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TOPIC: Planned Vacation and Other Travel

Information for Resource Parents concerning a planned vacation and other travel

Can the child I'm caring for travel with me out of the state for a vacation or other reasons?

Yes, children in resource care can accompany their resource family on vacation and travel for other purposes both in and out of the state. Family vacations and travel are positive experiences that a child in placement with a resource family should have an opportunity to share.

Division policy; II D, Foster Care Services, 909 Vacations, Other Travel and Events, begins with the statement: *"The sense of belonging and security of the child in placement in a resource home is supported by including him in the vacation and/or travel plans of the resource family"*.

Do I need anyone's consent to take a child in placement with me on vacation or when I'm traveling for other reasons?

Yes, it is necessary that you consult with the child's caseworker and obtain consent if you plan to go on vacation or travel away from the resource home for three (3) or more days.

You should notify the child's worker at least thirty (30) days in advance of planned vacation or travel; in emergency situations, notice should be given as soon as possible after the decision to travel is made.

The Manual of Requirements for Resource Family Parents also states that: *(f) The resource family parent shall notify the child's case worker of vacation plans in which the resource family parent or child in placement will be absent from the home overnight.*

What if I'm going out of state, but it is only a day trip and not for an overnight stay?

While consent may not be necessary, it is reasonable and a matter of good practice to inform the child's case worker of your plans and how you could be contacted if necessary.

Since the child lives in my home and I'm responsible for him as a member of my family; why is it necessary to consult the child's caseworker about vacations and travel?

Although the child is a member of the resource family, the Division, by court order, is legally responsible for the child and all case activity involving the child.

IID, 1222, Consent for Child to Accompany Resource Family on Vacation or Other Trip In or Out-of-State, states: *The Division's responsibility for children in resource family placement and all aspects of case activity for these children makes it imperative that resource families consult the Worker about planned vacations or trips.*

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The caseworker must also notify and obtain the birth parent's consent if a child in placement is to accompany their resource family on vacation or travel for other reasons. IID, 1222 also states: *Upon approval, the Division informs the child's birth parent, in writing, about the vacation/travel plan and obtains the birth parent's written consent for the child to travel. This parental notification is mandatory and applies to all children in resource family home placement unless parental rights have been terminated and DYFS has an Order of Guardianship for the child, or there is a standing court order specifically prohibiting the parent from making decisions on the child's behalf.*

Administrative Code; N.J.A.C. 10:122C-1.15(d), states: *The foster parent and the Division representative (Worker) or contract agency employee shall advise each other of any vacation plans, emergencies, unusual occurrences or significant problems involving the foster child.*

Are there reasons why I wouldn't be allowed to take a child in my care on vacation with me?

Yes, there are reasons that could prevent a child from going on vacation or traveling with his resource family. This is why, as stated above, it is necessary to consult with the child's caseworker about vacation/ travel plans.

Division policy; IID, 1222, Consent for Child to Accompany Resource Family on Vacation or Other Trip In or Out-of-State, states: *Policy requires the Division to review/approve all resource family vacation or travel plans for children in placement by court order, unless there are compelling reasons why the child cannot accompany them. Such reasons are limited to:*

- *Court ordered visitation,*
- *scheduled court appearances,*
- *scheduled therapeutic or medical treatment which cannot be postponed,*
- *A court order which specifically prohibits the travel or otherwise contains stipulations which preclude such travel.*

What happens if the child in my care cannot go on vacation or travel with me either because of a conflict with court ordered case activity or if, for my own reasons, I can't or do not intend to take the child in my care with me.

Whenever a child in placement cannot go on vacation or travel with their resource family, temporary care arrangements such as a vacation placement must be secured for the child.

Policy 1222, mentioned above, also states: *If a child in placement cannot accompany the resource family on vacation or other trip, it is the responsibility of the Division to assure that appropriate alternative arrangements are made for the child.*

While it is expected and preferable that a child in care accompany the resource family on family vacations and for other travel; the resource parent, by planning ahead, can be prepared for those situations when the child can't accompany them and help eliminate uncertainty about securing an appropriate placement by having someone who has been approved as a temporary caregiver, another resource family or extended family, in place for planned vacations or emergency travel.

Administrative Code: N.J.A.C. 10:122C-1.15(d), 10:122C-6.1 Supervision of children in placement,

Policies: II D, Foster Care Services, 909 Vacations, Other Travel and Events; IID, 1222, Consent for Child to Accompany Resource Family on Vacation or Other Trip In or Out-of-State; Manual of Requirements for Resource Family Parents, 10:122C-3.4, Reporting Requirements

Definitions: Vacation or trip: "any consecutive time period of more than three days, during which a child in placement accompanies the resource family to a location in or out-of-state away from the resource family home"

"Temporary caregiver": "Temporary caregiver means a person who provides supervision to a child in placement on behalf of the resource family parent for more than three consecutive days."

Requirements to become a temporary caregiver: The temporary caregiver shall complete a Child Abuse Record Information background check, as specified in N.J.A.C. 10:122C-5.5, and a check of court records (known as a PROMIS/GAVEL check);

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