

NUMBER

#19-68-11

DATE

May 8, 2019

OF INTEREST TO

County Directors
Social Services Supervisors and
Staff

ACTION/DUE DATE

Please read information and
prepare for implementation

EXPIRATION DATE

May 8, 2021

Notifying the Court of Placement Changes

TOPIC

New processes to support timely notification to the court of foster care placement changes.

PURPOSE

For foster parents and pre-adoptive parents to be notified of hearings, agencies must ensure that the court has the most accurate placement information. An enhancement in the Social Service Information System (SSIS) will support timely court notification of placement changes.

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SIGNED

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TERMINOLOGY NOTICE

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.

I. Background

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (department) participated in its third federal Child and Family Service Review in 2016. As a result of findings in need of improvement, the department was required to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that identifies goals, strategies and key activities for all case reviews and systemic factors that received overall ratings of area needing improvement.

One of the systemic factors rated as needing improvement is item 24: How well is the case review system functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

Relevant information learned from the federal review is that courts are not consistently receiving information when a child moves from one placement setting to another within a continuous placement episode. Courts are required to provide the Notice of Hearing to children's foster parents. However, if courts do not receive updated information regarding placement changes, it does not have current foster parent addresses and is unable to send the required notice.

Federal policy and Minnesota law [Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.152] sets practice to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relatives receive Notice of Court Hearings, providing them opportunities to be heard.

A new process will improve adherence to item 24 by supporting agency staff in notifying the court of a foster care placement change. The Social Service Information System (SSIS) enhancement in release 19.3 addresses this need by adding a prompt on the **Continuous Placement** screen.

II. Notifying Courts of Change in Foster Care Placements

Best practice is to send the Notice of Change in Placement form within 72 hours to the court when a change in placement occurs. It is necessary that the court have the most accurate and up-to-date placement information and address for all children in care. This allows children's attorneys, guardians ad litem, parents' attorneys, and other involved parties to have simultaneous access to current placement information. It will also close the loop so foster parents receive their Notice of Court Hearings and opportunity to be heard.

In release 19.3, the Social Service Information System **Permanency Placement, Location and Absence** screen was enhanced by adding a new **yes/no** question that the court has been notified of a change in placement.

When one county is legally responsible and another county is financially responsible for a child's placement, or a county is providing courtesy supervision for another county, it is important that these agencies communicate with each other regarding placement changes and to ensure timely notification is sent to state or tribal court.

The screenshot shows a web-based interface for a case management system. On the left is a navigation tree for a case titled "Baby Borden". The tree includes folders for "Address/Phone/Email/State Detail", "Adolescent Services", "Name/Race", "ICWA", "Relationship", "Education", "Employment", "Diagnosis/Disability/Substance", "Health/Insurance", "Medication/Checkup", "CWB/Infant and Toddler Intervention", "CMH Screenings and Assessments", "Court Actions", "Permanency", "Continuous Placements", "Placements/Locations/Absences", "Removal and Adoption History", "Child Ward", "Legacy Submissions to DHS Adoptions Unit", "Northstar History", "MAPCY/DOC Assessments", "SEY", "Workgroups & Intakes", "Client Eligibility Log", "Healthcare Eligibility from MMIS", "Supplemental Healthcare Eligibility", "Fiscal Details", "Special Studies", "Service Outcomes", "Attached Files", and "Documents". A red arrow points to the "Placements/Locations/Absences" folder. The main content area displays a form for placement information. The form has tabs for "<Unknown>", "Foster Parents", "Changes to this placement/location", and "ICWA Placement Preferences". The "Changes to this placement/location" tab is active. The form includes sections for "Placement / Location / Absence Information" and "School Change Information". The "Placement / Location / Absence Information" section contains fields for "Setting", "Reason", "Start Date", "Entry Date" (3/21/2019 03:18 PM), "Classification" (<Unknown>), "Effective date", "Workgroup", "Bus org / provider", "Location description", "End reason", "End date", "End Entry Date", "Disruption reason", "Disruption detail", and "School district attending". The "School Change Information" section includes checkboxes for "Notice of change of foster care placement /location was provided to the court?", "Is child currently enrolled in school?", and "Did child change schools due to this placement?". Below these are fields for "Date child enrolled in new school", "Reason for change", "If unreasonable travel, reason for placement choice", "Other", and "School exemption reason". A red arrow points to the "Notice of change of foster care placement /location was provided to the court?" checkbox, which is currently unchecked.

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling (651) 431-3809 (voice) or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.