

DSS Policy and Procedure Guide

Division 03: Child Welfare

Chapter 02: General Administration

Item 019: **Transportation of Minors**

Suggested changes send to: [DSS PSOA Mailbox](#)

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References: Local Rules for the Superior Court of California- County Of Fresno

Replaces Issue: November 19, 2008

Policy

Department of Social Services (DSS) Child Welfare staff shall ensure that minors transported by social work staff or by means of transportation arrangements made by DSS staff are transported safely and that each child's specific needs are considered in the transportation arrangements.

Purpose

To increase the safety and wellbeing children and social work staff by informing staff of policy and procedure guidelines regarding the arrangement of transportation services on behalf of dependent and non-dependent children who are receiving services from DSS.

Procedure

Authority

Court Dependent:

- When a child is declared a dependent of the Juvenile Court, the Court vests the care, custody, and control of the child with the DSS. Unless otherwise ordered, the minor's care provider may authorize travel for the minor within the State of California with the concurrence of the DSS and, when possible, notice to the parent.
- Approval for a minor to travel outside of California, including travel outside the United States, is obtained from the court by means of a signed and filed Ex-Parte Application. (See [Local Rules of Court 6.4.11 and 6.4.4](#)).

Non-Dependent:

- When the family is participating in Voluntary Family Maintenance (VFM) services, the social worker (SW) shall assist the parent arrange transportation by the parent or other appropriate person of the parent's choosing.
- If the parent is unable to transport or arrange transportation the SW or other approved DSS staff may transport the child and parent.

Ensuring the Safety of Minors Transported

DSS staff shall:

- Ensure the use of a properly-installed passenger restraint system for the driver and all passengers and, if applicable, the use of federally-approved car seats and/or booster seats which are age-and weight-appropriate for the children being transported.
- Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle.
- Not smoke, nor allow any other person to smoke, in the vehicle with children.
- Not use a cell phone while driving a vehicle.
- Immediately report any change in their driver's license status to their supervisor
 - When the supervisor is notified by DSS Personnel or through the employee's disclosure of a change in the status of an employee's driver's license, e.g., license restricted or revoked, the employee shall no longer be allowed to drive on County business until the supervisor and DSS Personnel receive verification that the employee has resolved the issue.
- Supervisors of social workers and transporters shall be aware of circumstances that may produce a safety risk or allegation and assist their staff in putting safeguards in place for the transport.

Transporting Minors with Special Health Care Needs

To meet the special/specific health care needs of each minor:

- The minor's SW shall consider the minor's physical and emotional needs (behavior, mental and physical health concerns/diagnoses) that may affect the number of staff required to safely transport the minor. The minor's SW shall then make the appropriate arrangements.
 - Safety/Risk factors may include:
 - History of aggressive behavior
 - History of running away
 - History of mental illness
 - Other concerns discussed by the Social Work Supervisor and SW on a case by case basis.
- The minor's SW shall determine whether the gender of transport staff is a consideration and make the appropriate arrangements.
- The minor's SW shall ensure that the minor's equipment (such as wheelchairs, oxygen, etc.), medications and supplies accompany the minor.
- If the minor cannot be safely transported in a county vehicle, the minor's SW shall make arrangements to have the minor transported by ambulance. *The SW shall first consult with his or her immediate supervisor to determine if this arrangement is appropriate.*