

June 30, 2023

## GENERAL LETTER NO. 18-C2-8

ISSUED BY: Bureau of Child Welfare and Community Services  
Division of Family Well-Being and Protection

SUBJECT: Employees' Manual, Title 18, Chapter C(2), **Case Management**, 17, 56, 84-86, revised.

### Summary

This chapter is revised to

- Add Family Interactions as a separate Family-Centered Service
- Update Title IV-E amendment information on the Department's responsibilities with missing and exploited children
- Add information/link to Human Trafficking Comm. document

### Effective Date

Immediately..

### Material Superseded

Remove the following pages from Employees' Manual, Title 18, Chapter C(2), and destroy them:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Date</u>
17	October 2, 2020
56, 84-86	December 16, 2022

### Additional Information

Refer questions about this general letter to your area service administrator.

They should also be documented in either the case plan or court report so that the efforts are shared with court partners. The SWCM will need to discuss these situations with their supervisor to see if the “No Worker-Parent Visit Flag” should be utilized. This will require an ongoing review with the supervisor regarding use of the “No Worker-Parent Visit Flag.”

If the worker is unable to determine the identity or location of the father, activate the “No Worker-Parent Visit Flag.” If the worker is unable to contact the father after his identity and location are known, consult with the supervisor about activating the “No Worker-Parent Visit Flag.” All of the above efforts and results must be documented by the SWCM in case notes (use **Concerted Efforts** header checkbox) and in either the case plan or court report.

The following are some general topics to engage the father in discussion:

- Information regarding the allegations,
- What they see as needs/services for their child,
- What they see as their own needs/services,
- How they can be involved in the case and services,
- Case planning (including what the parent’s goals are).

### **Setting Up a Case**

After a family is determined to be eligible, a FACS case shall be opened under the child who is the youngest child victim on the assessment. A FACS case shall be opened on a sibling (or siblings) of the youngest child victim if they are placed outside of the parental home via VPA or Juvenile Court Order and/or Adjudicated CINA. Additional information about setting up a case is located at [CWIS HD SharePoint](#).

### **Department Contracted Family-Centered Services**

It is the SWCM’s responsibility to arrange and coordinate the delivery of services to children and families. Respect the family’s strengths, cultural context, and preferences in arranging service provisions. Department contracted family-centered services include:

- Solution Based Casework® (SBC)
- SafeCare®
- Family Preservation Services
- Child Safety Conferences (CSC)
- Solution Focused Meetings
- Youth Transition Decision-Making (YTDM) Meetings
- Family Interactions

For information regarding these services and how to make a referral, see 18-C(3), [Family Centered Services](#).

## **Monitoring for the Potential of Human Trafficking**

U.S. federal law defines human trafficking as a form of modern-day slavery where people profit from the control and exploitation of others. Victims are forced, defrauded, or coerced into trafficking. The actions of traffickers is to exploit victims for labor, services, or commercial sex.

See [Comm. 676, Human Trafficking: Safety of Children in Foster Care](#) for a definition of trafficking, risks, and guidelines for monitoring for risk of trafficking for children in foster care.

1. **Identify the children and youth within the child welfare system** who are at risk of becoming a sex trafficking victim or who is a victim of sex trafficking. Children and youth at risk of sex trafficking include:
  - Any child or youth in which there is an open Department child welfare case but has not been removed from the child's home.
  - Any child or youth in which the Department has responsibility for the child's or youth's placement, care, or supervision.
  - Any child or youth under the age of 18 who has run away from foster care.
  - Any youth not in foster care but who is receiving Chafee funded transition services.
2. **Risk factors related to sexual exploitation** of minors vary in terms of the type and severity of the risk. Potential indicators of risk for children and youth who have:
  - A history of running away.
  - Experienced a lack of stable housing or periods of homelessness.
  - Been physically or sexually abused.
  - Been exposed to domestic violence.
  - Expressed a strong interest in an older adult or is in a relationship with an older man or woman.
  - Been or is currently placed in a foster care home, group home, residential treatment center, shelter or other such setting.
  - Suddenly acquired expensive items such as a cellphone or clothing.
  - Knowledge of and frequents internet sites known for commercial sex. Digital risk factors include recruiting, grooming, and advertising.
  - Contracted sexually transmitted diseases or infections.
  - Acquired tattoos or cutting or burn marks which may be a sign of branding.
  - Identified themselves as a LGBT person.
  - A history of substance use or abuse.
3. **Interview and screen the child or youth (see above)** if there is reasonable cause to believe the child or youth may be a sex trafficking victim. Be aware that children and youth may not recognize their own risk with regard to sex trafficking. Children and youth who have experienced sexual exploitation may not view themselves as victims or may be too traumatized by their experience to disclose information.

## **Response to Unauthorized Absence from Placement**

Legal reference: Iowa Code Chapter 694 and Sections 232.2(11), 232.19, 232.158 (Article V), 232.171 (Article IV), 233.1, and 709A.1

Take immediate action to locate a child under the Department's care or supervision when there is an unauthorized absence from placement by contacting the appropriate authorities. For the purpose of these procedures, "unauthorized absence" means any unplanned absence due to:

- Actions taken by the child (e.g. a run away),
  - Actions of others (e.g. abduction), or
  - The lack of attention or supervision by the caretaker.
1. Any foster care placement where a child has run away or has been abducted requires the placement provider to immediately notify the Department by telephone and e-mail regarding the missing child.
  2. Obtain as much information as possible about the circumstances surrounding a child's absence.
  3. Make an immediate and reasonable initial effort to locate the child. At a minimum, contact the school, parents, relatives, friends, and other contacts or locations identified as likely places the child may be.
  4. Identify and contact any other individuals who the child may have contacted for assistance while on the run. Encourage them to help locate the child or return the child to foster care.
  5. Immediately contact law enforcement and provide the child's name, date of birth, height, weight, sex, ethnicity, race, hair color, and eye color and any other unique identifiers such as eyeglasses and braces. Inform law enforcement when the child went missing and what clothing the child had on.
  6. Contact the child's parents and inform them the child is missing or abducted. Gather any information from the parents that may be helpful in the search for the child.
  7. Search diligently and regularly for the child at places the child has frequently known to go to.
  8. Notify the juvenile court.
  9. Report immediately, and in no case later than 24 hours, after receiving information regarding missing or abducted children or youth to law enforcement for entry into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and also report to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) or <http://www.missingkids.org>.
  10. The Agency is responsible for maintaining regular communication with law enforcement agencies and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in efforts to provide a safe recovery of a missing or abducted child or youth. At a minimum, maintain weekly contact with law enforcement agencies and NCMEC until the child or youth is located.
  11. Where reasonably possible, the Agency shall provide:
    - A photo of the missing or abducted child or youth; and
    - Endangerment information, such as the child's or youth's pregnancy status, prescription medications, suicidal tendencies, vulnerability to being sex trafficked, and other health or risk factors.

12. If the child is located, make arrangements for the child's return to the placement.

You may negotiate with a runaway child as to when the child is willing to return. The safety and well-being of the child should be the first consideration in the negotiation. The agreed-upon return time should always be within 48 hours of the contact.

If a parent sabotages attempts to pick up a runaway child, notify law enforcement.

Notify the parent or caretaker as soon as possible when the child is found unless there a reason to believe this may further endanger the child.
13. Identify the factors that contributed to the child or youth being absent from the foster home and determine what the child's or youth's experiences were while absent, including screening the child to determine if the child is a possible victim of sex trafficking. To the extent possible respond to those factors in the current and subsequent placements.
14. Screen all located youth for possible sex trafficking. See [Screening All Located Children for Possible Sex Trafficking](#) for more information.
15. Identify, and to the extent possible, respond to the primary factors that contributed to the child or youth being absent from foster care. Document the responses to these factors in case notes. Provide a description of how these responses will be incorporated and integrated into the current placement and how it is believed that they will positively affect the current and any subsequent placement.
16. If there is evidence the child is in another state, request that local law enforcement contact law enforcement in the other state about searching for the child. If needed, contact the Iowa Missing Person Information Clearinghouse at 1-800-346-5507 for assistance.
17. If there is reason to suspect that the life or well-being of the child may be in jeopardy:
  - Immediately request the local law enforcement agency to enlist the aid of the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation or direct the guardian to do so.
  - Determine if a protective service alert should be issued, follow procedures described in [17-B\(1\)](#).
  - Be aware of what information is needed to issue an AMBER alert, in the event that local law enforcement determines that an AMBER alert should be issued.
    - An AMBER alert is used only when the child has been abducted and in danger.
    - An AMBER alert is not used for a runaway unless the child is known to have been abducted and the child's life is in danger.
18. Notify the court and the guardian ad litem, as needed, in writing within two working days (or within the court's preferred time limit if one has been established) when there is reason to believe that parents or others have:
  - Failed to divulge or concealed facts known to them about the whereabouts of the child,
  - Aided and abetted the unauthorized absence of the child, or
  - Contributed to the delinquency of the child.
19. When the child is found in Iowa:
  - Follow orders described in a court issued pick-up.
  - Notify the court and make plans for the child to be returned to placement.

- Notify the law enforcement agency where the initial report was made that the child was found and returned and,
  - Notify parents and the service area office and caregiver (as applicable).
20. When the child is found in another state:
- Contact the Department Interstate Compact Unit immediately for assistance. The Interstate Compact Unit will assume responsibility for the necessary communication to affect the return of the child.
  - Request the use of the Iowa System Terminal to transmit a “hold” request for the return of the child to the Iowa Department of Human Services.
  - If the other state has any questions about releasing the child, contact the appropriate Iowa law enforcement agency. Begin with local police and report to the sheriff or state police as needed.
  - If Department workers travel out of state is required, follow Department procedures in 18-D(5), [The Interstate Compact On Juveniles: Procedures for Return of Runaways, Escapees, or Absconders](#), with the assistance of and coordination with the Interstate Compact Unit.
21. When a child remains on the run for a long period of time:
- Contact law enforcement on an ongoing basis about what is being done to locate the missing juvenile.
  - Contact parents and others involved regularly to see if they have more information about the child’s whereabouts or activities.
  - Discuss with the Iowa Department of Public Safety the need for posting photographs of missing persons to state and national Internet sites.
  - If posting is determined necessary or beneficial and a picture of the missing child is available, contact the Iowa Missing Person Information Clearinghouse at 1-800-346-5507 to get it published on:
    - The Iowa Department of Public Safety website at <http://www.dps.state.ia.us/DCI/fieldoperations/mpic.shtml> and
    - The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children website at <http://www.missingkids.org>
  - Consider other resources that may be helpful in locating and returning children:
    - **Home Free** is a program in which Greyhound Bus Lines provides free one-way transportation between any two points in the continental United States (excluding Alaska) for runaway children returning home. This is done in conjunction with the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS).  
  
To receive a free ride home, children between the ages of 12 and 18 may call the NRS at 1/800/RUNAWAY or call a local social service agency, shelter, or law enforcement. All of these services can make necessary travel arrangements with Greyhound.