

PROCEDURE:

References

Note: CFOP 175-61 repealed by DCF on 10/31/08

Definitions

- a. Child Exit Interview means the process of directing a specific set of questions to a child who has exited a family foster home, group home or residential facility.
- b. Child Exit Interview Form means the specific set of questions designed for use with children from age 5 through 8 and age 9 until 18. (See forms contained in this operating procedure.)

1. General Requirements

- a. The child exit interview is to be considered anonymous but not confidential. This means the interviewer tells the child that the information shared by the child will eventually reach the foster parent; however, the child's name will not be attached to that information. Even though the foster parent may be able to determine the child's identity, it is important for foster parents to have the information so that they know how children are responding to the care they provide.
 - b. Children ages 5 until 18 must be interviewed if they have resided in the home 30 days or more.
 - c. The interview must be conducted within five days of the child's exit from the home.
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- d. The interview shall not be conducted in the home from which the child just exited. It must take place in a setting where the child feels comfortable and where the conversation can be considered private.
- e. The interviewer should ask the child questions and write the child's answers verbatim as much as possible. The child must not be given the form to complete. An audio tape of the interview may be made with the child's consent in order to facilitate a complete transcription of the child's responses.
- f. If the child is non-verbal or unresponsive, the interviewer may gently persist but should reschedule the interview if the child becomes upset or exhibits other behaviors of concern.
- g. Interviewers must be careful not to influence or lead the child in answering the questions through positive or negative facial expressions, body language or comments. Thanking the child for answering the question will encourage the child to answer, but not bias the responses.
- h. Interviewers must record any observations about the child's physical appearance or emotional state (positive or negative) that seem significant to the interview process.
- i. If the child alleges abuse, neglect, or any maltreatment during the exit interview, the interviewer is mandated to make an immediate report to the Abuse Hotline.
- j. A child whose exit from the home/facility is due to running away will be temporarily exempt from the exit interview. Upon the child's return, efforts must be made to interview the child, regardless of the child's length of time in the home, to rule out unfavorable conditions in the home contributing to the child's runaway.

2. Response and Follow-Up Requirement

CBC of Brevard Caregiver Liaison will coordinate appropriate response to both positive and negative feedback from the child exit interviews. This coordination will occur with the Child Placing Agency that licenses the reference foster home. Guidelines are as follows:

- a. If the child indicates the quality of care he/she received was above average or exceptional, this information should be purposefully shared with the foster parents as positive reinforcement for their efforts. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways:
 - 1. Positive responses may be shared with foster parents during home visit or by letter or phone call.
 - 2. Positive responses may be summarized in writing on a quarterly or annual basis and shared with the foster parent.
 - b. If the child indicates the quality of care needs improvement, a careful assessment of the child's feedback should follow. An assessment involves consideration of the following:
 - 1. Child's responses to the interview questions;
 - 2. Child's developmental level and special needs;
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3. The foster parent(s)' response to the issue(s) raised;
 4. Observations obtained from all staff who have visited in the home within the previous 6 months;
 5. Feedback obtained from other foster children who may have exited the same foster home within the previous 6 months; and,
 6. Feedback obtained from any other relevant sources, e.g., teachers, therapists, guardians ad litem, if applicable.
- c. When a safety or quality of care issue raised by the child is supported by other information, the Child Placing Agency must develop a corrective action plan. The type of corrective action can range from providing more intense supervision/support/training for the foster parent to a more formal corrective action plan or a recommendation for revocation of the license, if appropriate. Decisions about the type and manner of response must take into account:
1. The seriousness of the issue raised by the child.
 2. Protection of the child's anonymity.
 3. Any needs or concerns the foster parent may have expressed.
 4. The frequency and/or chronicity of the conduct or condition being addressed.
- d. When corrective action is necessary, written follow-up within a pre-determined time frame not to exceed 90 days must occur.

3. Documentation Requirements

The completed interview form, CBC of Brevard and/or Child Placing Agency response, if any, and follow-up tasks must be placed in the:

- a. Child's case record.
 - b. Licensing records. The interview form must be shared with licensing staff and placed in the foster parent licensing file with the child's name redacted.
 - c. A copy of the exit interview must be sent to the CBC of Brevard Caregiver Liaison or designee.
 - d. Youth exit interview summaries will be sent to the CBC of Brevard Quality Operations Officer on a quarterly basis. The summary will include but not limited to:
 1. The number of youth who should have been given an exit interview, by month.
 2. The number of youth who completed an exit interview, by month.
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3. The percent of youth interviewed who reported they were satisfied with the placement, by month.
4. The percent of youth interviewed who reported they felt safe in the placement, by month.
5. A ten percent sample of the completed exit interviews.

4. Child Placing Agency Options

- a. Child Placing Agency specific interviewing forms may be developed, however, no items which appear on the CBC of Brevard form may be deleted.
- b. Child Placing Agencies may expand the usage of the form.
- c. Child Placing Agencies may re-title the form so that the title indicates the form may also be used for annual interviews of children in stable placements.
- d. Child Placing Agencies may add questions and/or signature lines to the form, Ongoing Assessment and Its Relationship to Case Planning. For all children and families receiving services, the assessment process is a critically important component of the case plan. Again, the strengths, resources, and the factors related to child safety risks are examined so that interventions and supports can be matched to the family's needs.

5. Response and Follow –Up

1. If the child alleges abuse, neglect or any maltreatment during the exit interview, the interviewer shall make an immediate report to the Florida Abuse Hotline.
 2. During any interview in which the child's statements indicate possible safety risks or quality concerns, the Caregiver Liaison must complete an Exit Interview Summary Report Form and forward to the Risk Management Team and follow the policy and procedure outlined in the Risk Management Committee Review Process Level 1 Review and Compliance Committee Review Process Level 2 Review.
 3. After the Caregiver Liaison completes sections I-III of the form, the Exit Interview summary form must be completed as follows:
 - a. The Child Placing Agency/Group Home will complete sections IV-VI documenting summary of concerns, follow-up action and forward to the Caregiver Liaison.
 - b. The Caregiver Liaison will forward Exit Interview form to Supervisor to complete section VII documenting supervisor comments, follow-up actions and recommendations or suggestions for preventing future incidents and/or follow-up interventions implemented.
 - c. The Child and Family Program Manager will then forward the Exit Interview Summary Form to the Risk Management Committee to complete section VIII- IX documenting follow-up actions, findings, recommendations and plan for resolution.
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- d. The Risk Management Committee will forward all high probability risk to the Compliance Review Committee for their review and recommendations. If the Risk Management Committee does not deem concerns high risk the Exit Interview Summary form will be forward to the Child and Program Manager to ensure follow up actions were completed.
- e. Child and Family Program Manager will forward form to Caregiver Liaison for final disposition to DCM and CPA to ensure inclusion in the Direct Service File. The Caregiver Liaison will retain original form in binder.
- f. A summary of exit interviews conducted shall be sent to the Department's Office of Family Safety as requested by that office.

BY DIRECTION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER:



DR. PATRICIA NELLIUS-GUTHRIE
Chief Executive Officer
CBC of Brevard, Inc.

APPROVAL DATE: 3/2/09

**DIRECTIONS FOR THE CBC OF BREVARD REPRESENTATIVE CONDUCTING
AN EXIT INTERVIEW FOR FOSTER CHILDREN: AGES 5 - 8**

- ◆ This foster child exit interview does not need to be completed unless the child has resided in the home thirty (30) days or more.
- ◆ This is an interview that is to be conducted by a CBC of Brevard representative with the foster child. Explain to the child the purpose of the interview is to make sure children are living in safe homes, to help foster parents do their best and to find a home they will feel good about.
- ◆ Prior to the interview, the CBC of Brevard representative will select the time and location of the interview. The interview should be done in a location that provides the CBC of Brevard staff member and child an opportunity to talk privately without placing the CBC of Brevard staff person at risk for allegations.
- ◆ The interview **cannot** take place in the home the child has just exited.
- ◆ The CBC of Brevard representative may want to use the attached smiley face chart with a young child to encourage the child to express feelings about the home.
- ◆ The CBC of Brevard representative conducting the interview should read the questions to the child and write the responses on the interview form. An audio tape of the interview may be made with the child's consent in order to facilitate a complete transcription of the child's responses.
- ◆ If the child is non-verbal or unresponsive, the interviewer may gently persist but should reschedule the interview if the child becomes upset or exhibits other behaviors of concern.
- ◆ Interviewers must be careful not to influence or lead the child in answering the questions through positive or negative facial expressions, body language or comments. Thanking the child for answering the question will encourage the child to answer but not bias the responses.
- ◆ Interviewers should record enough detail regarding a child's comments to ensure it is in the context of the child's age and individual circumstances regarding things such as bedtimes, chores, privileges, etc
- ◆ Children who have medical or mental conditions that prevent them from being able to comprehend or answer all of the questions will be exempted from this interview process. However, efforts should be made to determine the quality of their care in any home they leave through other means, such as, unannounced visits to the home. This also is true for children under 5 years of age.
- ◆ Interviewers may record any additional observations about the child's physical appearance or emotional state (positive or negative) that seem important.
- ◆ If during the interview the child reports an event that would require a call to the Hotline, the interviewer, as a CBC of Brevard employee, is mandated to report it to the Hotline.
- ◆ The CBC of Brevard representative should ensure that the original interview form is placed in the foster parent licensing file, with one (1) copy going to the child's case record and one (1) copy to the designated CBC of Brevard Caregiver Liaison.

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- ◆ If a child who is three or four years of age is considered to be a good candidate for this interview, the interview may be conducted.

Thank you for your time, effort and cooperation in obtaining valuable feedback for foster parents and CBC of Brevard.



EXIT INTERVIEW FOR CHILDREN FOR FOSTER CHILDREN AGES 5 - 8

Name of Person Conducting the Interview: _____ Date _____

Location of Interview: _____

Name of Foster Parent(s) Child Exited From: _____

Child's Length of Stay in the Home: _____

Dates of Placement: Begin Date: _____ End Date: _____

Total Number of Foster Home Placements: _____

Child Placing Agency: _____
(Foster Parent's Licensing Agency)

County of Foster/Shelter Home: _____

Date of Removal from Biological Home: _____

Child's Name and D.O.B.: _____

1. Did you feel happy in the foster home?

- Circle: Very Happy
- Happy
- Neither Happy or Unhappy
- Unhappy
- Very Unhappy

Why?

1. Were you given plenty of food in this foster home?

Circle: Yes No

If no, what did you get to eat?

2. Did you have clothing that fit you in the foster home?

Circle: Yes No

If no, what did you get to wear?

3. Where you taken care of when you were sick or had an accident?

Circle: Yes No

If no, what happened?

4. Did you ever ask to call your guardian ad-litem or other people and were told no?

Circle: Yes No

If yes, what happened?: _____

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5. Did you ever ask to call your Care Manager and were told no?

Circle: Yes No

If yes, what happened? _____

6. Did you feel safe in the foster home?

Circle: Yes No

If no what happened to make you feel unsafe?

7. What did you like the *best* about living in this foster home?

8. If you did something you were not supposed to do, what happened?

9. Why did you leave the home of _____ and _____?
(Insert foster parents' names)

10. Do you think this home is a good place for children? Circle: Yes No

Why?

11. Did you feel safe living with the other people in this foster home? Circle: Yes No

12. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about living in this foster home?

Interviewer's Observations:

Interviewer's Signature

Date

DIRECTIONS FOR THE CBC OF BREVARD REPRESENTATIVE CONDUCTING AN EXIT INTERVIEW FOR FOSTER CHILDREN: AGES 9 - 18

- ◆ This foster child exit interview does not need to be completed unless the child has resided in the home thirty (30) days or more.
- ◆ This is an interview that is to be conducted by a CBC of Brevard representative with the foster child. Explain to the child the purpose of the interview is to make sure children are living in safe homes, to help foster parents do their best and to find a home they will feel good about.
- ◆ Prior to the interview, the CBC of Brevard representative will select the time and location of the interview. The interview should be done in a location that provides the CBC of Brevard representative and child an opportunity to talk privately without placing the CBC of Brevard representative at risk for allegations.
- ◆ The interview **must not** take place in the home the child has just exited.
- ◆ The CBC of Brevard representative conducting the interview should read the questions to the child and write the responses on the interview form. An audio tape of the interview may be made with the child's consent in order to facilitate a complete transcription of the child's responses.
- ◆ If the child is non-verbal or unresponsive, the interviewer may gently persist but should reschedule the interview if the child becomes upset or exhibits other behaviors of concern.
- ◆ Interviewers must be careful not to influence or lead the child in answering the questions through positive or negative facial expressions, body language or comments. Thanking the child for answering the question will encourage the child to answer but not bias the responses.
- ◆ Interviewers should record enough detail regarding a child's comments to ensure it is in the context of the child's age and individual circumstances regarding things such as bedtimes, chores, privileges, etc.
- ◆ Children who have medical or mental conditions that prevent them from being able to comprehend or answer all of the questions will be exempted from this interview process. However, efforts should be made to determine the quality of their care in any home they leave through other means, such as, unannounced visits to the home. This also is true for children under 5 years of age.
- ◆ Interviewers may record any additional observations about the child's physical appearance or emotional state (positive or negative) that seem important.
- ◆ If during the interview the child reports an event that would require a call to the Hotline, the interviewer, as a CBC of Brevard employee, is mandated to report it to the Hotline.
- ◆ The CBC of Brevard representative should ensure that the original interview form is placed in the foster parent licensing file with the child's name redacted, with one (1) copy going to the child's case record and one (1) copy to CBC of Brevard – Caregiver Liaison.

Thank you for your time, effort and cooperation in obtaining valuable feedback for foster parents and the CBC of Brevard.



EXIT INTERVIEWS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN AGES 9-18

Name of Person Conducting the Interview: _____	Date _____
Location of Interview _____	
Name of Foster Parent(s) Child Exited From: _____	
Child's Length of Stay in the Home: _____	
Dates of Placement: Begin Date: _____	End Date: _____
Total Number of Foster Home Placements: _____	
Child Placing Agency: _____ (Foster Parent's Licensing Agency)	
County of Foster/Shelter Home: _____	
Date of Removal from Biological Home: _____	
Child's Name and D.O.B.: _____	

1. Did the foster parent make you feel welcome and help you to feel comfortable when you arrived in the home/placement.
Circle: Yes No
How? _____

2. Do you believe you were treated fairly and with respect in this home/placement?
Circle: Yes No
(For example: treated like a family member, able to express your concerns, treated about the same as other children, keeping in mind age and other individual factors.)
Why? _____

3. I was given plenty of food in this foster home
Circle: Yes No

4. I had enough clothing in my size to wear in this foster home.

Circle: Yes No

5. Do you think living in this foster home/placement helped you in any way?

Circle: Yes No

Why? _____

6. What was the best thing about living in this home/placement?

7. If there was one thing in the foster home/placement you could change, what would it be?

8. Did you feel safe in this foster home/placement?

Circle: Yes No

(Did you feel safe living with the other people in the home?, Did you feel safe in the Neighborhood?)

Why/Why not?

If you did not feel safe, did you tell anyone?

Circle: Yes No

Who? _____

9. Give me an example of discipline/punishment that your foster parent(s)/this placement used.

10. Give me an example of rewards or praise you received from your foster parent(s)/this placement.

11. How did your foster parent(s)/staff show concern for you?

12. How were other children treated in this home/placement?

13. Did you ever ask to call your parents or other family members and were told no?

Circle: Yes No

If yes, explain: _____

14. Did you ever ask to call your Care Manager and were told no?

Circle: Yes No

If yes, explain: _____

15. Did you want to leave this home/placement?

Circle: Yes No

Why? _____

16. Why do you think you are leaving the home/placement? _____

17. Was there anything Family Safety and Preservation could have done to make this home/placement better?

18. Do you have a Guardian Ad Litem?

Circle: Yes No

If yes, go to Number 16. If no - go to 17.

19. Did you ever ask to call your Guardian Ad Litem and were told no?

Circle: Yes No

If yes, explain: _____

20. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your time in this home/
placement?

21. How you were prepared or made ready to leave this home/placement?

22. Do you think this home is a good place for children to live?

Circle: Yes No

23. Overall, how satisfied were you living in this foster home?

Circle one: Very Satisfied

Satisfied

Neither Satisfied or Not Satisfied

Unsatisfied

Very Unsatisfied

Why?

Interviewer's Observations:

Interviewer's Signature _____

Date _____