

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
Department of Health and Family Services  
Division of Children and Family Services

DCFS Memo Series 2008 - 12  
June 30, 2008  
Re: Definition of Missing from Out-  
of-Home Care and Documentation  
Requirements

To: Area Administrators/ Human Services Area Coordinators  
Bureau Directors  
Child Placing Agency Directors  
Child Welfare Agency Directors  
County Departments of Community Programs Directors  
County Departments of Developmental Disabilities  
Services Directors  
County Departments of Human Services Directors  
County Departments of Social Services Directors  
Indian Child Welfare Directors  
Licensing Chiefs/Section Chiefs  
Tribal Chairpersons/Indian Child Welfare Directors  
Residential Care Centers, Group Homes, and Shelter Care Facilities

From: Reggie Bicha   
Administrator

As part of the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has been working on strategies to improve placement stability and placement reporting accuracy for AFCARS reporting to the federal government. In addition, the new federal requirements for caseworker contact are impacted by accurate documentation of a child's or juvenile's missing from out-of-home care status.

It is critical that the Department or a county agency know the whereabouts of a child or juvenile who has been removed from his or her home under the placement and care responsibility of the Department or a county agency. When the whereabouts of a child or juvenile living in an out-of-home care setting are unknown, the safety, permanence, and well-being of that child or juvenile cannot be assured. When children or youth are missing from out-of-home care, they are vulnerable and at risk of additional emotional and physical trauma. Thus, measures to locate the child or juvenile, communicate with critical individuals and agencies involved with the child or juvenile, and plan for the child's or juvenile's safe return must be made.

The attached policy was developed by the Out-of-Home Care and Adoption Committee and defines when a child or juvenile is considered to be "Missing from Out-of-Home Care." Additionally, the policy establishes requirements for agency response when a child or juvenile is missing and for documenting the missing status. This policy is effective on December 1, 2008.

REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT: Area Administration

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Out of Home Care Section Chief  
Division of Safety and Permanence  
Bureau of Permanence and Out of Home Care  
608-422-6930

MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

Attachments: Information Required for Entry into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC)

## **INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR ENTRY INTO THE NATIONAL CRIME INFORMATION CENTER (NCIC)**

Only law enforcement agencies are authorized to enter a missing person into the NCIC. This system allows law enforcement agencies to share information across jurisdictions nationally. When contacting law enforcement to list a child or juvenile missing they will be requesting the information marked with an asterisk (\*) as shown on the form linked below.

Link to Department of Justice Special Operations Programs:

<https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dci/special-operations-programs>

Caregivers, out-of-home care providers, and others may sometimes be told that 24-hours must elapse before a child or juvenile can be entered as missing. This is because each law enforcement agency has discretion in determining when the agency considers a person to be missing. It may help to explain that the child or juvenile is under the placement and care responsibility of the county agency and the juvenile court.

### **Other information that may be helpful to law enforcement includes, but is not limited to:**

- Identification of any special needs: ability, disability, health or mental health concerns, etc.
- A description of the circumstances surrounding the disappearance
- Whether the child or juvenile left voluntarily or involuntarily
- A description of significant behaviors or behavior patterns of the child or juvenile
- A description of the clothing the child or juvenile was wearing
- A description of what was happening just prior to the child or juvenile's disappearance
- Identification of the child or juvenile's last known location
- Information on the last contact with the out-of-home care provider or caregiver and the circumstances of that contact
- Identification of anyone known to be with the child or juvenile
- A description of any known threats to the child or juvenile (e.g., custody battles)
- Identification of previous missing episodes

## **RESOURCES**

Wisconsin Clearinghouse for Missing & Exploited Children & Adults:

<http://www.missingpersons.doj.wi.gov/>

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children: <http://www.missingkids.com/>