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Communities Connected *for* Kids

Title Exit Interviews with Children in Licensed Out of Home Care		**Number** 808	
Department: Quality Management	**Owner** Director of Quality Management	**Regulatory Authority/ Related Policies:** 65C – 28.017	**Attachments:** NA
Effective Date: November 2013	**Last Revision:** March 2026	**Review Date:** March 2026	

Purpose: Communities Connected *for* Kids will ensure that exit interviews are completed by the assigned Child Welfare Professional or designee, in a timely manner in order to gain perspective concerning the safety and quality of care provided in the licensed home in which the child was placed, per Fla. Admin. Code 65C - 28.017

Policy:

1. The purpose of this procedure is to outline the policy of Communities Connected for Kids regarding interviews with children upon their exit from a licensed out-of- home care placement. The purpose of the interview is to gain the child's perspective concerning the safety and quality of care provided in the home.

2. This operating procedure applies to children ages 5 and up to a child's 18th birthday exiting a licensed out-of-home care placement after 30 days of placement. Attempts should be made to conduct exit interviews with young adults who exit extended foster care.

3. Definitions for the purposes of this operating procedure:

    a. The child exit interview is defined as: the process of directing a specific set of questions to a child who has exited any licensed out-of-home care placement, including level 2-5 placements.
    b. The child exit interview form is defined as: a specific set of questions designed for use with children from age 5 through 18.

4. The child welfare professional or designee shall not be required to complete an exit interview in the following circumstances:
    a. When there has been a change in placement type to reflect adoptive placement, no physical change in placement occurred.
    b. If a child is on runaway status and returns to the same placement.
    c. If the youth ages out of foster care and remains in the same placement.
    d. If the child is hospitalized for a medical or mental health reason and returns to the same home.
    e. If the child is placed in the Department of Juvenile Justice detention center and returns home.

5. General Requirements
    a. The child's identity is confidential, but the information received through the exit interview is not. This means that the interviewer informs the child that the information revealed will eventually reach the caregiver; however, the child's name will not be disclosed to the caregiver. Even though the licensed

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caregiver(s) may be able to determine the child's identity, it is important for licensed caregiver(s) to have the information so that they know how children are responding to the care they provide.

b. Children ages 5 and up to the child's 18th birthday must be interviewed if they have resided in the licensed placement for 30 days or more.
c. The interview must be conducted within five days of the child's exit from the placement.
d. The Dependency Case Manager will make and document a minimum of three attempts to interview a youth who is 17 years old before transitioning from licensed out-of-home care to adulthood. All attempts shall be documented in FSFN.
e. The interview must not be conducted in the home from which the child exited. It is essential that the interview takes place in a setting in which the child feels comfortable and where the conversation can be considered private.
f. When questioning the child, the interviewer must document the child's answers verbatim when possible. The child must not be given the interview 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.
g. 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.
h. 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 questions will encourage the child to answer but not bias the responses.
i. Interviewers must record any observations about the child's physical appearance or emotional state (positive or negative) that seem significant to the interview process, or that may explain the child's responses.
j. If the child alleges abuse, neglect, or any maltreatment during the interview, the interviewer is mandated to make an immediate report to the Florida Abuse Hotline. If the child reports issues relating to the quality of care that do not rise to the level of abuse, neglect, or maltreatment, the interviewer shall report these issues to the licensing unit responsible for licensing the out-of-home caregiver or group care facility within three business days of completion of the exit interview and document the notification in FSFN.
k. A child whose exit from the home is due to running away will be temporarily exempt from the exit interview. The exit interview will occur within five days of the child being located.

6. Response and Follow-Up Requirement

Communities Connected *for* Kids will designate staff to coordinate appropriate responses to both positive and negative feedback from the child exit interviews. 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 licensed out-of-home caregiver(s) as positive reinforcement of their efforts. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways:

(1) Positive responses may be shared with foster parents or group care facility staff during on-site visits, 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 or group care facility.

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b. Following a negative exit interview (issues relating to quality of care that do not rise to the level of abuse), 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;

(3) The foster parent(s') or group care facility's response(s) to the issue(s) raised;

(4) Observations obtained from all staff who had visited the foster home or group care facility within the previous 6 months;

(5) Feedback obtained from other foster children who have exited the same foster home or group care facility within the previous 6 months; and,

(6) Feedback obtained from 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 supplementary information, Communities Connected *for* Kids shall request the licensing authority to develop a corrective action plan. The type of corrective action can range from providing more intense supervision/support/training for the caregiver to a more formal corrective action plan or a recommendation for revocation of the license, if appropriate. Decisions about the type and manner of the response must take into account:

(1) The seriousness of the issue(s) raised by the child.

(2) Protection of the child's identity.

(3) Any needs or concerns expressed by the licensed caregiver (s).

(4) The frequency 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.

7. Documentation Requirements. The completed exit interview form and any corrective action plan/follow-up tasks:

a. Shall be placed in the child's case record.

b. Shall be placed in the Licensing records. The exit interview form must be shared with licensing staff and placed in the out-of-home caregiver's licensing file with the child's name redacted within two business days of the interview.

c. Shall be sent electronically to Communities Connected *for* Kids' senior management.

d. A summary of exit interviews conducted shall be sent to the Department's Office of Family Safety as requested by that office.

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8. All child welfare professionals or designees who conduct exit interviews shall receive training from the community-based care lead agency (CBC) during pre-service training or its contracted provider. All trainings developed by the CBC or contracted provider must include components that address appropriate methods to conduct the delivery of an exit interview and instructions regarding creating safe and private environments for the child to complete the interview.

Approved by:

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