

## DSS Policy and Procedure Guide

Division 03: Child Welfare

Chapter 05: Placement

### Item 023: Placement Holds

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

Issued: **November 6, 2015**

References: Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 9.5, [89405](#); Fresno County PPG [03-09-003](#)

**Revisions in Red**

Replaces Issue: October 10, 2014

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### Preamble

Child Welfare Policy and Procedure Guides are meant to be used as tools to relay best practice and staff expectations. It is understood that specific case scenarios may not always align themselves with the stated practices and that at all times what is of paramount importance is the Safety and Well-being of the children we are charged to protect.

### Policy

A foster care placement hold (hold) shall be placed on any Fresno County licensed or State of California **Community Care Licensing** (CCL) licensed home/facility whenever any significant concerns with the foster home or foster agency/facility arise. Holds should be placed in situations including, but not limited to, the following specific circumstances: a licensing complaint has been received and is currently under investigation, child abuse or neglect allegations have been made and are currently under investigation, failure to complete or participate in required training, or at the request of the foster parent or licensed agency/facility. Holds will remain in place until the completion of the associated investigation and it is determined safe and appropriate to once again place children in the home or facility.

Foster Parent Resources (FPR) shall address the need for holds on all Fresno County licensed homes, Foster Family Agency (FFA) foster homes and group homes. Holds on Risk-adopt/Fost-adopt homes are addressed by Adoptions Staff.

### Purpose

To inform Department of Social Services (DSS) Child Welfare staff of the **five** categories of holds that may be placed on foster homes or group homes, the documentation and review requirements for holds and the process for the removal of holds.

## Definition

A placement hold means that a foster home or group home will not be considered for future placements of foster children until the hold is removed.

## Procedure

Holds are entered into CWS/CMS by FPR **after the allegation has been discussed and mutually agreed upon by the FPR Social Work Supervisor (SWS) and Licensing SWS, or SWS and a SWP. If a mutual agreement cannot be reached, a Program Manager (PM) will make the final decision.**

Holds are not removed without the approval of the **FPR SWS or Licensing SWS**. Holds are removed only after any complaint issues, necessary evaluations, concerns and/or training issues have been resolved. **Voluntary** holds requested by the foster parent may be removed at the foster parent's request, barring any other issues **and all training hours are completed.**

## Types of Placement Holds

### Level I-Administrative Action

This type of hold is initiated by the **Foster Parent (FP)**, FFA or group home and can be removed upon request, barring any other concerns or issues. The FP, FFA or group home may request a hold and not take any further placements of foster children for any given length of time.

A **Licensee Request** may also be placed if FPR has been unable to contact the FP or group home Administrator for a period of 2 months despite several contact attempts (via telephone, letter and in-person visits). Notification of this type of hold is mailed (and/or emailed if an email address is known) to the FP, FFA or group home by FPR.

During a **Licensee Request** hold, the FP or group home must still meet all Licensing regulations **for home, educational training and any specialized training.**

If a **Licensee Request** has been in place over one year and the FP requests the hold be removed, the **Licensee Request** shall be removed and a Pending Evaluation Hold shall be placed on the home by FPR. The Pending Evaluation Hold shall remain in place until the FPR SW is able to meet with the FP and update the **School Connect Foster Parent Profile (FPP) form**. Once the updated **form** is completed and entered into the **system**, the hold shall be removed. **If the home has been on a Licensee Request hold and the FP does not want to remove the hold, FPR will meet with them and close that home in CWS/CMS until they reapply. If they reapply they are subject to go through the licensing process again including legal clearances, home inspection, pre service and any other mandatory training.**

### Level II-Placement Issues

This type of hold occurs when a licensing complaint has been filed against a FP or agency/facility and/or there has been an allegation of abuse or neglect made against the FP or agency/facility staff.

In order not to interfere with an allegation of abuse or complaint investigation, the notification letter of the hold that is normally mailed to a group home or a Fresno County licensed foster parent is not mailed or emailed. It will be delivered via certified mail to the **FP** or group home by FPR within two working days of the complaint. For all FFA Certified Foster Homes, the Placement Services PM, FPR SWS, or their designee shall contact the respective FFA Director within two business days to advise them that a hold has been placed on the foster home.

The hold shall remain in place until an investigation is completed and a conclusion is determined regarding the complaint(s) or allegation(s).

- For FFA Certified Foster Homes, the hold shall remain in place until an investigation by both DSS and CCL is completed and both agencies have made a determination.
- The FFA in question shall provide DSS with all CCL documentation regarding CCL's investigation.
- The DSS FFA Liaison will contact the FFA in question every two weeks to review the status of the hold until resolution.

There are three types of investigation conclusions: Unfounded, Inconclusive, and Substantiated.

If the allegations are concluded as "Unfounded", the hold shall be removed once FPR is made aware of the investigation/complaint conclusion. FPR will then notify the FP, FFA or group home via mail or email that the hold has been removed.

If the allegations are concluded as "Inconclusive" or "Substantiated", the hold shall remain in place and the investigation/complaint documentation shall be reviewed by the FPR SWS and FFA Liaison.

Once the review has been completed, a meeting will be held with the FP, FFA Administrator, or group home Administrator to discuss the issues surrounding the complaint or allegation(s), and a final determination shall be made as to whether or not DSS will continue to use the home for future placements.

If a recommendation is made not to use a home for future placements, the FPR SWS shall review the investigation documentation with the Placement Services PM for approval.

If the decision **is** to not use the home for future placements, the Placement Services PM **must review and must agree**. The hold shall remain in place and a notation will be entered in CWS/CMS indicating the home will not be used per Title 22 Section 89400.

If the home is to be used for future placements, the hold shall not be removed until FPR has received documentation that all concerns have been adequately addressed by the **FP** and/or any required conditions or trainings have been met or completed.

### **Level III-Pending Agency Agreement**

#### Not Placement Ready

This type of hold occurs when Licensing notifies FPR of a newly licensed home. The home is automatically placed on hold until FPR is able to go out to the home and complete an assessment and the **School Connect** FPP. The FPR initial home visit shall be completed within five working days of the licensing notification. Once the assessment and the FPP are completed and entered into the FPR database, the hold shall be removed. (Group homes are not required to complete an FPP).

A Pending **Agency Agreement** hold can also occur when an already licensed FP moves to a new location. The home is automatically placed on hold until Licensing unit staff, FFA Staff, or CCL completes an evaluation of the new home and the FPR SW meets with the FP to update the **School Connect** FPP. Once the hold is entered into CWS/CMS, FPR will generate and mail a letter (and/or send an email if an email address is known) to the foster parent, FFA, or group home, indicating the home has been placed on hold until the new home has been approved and a new profile is completed. Once the FPP is completed and entered into the database, the hold shall be removed.

#### Non-Licensing Complaints

There may be other situations that may occur that do not rise to the level of a licensing complaint or allegation of abuse/neglect that may still require DSS staff to complete an evaluation of the situation. In these situations, a 'Pending **Agency Agreement**' type of hold shall be used. **A case consultation meeting with the foster parents and FPR/Licensing will be held prior to the hold being removed.** The hold shall be removed once **any corrective action items from the case consult have been resolved.**

### **Level IV-Pending Training Hold**

This type of hold occurs when the FP has not yet completed their training hours or a mandatory training certification has expired. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Required annual training as mandated by the State of California's Manual of Policies and Procedures, Community Care Licensing Division, Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 9.5, Regulation [89405](#); and Fresno County Policy 03-09-003, *Ongoing Training Requirements for Fresno County Licensed Resource Families*.
- CPR and First Aid, and
- SIDS/Abusive Head Trauma or any other type of training the DSS determines to be necessary and
- **Any other training deemed mandatory by DSS**

Once the hold is entered into CWS/CMS, FPR will generate and mail a letter (and/or send an email if an email address is known) to the FP, FFA, or group home indicating the home has been placed on

hold due to a lack of required training hours. These holds are removed once verification has been received that the training has been completed and has been documented in CWS/CMS.

**Level V-Does Not Meet County Standards (Licensing Issue Only)**

This is a Buildings and Grounds Licensing specific issue. These are issues with the physical foster home and grounds observed during the initial inspection and/or during an annual reassessment (REAP) of the home. A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) will be initiated, and the FP is allowed a specific period of time to rectify the issue. Some items may be very simple to fix such as moving furniture in a room or adding a smoke alarm. Other issues are large, such as fencing around a new pool.

Depending on the issue and age of the child, this home may be able to accept a placement if corrected within 24 hours (i.e. installing new smoke alarms, lock box for medication, etc.). Any placement within these homes must be discussed with the sections/on-call PM. Any decision and action must be documented in CWS/CMS.

**Pending State Legal Review/Revocation/Complaints**

These types of issues are rare but are serious. The case is in the process of being reviewed with the State and may result in sanctions or revocation of the foster care license. There is no resolution for this home until all legal action with the State and recommendations have been completed.