

Community-Based Care South Central & Hill Country Stage II Joint Operations Manual

March 2025



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What is Community-Based Care?

This operations manual provides Child Protective Services (CPS) and Belong staff an in-depth look at the protocols for case actions in CPS cases involving substitute care placements and case management services that are affected by Community-Based Care in the South Central & Hill Country (8b).

To begin, staff must understand Community-Based Care.

Community-Based Care is a new way of providing foster care and case management services. It is a community-based approach to meeting the individual and unique needs of children, youth, and families. Within a geographic designated community area, a single contractor (officially a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC)) is responsible for finding foster homes or other living arrangements for children or youth in state care and providing them a full continuum of services.

CPS began expanding the community's role to meet the challenges of serving children and youth in foster care under Foster Care Redesign. Under Foster Care Redesign, the SSCC was responsible for:

- Developing foster care capacity.
- Building a network of providers.
- Engaging the community to help.
- Foster care placement services.
- Coordinating and delivering services to children and youth in foster care and their families.

In 2017, the Texas Legislature directed CPS to expand this model to include both foster care and relative or "kinship" placements and give the SSCC sole responsibility for case management rather than sharing that responsibility with CPS.

As Community-Based Care takes shape statewide, CPS' focus will shift to ensuring quality oversight of foster care and services for children, youth, and families. The SSCC will be responsible for case management and services, that safely maintains children in foster care or kinship care, with the goal of positive permanency for all youth in care.

For more information about Community-Based Care, see the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) websites: [Community-Based Care \(Internal\)](#) or [Community-Based Care \(Public\)](#).

Office of Community- Based Care Transition (OCBCT)

With SB 1896 the Office of Community-Based Care Transition was created to help assist with the transition and implementation of the Community-Based Care Model in Texas. OCBCT is a new independent office structure that is administratively attached to DFPS but reports directly to the Governor. OCBCT serves as the office who project manages the implementation of CBC across the state with the support of other key players and provides ongoing support to the SSCC.

Community-Based Care Administrator (CBCA)

Under the direction of the CBC Director of Implementation, the CBCA is responsible for CBC implementation and operation activities and serves as the CBC area liaison to Belong. The CBCA interacts routinely with DFPS staff, the SSCC, other agencies in the community, community boards, judges, schools, and the public during and after the implementation to the Community-Based Care model. This position reports to the Implementation Director, Esmeralda Silva.

CBCA for the South Central and Hill Country Area

Crystal Smith Cell Phone: (830) 317-0503

Email: crystal.smith@dfps.texas.gov

Case Management Oversight

The Case Management Oversight Team provides technical guidance and subject matter expertise regarding CPS and the CBC program. This team will support, collaborate, assist, and work to facilitate the success of Belong during and after the transition. They ensure compliance of federal and state requirements and report results of quality assurance reviews. Their goal is to support Belong and its success for children and families in Region 8. This team is a part of DFPS and reports to the Regional Director, Letty Lozano for Region 8. The CMO team contact information is listed below.

Name	CMO Position	Work Phone	Email
Molly Daniel	CMO Manager	(830) 426-0005	Molly.Daniel@dfps.texas.gov
Patricia Magdaleno	CMO Manager	(210) 247-8207	Patricia.Magdaleno@dfps.texas.gov
Laura Galvan	CMO Admin	(512) 289-8042	Laura.Galvan@dfps.texas.gov
Sarah Baimbridge	CMO Specialist	(830) 433-0057	Sarah.Baimbridge@dfps.texas.gov
Ashleigh Baumgarten	CMO Specialist	(361) 571-5344	Ashleigh.Baumgarten@dfps.texas.gov

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Vanessa Retiz	CMO Specialist	(830) 255-8314	Vanessa.Retiz@dfps.texas.gov
Jacquelynn Bingham	CMO Specialist	(830) 426-0313	Jacquelynn.Bingham@dfps.texas.gov
Jennifer Kahn	CMO Specialist	(830) 431-1646	Jennifer.Kahn@dfps.texas.gov

Community-Based Care Quality Indicators:

1. Children and youth are safe in their placements.
2. Children and youth are placed in their home communities.
3. Children and youth are appropriately served in the least restrictive environment that supports minimal moves for the child or youth.
4. Connections to family and others important to the child or youth are maintained.
5. Children and youth are placed with their siblings.
6. Children and youth remain in their school of origin.
7. Services respect the child's and youth's culture.
8. To be fully prepared for successful adulthood, children and youth are provided opportunities, experiences, and activities similar to those experienced by their non-foster care peers.
9. Children and youth are provided opportunities to participate in decisions that impact their lives.
10. Reunification of children and youth with their biological parents.
11. Promotion of the placement of children and youth with relative or kinship caregivers.

Community-Based Care is intended to allow the SSCC and the community more flexibility to innovate to meet the unique needs of the children, youth, and families in each designated service area. This increased flexibility comes with greater responsibility and accountability for overall safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.

Single Source Continuum Contract: Belong

On April 1, 2021, CPS awarded the Single Source Continuum Contract (SSCC) to Belong. Belong, with a home base in New Braunfels, serves children and families in the following counties: Atascosa, Bandera, Calhoun, Comal, DeWitt, Dimmit, Edwards, Frio, Gillespie, Goliad, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Jackson, Karnes, Kendall, Kerr, Kinney, La Salle, Lavaca, Maverick, Medina, Real, Uvalde, Val Verde, Victoria, Wilson, and Zavala.

To learn about Belong, visit the Belong website at <http://www.sjrcbelong.org>

Mission Statement:

Offer healing and hope to children and families affected by abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

Vision Statement:

Abused and neglected children will be empowered to grow up to be happy, productive, and caring adults.

Belong will operate a model through the SSCC contract that includes:

- Work to increase the capacity of existing providers and identify more community-based supports and services.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of community needs and an analysis to find gaps between the need for services and their availability.
- Do comprehensive safety and risk assessments to evaluate family strengths and needs.
- Provide service coordination based on the ten principles of Wraparound. For children and youth with complex behavioral health needs, Belong will use what is known as evidence-informed models.
- Use a trauma-informed and trauma-based care service approach.
- Use a comprehensive Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process to assess, inform, and guide how services are provided, and the system improved.
- Have a centralized training department that provides evidence-based training to all providers and stakeholders in Belong System of Care, based on CQI data and stakeholder feedback.

Operating Policies and Rules

The protocols detailed in this operations manual are for children and youth from the South Central & Hill Country (8b) placed with and receiving services through Belong as the Single Source Continuum Contractor.

CPS Policy, Resource Guides and other supportive material linked in this operating manual may reference CPS staff specifically. Texas statute provides authority for the Single Source Continuum Contractors (“SSCC”) in the State of Texas, either directly or through subcontractors, to assume the statutory duties of CPS staff. See [Legal Basis for CPS and Single Source Continuum Contractor Relationship](#).

CPS Handbook policies and DFPS and HHSC Texas Administrative Code rules, including HHSC Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards, apply to an SSCC unless specifically waived by DFPS. However, this manual may identify that the actions that were previously completed by DFPS are now completed by Belong. For example, suppose differences or conflicts in the CPS Handbook policy are present that affect a child's best interest. In that case, the two parties will reference the Solution-Based Communication (Dispute Resolution) process and determine if Belong needs to submit a policy waiver request. See [Community Based Care Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\) Rules Waiver](#) a listing of (TAC) rules that are waived.

Additionally, since this operations manual identifies responsibilities for the SSCC that include access to sensitive information in the CPS IMPACT system, the SSCC has adopted policies and procedures, Belongs Provider Manual, to minimize the risk of data breaches.

If you have questions about any information in this manual, please contact your supervisor, Program Director or the South Central & Hill Country (8b) Community-Based Care Administrator at crystal.smith@dfps.texas.gov or (830) 317-0503.

Legal Basis for CPS and Single Source Continuum Contractor Relationship

For information regarding the legal basis for Child Protective Services including the governing State and Federal Laws see [1200 Legal Foundation for Child Protective Investigations and Child Protective Services](#).

Legal Basis for Single Source Continuum Contractor to Act on Behalf Of CPS

Texas statute provides authority for the Single Source Continuum Contractors (SSCC) in the State of Texas either directly or through subcontractors, to assume the statutory duties of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS or the Department) in connection with the delivery of foster care services, relative and kinship caregiver services, and case management services in the SSCC's defined designated community area.

In accordance with [Texas Family Code §264.151](#), the provision of case management services to a child for whom DFPS has been appointed Temporary Managing Conservator (TMC), Permanent Managing Conservator (PMC), or Joint Managing Conservator (JMC) to the child's family, a young adult in extended foster care, a relative or kinship caregiver, or a child who has been placed in the designated community area through Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, and includes, but is not limited to:

1. Caseworker visits with the child, family and caregivers;
2. Convening and conducting permanency planning meetings;
3. Development and revision of child and family plans of service, including a permanency plan and goals for a child or young adult in care;

4. Coordination and monitoring of services required by the child and the child's family;
5. Assumption of court-related duties regarding the child; and
6. Any other function or service that DFPS determines necessary to allow anSSCC to assume responsibility for case management.

History

In 2017, the 85th Texas Legislature through Senate Bill 11 established the Community-Based Care (CBC) Model for delivery of the state's child welfare services. Under the CBC Model, DFPS is required to purchase case management and substitute care services from the SSCC for children, youth, and young adults who are in DFPS' conservatorship or who are receiving services through the extended foster care program. Implementation of the CBC model transitions the Texas child welfare system from a statewide, "one size fits all" approach, to a community-based model designed to meet the individual and unique needs of children, youth, and families in Texas at the local level.

As of December 2019, DFPS is implementing CBC in four designated community areas of the state: Panhandle Area (1), Big Country/Texoma Area (2), Metroplex West Area (3b), South Central Hill Country Area (8b). Visit the public DFPS Website to view the [Implementation Plan Update](#).

Authority

Under Texas statute, the Legislature required DFPS to contract with community-based nonprofit and local governmental entities to provide child welfare services. These statutes provide authority for the community-based entities, known as the SSCC, to either directly or through subcontractors, assume the statutory duties of DFPS to deliver foster care services and services for relative and kinship caregivers in the SSCC's defined designated community area. Delivery of foster care services and services to relative and kinship caregivers can include, but is not limited to:

- An SSCC staff member's direct contact with a child or youth in DFPS Conservatorship who they are serving under the SSCC continuum of care.
- An SSCC staff member's ability to visit privately with a child or youth in DFPS Conservatorship at schools, foster, or kinship homes or any other meeting site.
- Entities providing confidential information to a SSCC staff member upon request about a child or youth in DFPS Conservatorship who is served under the SSCC continuum of care.

Under Texas statute, an SSCC in a contract with DFPS will, at a minimum:

- Assume the statutory duties of DFPS in connection with the delivery of foster care services and services for relative and kinship caregivers in a defined designated community area.
- Provide or protect records as outlined in the Open Records Act found in Texas Government Code Chapter 552.
- Be afforded protection of communication that may occur between the SSCC's employee, agent or representative when considered a client's representative of DFPS for purposes

of attorney-client privilege.

Under Texas statute, DFPS will, at a minimum:

- Contract with community-based nonprofit and local governmental entities that can provide child welfare services;
- Develop and maintain a plan for implementing Community-Based Care;
- Develop a formal review process to assess the ability of a Single Source Continuum Contractor to satisfy the responsibilities and administrative requirements of delivering foster care services and services for relative and kinship caregivers;
- Expand community-based care;
- Review contractor's performance; and
- In accordance with TFC 264.163, provide legal representation as provided for in the Texas Family Code.

Texas statute found in the Texas Family Code provides additional details regarding the requirements of the SSCC and DFPS.

In summary, the SSCCs, under contract with DFPS, assume the statutory duties of DFPS in connection with the delivery of child welfare conservatorship, kinship, and reunification services in a defined designated community area. This does not include Intake, Investigation and Family Based Safety Services. Vendors and other organizations should treat the SSCCs as an agent of DFPS as it relates to the child welfare services being delivered by the SSCCs.

Placement and Family Service Referrals

South Central & Hill Country (8b) Child Protective Investigations and Child Protective Services (DFPS) staff will work directly with Belong following the determination that a child or youth in CPS conservatorship requires placement in a substitute care setting. DFPS staff must follow CPS Handbook policy related to the assessment, consideration, and selection of the least restrictive placement for every child or youth's initial or subsequent placement (new placement or placement change) in substitute care. For more information, see:

- Policy section [4000 Placing Children in DFPS Conservatorship Care](#)
- [Placement Process Resource Guide](#)
- [Child Sexual Aggression Resource Guide](#)

Belong will be paid one blended foster care rate for all children or youth placed within Belongs provider network. Therefore, CPS will no longer submit service level requests to Youth for Tomorrow (YFT). Regardless of the child or youth's needs or services to meet those needs, Belong is responsible for providing a continuum of care to each child or youth placed within their provider network. CPS Handbook policy items related to requesting a service level for a child or youth, therefore, is waived. See [Community-Based Care Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\) Rules Waiver](#) for more information.

General Requirements for all SSCC Placements:

- Regardless of the type of placement DFPS Workers must staff the child or youth's case with their Supervisor and Program Director (PD) and obtain approval prior to requesting a substitute care placement and case management services from Belong.
- In situations where the DFPS Worker has identified that a child or youth *may* require a paid foster care placement, the PD may direct the DFPS Worker to provide Belong advance notification of a child or youth's need for possible paid foster care placement.
 - *If paid placement is no longer needed, the DFPS Worker will notify Belong by email or phone within one hour if it is determined that paid foster care placement is not needed.*
- If a court should order anything regarding the placement of a child or youth (i.e., a placement move or for a child or youth to remain in a particular foster home), DFPS Worker will notify Belong immediately and provide a copy of the court order as soon as possible. When possible, DFPS Worker will notify Belong prior to any anticipated court rulings that may affect the placement of a child, youth, or sibling group.

Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care

The CPS Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care, also known as the Bill of Rights, is an important document that outlines the rights children and youth have when they are placed in

foster care. It is required by federal law, Texas law, and CPS Handbook, policy [6420 Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care](#).

Every time it is reviewed with the child or youth, it must be signed by the child or youth, the caseworker, and the caregiver.

The primary caseworker is responsible for reviewing the Bill of Rights with the child or youth:

- Within 72 hours of the child or youth entering foster care (i.e., at initial placement following the child's removal).
- Within 72 hours of the child or youth changing placements into a DFPS Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD) program.
- Every time the Child's Plan of Service (CPOS) is reviewed, including the first time the CPOS is developed. The Bill of Rights is included with the CPOS when the CPOS is generated from the Forms drop-down in IMPACT 2.0.

Again, at the time of initial placement but no later than 72 hours, children and youth in foster care must be provided with a copy of the [Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care \(Form 2530\)](#). The primary caseworker must review these Bill of Rights with the child or youth. Upon completion of the review, the primary caseworker must have the child or youth and caregiver sign on the appropriate signature lines, provide a copy to the child or youth, and upload a copy of the signed document to OneCase.

Initial Bill of Rights Review

The date of the initial Bill of Rights Review will be captured on the Child Placement Information page as part of the placement documentation. The signed Initial Bill of Rights must be uploaded into the OneCase tab titled "Foster Care Bill of Rights."

The primary caseworker must review the Bill of Rights orally and in the child's primary language. There are no exceptions for age or disability. Caseworkers will need to provide accommodations where needed, such as translators or sign language interpreters. If a child cannot sign the Bill of Rights (e.g., infants), this must be noted on the form by the caseworker. The review must still occur with the caregiver and a signed copy must be uploaded into OneCase and included in the physical case file.

The Bill of Rights contains language and words that will not necessarily be understood by all children and youth. Some notable examples from the Bill of Rights are:

13. "Participate in... unsupervised childhood and extracurricular activities."
20. "Healthy foods in healthy portions for my age and activity level."
27. "Be informed of emergency behavioral intervention policies in writing..."
45. "Make calls, reports, or complaints" to

- The HHSC Ombudsman for Children and Youth currently in Foster Care at 1-844-286-0769.

- The DFPS Office of Internal Affairs at 1-800-720-7777.

The primary caseworker should check for understanding and explain anything the child or youth does not understand in a developmentally appropriate way.

The review of the Bill of Rights can be done by a virtual meeting, in-person/face-to-face, over the phone, or an application such as FaceTime (available on DFPS-issued iPhones).

Child Sexual Aggression

[Remedial Order 28-CSA](#)

The Belong Vice President of Permanency is the designated individual responsible for determining if a child or youth's behavior meets the definition of being sexually aggressive and has specific protocols and definitions that guide in that decision. If a child or youth is determined to have sexually aggressive behavior, Belong Vice President of Permanency must document the behavior in the child or youth's case record and in the Sexual Aggression tab in IMPACT.

If DFPS staff have a child/youth entering DFPS conservatorship from a South Central & Hill Country (8b) county who need to be assessed for sexually aggressive behavior, DFPS must:

- Contact Belong Vice President of Permanency, Shannon Walker, email: swalker@sjrctexas.org, is responsible for the CSA designation in IMPACT for any child or youth legally from the South Central & Hill Country (8b).
- As soon as the removal worker is made aware of possible sexual aggression, they will alert their chain of command and the removal Program Director will email Belong Vice President of Permanency to set up a child sexual aggression staffing.
- Belong Vice President of Permanency will schedule the staffing within 48 hours of notification.
 - Participants include:
 - DFPS Removal Worker (required)
 - DFPS Supervisor (required)
 - DFPS Program Director (required)
 - Belong Permanency Specialist
 - Belong Permanency Supervisor
 - Belong Director of Permanency
 - Belong Vice President of Permanency
 - Belong Clinical Coordinator
- The removal worker will be prepared to share all known information required for the staffing.
- Belong Vice President of Permanency will be responsible for documenting the staffing in IMPACT and, if determined, adding the designation in IMPACT.

If a child or youth is determined to have sexually aggressive behavior, it must be indicated in the child or youth's case record by the Belong Vice President of Permanency and reflected in the child or youth's application for placement. The Belong Vice President of Permanency is the designated individual responsible for determining if a child or youth's behavior meets the

definition of sexually aggressive and has specific protocols and definitions that guide in that decision.

If Belong or their network provider suspects that a child or youth has sexually aggressive behavior and the child or youth has not already been given that designation, notification to the Belong Permanency Specialist must be made immediately so the Belong Permanency Specialist can notify his/her Supervisor, Program Director (PD), and Vice President of Permanency.

For additional information regarding Child Sexual Aggression please refer to [CPS Policy 6419 Working with Children Who Are Sexually Aggressive, Have Sexual Behavior Problems, or Are Victims of Sexual Aggression](#) and the [Child Sexual Aggression Resource Guide](#).

If a Child/Youth is determined to have Sexually Aggressive Behavior:

The Belong Vice President of Permanency notifies the Belong PD, Supervisor, and Worker of the decision, including the rationale for the decision made.

If the Child/Youth is determined to have Sexually Aggressive Behavior at the time of removal:

- If the child or youth **has not** been placed, the removal worker updates the Alternative Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (Form 2087ex) in IMPACT before submitting to Belong for placement.
- If the child or youth has already been placed and the placement is not aware of the child or youth's behavior, the Removal Worker IMMEDIATELY notifies the Belong Intake Specialist and the placement about the child or youth's behavior and documents the notification in IMPACT. An uploaded Attachment A must also be completed, signed, and uploaded to OneCase within 3 business days.

If the Child/Youth is determined to have Sexually Aggressive Behavior after the Child/Youth is in Conservatorship:

- If the child or youth is pending a new placement, Belong Permanency Specialist launches a new application for placement. The new application for placement will autofill with the information from the sexual aggression page in IMPACT.
- If the child or youth is currently in placement, the Belong Permanency Specialist updates Child Plan of Service (CPOS) for the child or youth who was determined to have sexually aggressive behaviors and the child or youth who was the victim of child sexual aggression to include services and supports. The Belong Permanency Specialist must also generate a new Attachment A, provide copy to the placement, have the placement sign it and upload the signed copy to OneCase within 3 business days.

Within 24 hours of the child or youth being identified as being sexually aggressive, the Belong Program Director will send an e-mail to the Belong Permanency Specialist asking that they confirm that they have updated the application for placement, updated the Child Plan of Service, and notified the placement

The Belong Supervisor has 24 hours to respond to Belong Permanency Director confirming the above activities required of the Belong Permanency Specialist have been completed.

Child Sexual Aggression, Sexual Victimization, Sexual Behavior Notification:

Defining [Caregiver](#):

A caregiver is a person, including an employee, foster parent, foster/adoptive parent, contract service provider, or volunteer, whose day-to-day responsibilities include direct care, supervision, guidance, and protection of a child or youth in care. This includes employees and contract staff who provide 24-hour awake night supervision.

Initial Placements:

- DFPS will complete the question under the sexual victimization tab in IMPACT and enter any episodes if marked yes.
- If sexual aggressive behavior is identified, DFPS will follow the child sexual aggression designation process above.
- If applicable, DFPS will complete the trafficking information in IMPACT prior to printing the Attachment A form.
- DFPS will print the Attachment A form.
- If DFPS is transporting the child to the initial placement, DFPS will:
 - Discuss the information in the Attachment A form with the receiving caregiver;
 - Obtain signatures from all caregivers;
 - Upload Attachment A and [Placement Summary Form 2279](#) or [Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b](#) into OneCase in IMPACT within one (1) business day for access by Belong. DFPS will notify Belong when this is complete.
 - Form 2279 is a tool used to share information about a child including when a child with a history of sexual victimization or behaviors of sexual aggression is under the care of an alternate, temporary, or GRO caregiver.
- For placements made by Belong,
 - DFPS will create the Attachment A and the [Placement Summary Form 2279](#) or [Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b](#) ensure it is complete and send via email to Belong.
 - Belong, or their designee, will be responsible for discussing information in the Attachment A and the [Placement Summary Form 2279](#) or [Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b](#) <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Application/Forms/showFile.aspx?NAME=K-908-2279b.docx> with the caregiver at the time of placement.
 - Obtain the signature of the receiving caregiver on both forms.
 - Belong will, within one (1) business day, upload Attachment A and the [Placement Summary Form 2279](#) or [Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b](#) into OneCase in IMPACT. Belong will notify DFPS when this is complete.

Subsequent Placements:

- Belong Intake Specialist will update all information under the person detail page tabs prior to the placement change.
- Belong Permanency Specialist, or their designee, will:
 - Discuss information in the Attachment A with the caregiver at the time of placement,
 - Obtain all required signatures,
 - Record the date provided on the placement page, and
 - Upload a copy of the Form 2279 and Attachment A to OneCase in IMPACT within one (1) business day placement.

Additional Notification Guidance:

DFPS/Belong is required by federal court order to provide **all caregivers** who care for children/youth in the conservatorship of DFPS with information regarding a child/youth's history of sexual victimization and sexual aggression. At initial and subsequent placements of a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship in any setting, staff must review the information contained in the placement summary form and the Child Sexual History Report Attachment A, obtain signatures, and provide a copy of the documents in accordance with the guidance in this chart.

Placement Summary and Attachment A Tips

****For all placements where an Attachment A is required, the 2279 is also required!***

Note: Either a handwritten signature or a true digital signature including an authentication certificate are acceptable. A typed name using a cursive font is not acceptable.

Form	Which Placements	When and Who Signs	Timeline for Uploading into OneCase
<p>Attachment A</p> <p>*The Attachment A & 2279 are needed for all children, regardless of the child's victimization history!</p> <p>(*Do NOT backdate an Attachment A. The Attachment A must be launched from IMPACT on or before the date of signature. Dating the Attachment A with a date before the generated date is falsification.)</p>	<p>ALL PLACEMENTS MUST have an Attachment A & 2279.</p> <p><i>Including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorized Placements (4310) • Psychiatric Hospital (4231.1) • Juvenile (4231.1) • Returning a child home (4123.1) <p>Which Placements <u>Do NOT</u> Need the Attachment A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runaway • Jail • SIL <p><u>*If a caregiver refuses to sign, the caseworker must document on the Attachment A the name of the caregiver who refused to sign and the date they refused to sign it. The unsigned Attachment A must be uploaded to OneCase. The caseworker enters a</u></p>	<p>ALL caregivers and the caseworker must sign on or before the date of placement.</p> <p>All caregivers should PRINT their name and TITLE under their signature, and DATE, so that when reviewing the form, it can be identified the individual caregiver roles.</p> <p>For GRO Placements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator for the GRO • Child's case manager • Receiving intake staff, if applicable <p>For Kinship/Relative Placements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All adults living in the home who have unsupervised contact with the child. <p>For Foster Home Placements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All foster parents (this means if there are 2 foster parents, both must sign) 	<p><u>Upload the Attachment A on the day of the placement or by 7 p.m. on the next calendar day to the OneCase tab titled, "Sexual History Report Attachment A."</u></p> <p>Additional signatures captured on the form are uploaded to OneCase within 72 hours of placement.</p> <p>Place the original form in the case record.</p> <p>(Policy 4133)</p> <p><i>*Ensure the Attachment A has a date generated on the bottom of</i></p>

Form	Which Placements	When and Who Signs	Timeline for Uploading into OneCase
	<p><u>contact documenting the caseworker's efforts to notify the unauthorized caregiver of the child's sexual victimization and aggression history.</u> (Policy 4310)</p> <p>*For children whose placement type changes in IMPACT but the child remains in the same home (does not physically move), a new the 2279 and Attachment A are not required to be signed as these forms should have been provided at the time of placement. <i>If the 2279 and Attachment A were not provided or signed by ALL caregivers at the time of placement, caseworkers must get the documents signed and uploaded into OneCase.</i></p>	<p>For Psychiatric/Medical Hospitals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospital care coordinator or similar staff <p>For Juvenile Detention or Other Facility Settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission staff or person responsible for oversight of the child <p>For Unauthorized Placements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adult whose home the child is residing in <p>For Parent Placements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All parents in the home <p>*If one of the required caregivers is not present on the date of placement, the missing required signatures must be obtained within <u>3 business days</u> of the child's placement. (Policy 4133)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For placements in facilities regulated or operated by another state agency (juvenile/psychiatric hospitals), the child's 	<p><i>the document to reflect the most accurate information was reviewed timely.</i></p>

Form	Which Placements	When and Who Signs	Timeline for Uploading into OneCase
		<p>caregiver may admit the child. Upon being notified of the child’s admission the caseworker has up to 3 business days to get the Attachment A signed by the required caregiver. (4231.1)</p> <p>For “Initial Placement” then the caseworker has up to 3 days (72 hours) to get the Attachment A generated and signed. (4133)</p>	

Note about the 2279b: After reading the Attachment A, the 2279b is signed by staff during Child Without Placement. Otherwise, the 2279b is used by residential providers, Child Placing Agency (CPA) Staff, and Foster Adoptive Home Development (FAD) workers to have temporary placement(s) or alternative caregiver(s) sign as an acknowledgement of receipt of the K-908-2279: Placement Summary and the Child’s Sexual History Report (Attachment A). Foster and Adoptive Caregivers do not sign this form. This form is intended for alternate, temporary and GRO caregivers.

Note: There are limited signature lines on the Attachment A, additional signatures can be captured anywhere on the document along with their printed name, title, and date. For further guidance on caregiver notification of sexual abuse history, review the appropriate policy:

- [4121.2 Prepare the Current and New Caregivers for the Move](#)
- [4121.3 Complete the Placement Summary Form](#)
- [4133 Provide and Discuss the Placement Summary \(Form 2279\)](#)

- [Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b](#)
- [4152.2 Meeting the Needs of a Child or Youth without Placement](#)
- [4231.1 Notifying a Facility Regulated by Another State Agency of a Child's Sexual Victimization and Sexual Aggression History](#)

Evaluating a Possible Placement

The safety of the child or youth is the paramount consideration in any placement selection. When evaluating potential placements, must consider substitute caregiver's history of abuse and neglect allegations. For foster homes, this includes history of abuse and neglect allegations while verified with previous child placing agencies, if applicable, and substitute caregiver's licensing variances.

See policy [4114 Required Factors to Consider When Evaluating a Possible Placement](#) and Issues to Consider in Placement Decisions of the Placement Process Resource Guide for additional guidelines.

IMPACT and CLASS History Checks

The Belong Intake Specialist must complete a Residential Child Care Investigations (RCCI) investigation history check of all potential placements using CLASS to consider compliance history. The Belong Placement Coordinator also checks IMPACT for any pertinent abuse or neglect history.

The Belong Intake Specialist must review the results of the history checks and confer with the Belong Permanency Specialist or supervisor if the history checks return results such as:

- Pending licensing investigations.
- Investigations that were closed as reason to believe or unable to determine, or any patterns in the investigation history that cause concern.
- History of licensing violations.

If Residential Child Care Licensing places a general residential operation (GRO), residential treatment center (RTC), or child placing agency (CPA) on probation, Belong must not place a child or youth in that GRO, unless the associate commissioner, or deputy associate commissioner of CPS approves the placement, or a court orders a child or youth placed there (See [4151 Court-Ordered Placements in Unapproved Facilities](#)).

Belong will not place a child or youth in a foster home or straight adopt home with more than six children, unless there is an approved 24-hour awake supervision plan and the Director of Conservatorship Services approves the placement in advance.

If a Child Placing Agency (CPA) places one of its foster home or foster group home's verification on inactive status, Belong must not place a child or youth in that foster home or foster group home.

See [DFPS Rules, 40 T.A.C. §700.1311\(c\)](#).

CLASS Variance Checks

The Belong Intake Specialist must review all licensing variances, including variances pertaining to caregiver ratio, supervision, and training, when determining if the placement can meet the child/youth's individual needs. The Belong Intake Specialist must review and confer with the Belong Permanency Specialist or Belong Permanency Supervisor if the variance checks return results that may impact the placement's ability to meet the child/youth's individual needs. For initial placements, when the Belong Intake Team and DFPS Caseworker or DFPS Supervisor disagree, regional staff must escalate to the Regional Director, or designee, for a placement decision. The Regional Director, or designee, will consult with Belong's Program Director of Case Care.

Heightened Monitoring

[Remedial Order 20-Heightened Monitoring](#)

Belong will follow steps outlined in policy [4211.6 Placements into Operations on Heightened Monitoring \(HM\)](#) when:

- A child is already placed in a child placing agency (CPA), or a general residential operation (GRO), including a residential treatment center (RTC), and the operation is placed on heightened monitoring, **OR**
- For prospective placements, if a GRO, RTC, or CPA is on heightened monitoring at the time of the placement search.

Before placing the child in the placement, the heightened monitoring placement request must be submitted to the CPS regional director of the child's legal region and must receive the CPS regional director's approval in IMPACT. In the absence of the CPS regional director, approval from the CPS director of field or the CPS associate commissioner is required in advance. If the operation is also on probation (in addition to heightened monitoring), the approval of the Regional Director of CPS is also required before placement. This is entered in IMPACT in the *Heightened Monitoring Placement Request* tab in the *Placement* section of the *SUB* stage. This request must include a best interest statement and justification for placement that include child-specific information about why the placement is in the best interest of the child.

For **Heightening Monitoring requests** for Region 8b, please send the request using the following format to:

Kelley Johnson-Davis

Kelley.Johnsondavis@dfps.texas.gov;

512-945-5822

- **Child's Legal Region:**
 - **Child Name:**
 - **Age:**
 - **Person Identification (PID):**
- **Date Placement is Needed:**
- **Court Ordered Placement: (Yes/No)**
- **Child CSA/SVA:**
- **Reason for removal:**
- **Best Interest Statement for Child:**
- **Composition of the Home:**
 - **Placement Name (GRO/CPA)**
 - **Home Name:**
 - **Resource ID:**
- **Open Inv with Detail: (Home Specific) please attach report**

Email Summary of past 2 years closed investigation and citations (Home Specific):

For **1508 requests** please send to:

- Kelley Johnson-Davis: Kelley.Johnsondavis@dfps.texas.gov
- Placement Belong Email: Placementbelong@sjrctexas.org,
- Samantha Uriegas , Belong Director of Placement: suriegas@sjrctexas.org And CC: CBCA, [Crystal Smith](mailto:Crystal.Smith@dfps.texas.gov); crystal.smith@dfps.texas.gov

During Business Hours:

- Please send 1508 and HM requests via email & text to RD for HM, Kelley Johnson-Davis, business phone.
- Please identify in the email subject line and text if it is an emergency (due within 24 hours).

During after Hours/weekends/holidays:

- Please send the 1508 and HM requests by email and phone call to Kelley's number listed above.
- Please identify in the email subject line if it is an emergency (due within 24 hours).

Placements on Probation

If a GRO, RTC, or Emergency Shelter is on probation, then the CPS Associate Commissioner must provide advanced approval prior to placement. Belong Intake Staff must submit the placement request to the Division Administrator for Placement. Once reviewed, it is submitted to the Associate Commissioner for final approval.

Follow the Heightened Monitoring request process stated in the section above after approval is received.

When An Operation is Issued a Placement Hold

A placement hold on an operation is issued by the CPS Director of Conservatorship Services or CPS Director of Heightened Monitoring. The CPS Director of Conservatorship Services will notify the SSCC within 24 hours when a placement hold is issued. Once the SSCC receives notification, they must notify their placement staff immediately or within 24 hours.

If an operation is issued a placement hold, then no children may be placed into that operation.

Exceptional Care Rate

The Exceptional Care Rate is used to secure placement for children and youth in the designated community area with exceptional needs that cannot be met appropriately through use of the blended foster care rate. The SSCC cannot charge DFPS for both the blended rate and the exceptional care rate for the same child/youth on the same day or use the exceptional care rate for SIL Youth under any circumstances. DFPS will authorize use of exceptional care days using a validation process in instances when:

- 1) There is a Court Order that dictates a child specific placement or payment that exceeds the contemplated rate structure of the Blended Rate;
- 2) The child has extraordinary service needs that far exceed the traditional residential childcare settings (e.g., major eating disorders or severe medical/psychiatric needs);
or
- 3) Belong has performed an exhaustive search and placement cannot be located without the use of a child-specific contract whose rate exceeds the contemplated rate structure of the Blended Rate.

The Belong will electronically submit the request to seek approval of the exceptional care rate for **all** youth entering an exceptional care placement after the effective date. Belong should expect a response from the Exceptional Care Quality Assurance Analyst within one to two (1-2) business days of the submission. A third day may be required if the request is for a rate over

\$1,000. If the request is denied, the Exceptional Care Quality Assurance Analyst will submit a written response to Belong detailing the basis for the denial and include a recommendation concerning placement for the subject child. In addition, should the subject child be denied an exceptional care rate, Belong retains and reserves the right to have the contract-approved Third- Party Vendor review the DFPS denial and issue a subsequent opinion and recommendations with respect to placement. This review process shall occur within three (3) days of Belong receiving notice of the denial for the exceptional care rate. This Third-Party recommendation shall be submitted to DFPS for re-consideration concerning the subject child.

Please note that the exceptional care rate cannot be paid until approval is given. If approved, the payment will be from the date the request was submitted. Approvals will not be backdated. If a placement took place prior to submitting for approval, those prior dates will not be considered for payment.

See Appendix B: [Exceptional Foster Care Rate Request- Resource Guide](#)

For additional guidelines, refer to the [Placement Process Resource Guide](#) – Issues to Consider in Placement Decisions.

[4114 Required Factors to Consider When Evaluating a Child or Youth’s Possible Placement.](#)

Children/Youth under SSCC Supervision

*** SSCC Supervision or the use of the Belong House are not placements and should not be considered a placement. It is not in the best interest of children to be in DFPS/SSCC Supervision situations. DFPS and Belong will exhaust efforts to find the best and most

appropriate placement that meets the children’s best interests.***

Belong must establish policies/procedures for safely caring for children/youth and meeting their needs while a placement is being located. Policies/procedures must comply with [CPS Policy 4152.2 Meeting the Needs of a Child or Youth without Placement](#) and all of its sub-items.

Belong will report children under SSCC supervision to DFPS no later than **9:00 am** every day via email to the DFPS Placement team at cwop@dfps.texas.gov, copying the CBCA and CAM. Please title the e-mail “SSCC Supervision for the evening of DATE” This is the date prior to midnight for the overnight supervision that occurred.

If no children were under SSCC Supervision, Belong reports to DFPS that there were **NOT** any children in SSCC Supervision.

If there were children under SSCC Supervision, the Belong Single Point of Contact completes the *SSCC Supervision Daily Log* (excel spreadsheet template) with information on all children supervised by the SSCC overnight (as defined above). The naming convention for the log is “SSCC Supervision Log for DATE”. The date in the log is the date prior to midnight for the overnight supervision that occurred.

- The log is a record of all children supervised overnight on a single date. The log is completed every night a child remains under SSCC Supervision until a placement is found. Logs completed for Friday-Sunday nights are submitted Mondays by 9am following the naming convention for each night.
- If a child in SSCC supervision runs away, the incident must be reported to the DFPS SO placement team and Belong must verify that the runaway protocol was followed or will be followed. (This information is reported by the CPS placement team to the CPS Associate Commissioner.)
- Daily reporting to the DFPS placement team, CBCA and CAM is in addition to and does not take the place of communication between Belong and regional DFPS staff about locating placements as outlined in the operations manual. Transparent communication is essential so that DFPS and the SSCC can work together to meet the needs of the child.

- Individual Shift notes for each child that was under SSCC Supervision.
 - One note per child per 24-hour period. This includes children who spent a partial day in SSCC supervision. Example: A child enters SSCC supervision at 10:00 a.m. and leaves SSCC supervision for whatever reason at 4:00 pm. that same day.
 - The naming convention for shift notes is Belong[Child's first Initial][Last Name]Shift Notes [Date]
 - Shift notes begin once physical possession is obtained by the SSCC.
 - Shift notes must include:
 - Date and time of each shift
 - The child's PID,
 - Legal status,
 - Location name and address,
 - Full names of all staff providing supervision
 - Shift notes will be e-mailed to fclcompliance@dfps.texas.gov and uploaded into OneCase (neudocs) by 10:00 a.m.

By No later than 5:00 pm

The SSCC will send an e-mail to the CAM, copying the CBCA, detailing all the efforts made to secure placement for any child remaining in SSCC supervision.

Note: *Per an allowance of the SSCC to deviate from CPS Policy [4152.1 Plans for a Child or Youth When Placement Is Unavailable](#), if a child or youth in DFPS conservatorship does not have a placement, the child or youth can be supervised by a qualified SSCC staff. The request will be granted to all SSCC employees as long as: (1) SSCC employees are in charge of the children, (2) those employees have appropriate background checks (both of which are required by the statute), and (3) have received all the required training.*

Significant Events or Issues

Related Resources and Policy:

[CPS Handbook §4152.2 Meeting the Needs of a Child or Youth without Placement Child Without Placement Procedures](#)

Belong is to follow policy [4152.2 Meeting the Needs of a Child or Youth without Placement](#) and the Child without Placement Procedures guide (no link available) provided by program. If a significant event or issue arises while supervising a child or youth, staff members and caregivers must notify their supervisor immediately. All significant events and serious incidents must be immediately escalated up the chain of command to the DFPS regional director, using the email subject line *CWOP Serious Incident*.

New Placement and Case Management Referrals

After DFPS determines, with Supervisor and Program Director approval, that the child or youth requires placement in a *paid* foster care setting, the DFPS Worker must decide if the child or youth needs emergency or non-emergency placement.

Before any non-emergency placement change, the DFPS Worker must contact the following people and ask for their recommendations on the subsequent placement:

- Attorney ad litem (AAL);
- Guardian ad litem (GAL); and
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA).

If an emergency placement change does not allow time for the required consultations, the DFPS Worker must notify the AAL, GAL, and CASA as soon as possible, but no more than three (3) business days after the change. The DFPS Worker must notify parents within 24 hours. Legal representation may need to be notified depending on court jurisdiction.

Emergency Paid Placement and Case Management Referral

Source:

[Texas Family Code §262.115](#)

[Texas Family Code §264.107](#)

Related Resource and Policy:

[CPS Handbook §6151.3 Notification Requirements and Schedule](#)

[CPS Handbook §4113.5 Consult the Attorney Ad Litem, Guardian Ad Litem, and CASA Representative](#)

[CPS Handbook §4211.6 Placements into Operations on Heightened Monitoring \(HM\)](#)

[CPS Handbook §4142 Enter the Placement Change Information in IMPACT](#)

[Primary Medical Needs \(PMN\) Resource Guide](#)

[Child Placement Forms page](#)

[CBC 2085 series forms](#)

[Form 2625 Child Caregiver Resource](#)

[DFPS IMPACT Functionality Guide](#)

[CPS Handbook §11210 Meeting the Requirements for Medical and Dental Services](#)

[3 in 30 Resource Guide](#)

[Sexual Incident History Resource Guide](#)

[Appendix B: Emergency Placement Process Flow Charts](#)

[Appendix C: Medical Consenter Chart](#)

[T3C System Blueprint](#)

Texas Child-Centered Care (T3C) System and Placement Resource Guide

See [Appendix C: Emergency Placement Process Flow Charts](#)

The emergency placement process is used when DFPS makes a referral to Belong for a child or youth who is in **immediate** need for paid foster care placement and services **and is not currently served by Belong**. Immediate need for an emergency referral is if placement is needed within seven (7) hours. Therefore, this process will be used for all emergency removals in addition to any child or youth requiring immediate paid foster care placement and services.

For emergency removals, if DFPS does not have physical possession of the child/youth, the Belong Director of Intake and Placement may give approval for the placement coordinator to begin searching for placement. The 4-hour period will only begin once Belong has accepted the referral as complete and DFPS has physical possession of the child/youth. [See Appendix C](#) for a process map, when DFPS need to notify the Belong Intake team that a removal is likely to occur, and the youth(s) will be hard to place.

The section below reflects the specific steps a DFPS Worker must take to request and complete an emergency foster care placement from Belong.

Process	Procedure
<p>Notification & Referral</p>	<p>6151.3 Notification Requirements and Schedule</p> <p>DFPS Worker will contact Belong during regular work hours or after- hours by phone at (210) 904-1137</p> <p>Within one (1) hour of contacting Belong, DFPS worker will send an email to Placementbelong@sjrctexas.org and enter child and family referral in IMPACT. Please refer to the DFPS IMPACT Functionality Guide. If there are any complications with the referral, contact your CBCA. The e-mail subject line will read: (last name, first name of oldest child). The e-mail will include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPSDFPS Worker contact information; • DFPSDFPS Worker supervisor and contact information; • Belong’s Initial Referral Information (can be verbal); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Belong’s Intake Specialist to be assigned as secondary in IMPACT via the SSCC referral; ○ Attachment A form from IMPACT; ○ Belong’s Referral Form for Placement; if applicable. ○ The T3C Recommended Service Package, based on the DFPS workers’ professional judgment. ○ Relevant information to assist with finding placement (i.e. if available removal affidavit, education, medical, up-to-date psychological, etc.) ○ If removal involves a sibling group and kinship placements have been identified for some of the children and not all require a paid placement search, DFPSDFPS worker will clearly identify those that are needing an immediate paid placement. ○ Notification regarding if the child/youth requires a 3-day medical exam (this will also be included in the form 2087ex in the physical health section).

Process	Procedure
	<p data-bbox="480 151 1425 226"><i>Note: If any additional information is needed, Belong will call the DFPS Worker to request the additional information or staffing.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="529 268 1529 1150"> <p data-bbox="529 268 1123 302">• DFPS will enter the following in IMPACT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="652 315 1243 348">○ Open the FSU and SUB stages in IMPACT <li data-bbox="652 357 1529 642">○ Create Belong Child Referral (SUB Stage) and Family Services Referral in IMPACT, and email familyreferralsbelong@sjrctexas.org with a copy of the removal records and affidavit. Within 4 hours, the removing DFPS worker will receive a response from Belong of the name of the Permanency Supervisor to assign secondary to the FSU and SUB stages. See DFPS IMPACT Functionality Guide. <li data-bbox="652 651 1529 844">○ Update the IMPACT Person List to reflect all principles identified in the family structure, household members, and any kinship caregivers, are identified with a principle role on the person list and added to the Family Referral. See DFPS IMPACT Functionality Guide. <li data-bbox="652 869 1471 987">○ IMPACT Alternative Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (form 2087ex); excluding level of care information), <li data-bbox="652 999 730 1033">○ or <li data-bbox="652 1041 1360 1150">○ IMPACT Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care (form 2087; excluding level of care information). <p data-bbox="480 1192 1230 1226"><i>Note: Belong will be made primary no later than the ICM.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="652 1234 1487 1390">○ Belong will determine the Permanency Specialist assignment and will assign them to the FSU and SUB stage and notify DFPSDFPS for the purpose of coordination and collaboration. <p data-bbox="480 1423 1243 1457">Based on the child or youth's needs, the DFPS Worker will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="529 1465 1471 1583">• Notify relevant regional CPS Subject Matter Experts (i.e. Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist, Well-Being Specialist, Education Specialist, and when available Clinical Coordinator); <li data-bbox="529 1591 1477 1667">• When possible, notify the Developmental Disability Specialist prior to the child or youth's removal; and <li data-bbox="529 1675 1477 1709">• Request a staffing with the relevant Subject Matter Experts as needed. <p data-bbox="480 1738 1429 1856">For additional guidance, see Placing Children Who Have Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), Primary Medical Needs (PMN) or Complex Medical Needs.</p> <p data-bbox="480 1864 1451 1927">***Belong will not begin to search for placement without an active SSCC referral and a thorough and descriptive Alternative Application for</p>

Process	Procedure
	<p>Placement (2087ex) or Application for Placement (2087) specific to the child or youth's needs sent via IMPACT.***</p> <p>Belong will have one (1) hour to review the referral and information to determine if it is sufficient for the placement search. If the application for placement does not have sufficient information for the placement search, Belong will e-mail and call CPS Worker/Supervisor to update information. The 4-hour timeframe starts once the referral is accepted as complete by Belong. Belong will advise DFPS by phone and follow-up email as to when the referral is accepted to allow DFPS to coordinate plans for the child/youth.</p> <p>The timeframes associated with placement must take into consideration the best interest of each child/ren and/or youth. Although the timeframes will be followed in most instances, there may be times DFPS and Belong staff will need to work together to ensure best interest of child/ren and youth take precedence.</p> <p>Emergency staffing's may be necessary to ensure all information is being shared between parties. Emergency staffing's can be requested by either DFPS or Belong. Include CBCA on these staffing's.</p> <p>Belong will include DFPS Worker, Supervisor, and Program Director on all correspondence throughout the case.</p>
<p>Belong Placement Options and DFPS Approval</p>	<p>Belong Placement Option</p> <p>No later than seven (7) hours from receipt of notification of need for emergency placement, Belong will provide DFPS Worker with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of a recommended placement and medical consent by phone, followed by an e-mail to the DFPS Worker and Supervisor, or electronically (IMPACT). • Information about the recommended placement will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Placement Name, Address, Phone and Resource ID, if known; ○ Network Provider Name; ○ Placement credential status information including what T3C service packages and add-on services the placement is credentialed to provide. Medical Consenter name and PID, if known; ○ Information regarding other children or youth placed in the home, including if any have a child sexual aggression designation or a victim of child sexual aggression; ○ Education Decision Maker name and PID; and ○ For placement options on Heightened Monitoring, Belong will follow steps outlined in policy 4211.6 Placements into Operations on Heightened Monitoring (HM)

Process	Procedure
	<p>DFPS Placement Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS Worker will evaluate and approve Belong’s recommended placement option and medical consentor within 1 hour of receipt of notification from Belong by telephone (210) 904-1137 or email at Placementbelong@sjrctexas.org and include the Belong Intake Specialist in the email. • Approval of the placement will be assumed if denial is not received within 1 hour. • If there are concerns about the placement recommendation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DFPS Worker must obtain Supervisor, Program Director, and Program Administrator approval to deny placement recommendation. ○ Denial justification must be included and provided to Belong by responding to referral e-mail. ○ During business hours, the DFPS Program Director will contact Belong’s Director of Intake and Placement with the decision. ○ After business hours, the DFPS Program Director will contact Belong’s On-Call Permanency Director with the decision. ○ The CBC Administrator must also be notified. ○ Denial of a placement option may impact the ability of Belong to secure the placement within seven (7) hours. <p>If Belong has not established a placement for a child or youth within seven (7) hours of initial referral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belong will notify DFPS Worker and DFPS Supervisor of status and planned strategy for finding a placement. • DFPS Supervisor will notify the CBC Administrator. • If placement is not identified by Belong within the 7-hour timeframe and the child or youth has been physically transferred to Belong, then the DFPS Worker will provide verbal approval of the placement and medical consentor when placement is secured.
<p>Placement of Child/Youth</p>	<p>If placement is located within four (4) hours of documented emergency placement referral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS Worker will physically transport the child or youth to the placement. • DFPS Worker at the time of placement will complete the documents below, include the CBC 2085 series forms, and will review the information with the caregiver, obtain the caregiver’s signature on the documents and provide copies of the documents to the caregiver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Placement Authorization (Form 2085FC) – to be signed by caregiver and electronic copy provided to Belong.
Process	Procedure

- Designation of Medical Consenter (Form 2085B) - to be signed by consenter and electronic copy provided to Belong.
- Designation of Education Decision-Maker (Form 2085E) - to be signed by decision maker and electronic copy provided to Belong.
- [DFPS Placement Summary Form 2279](#) or [Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b](#) – to be signed by caregiver, copy uploaded into OneCase by DFPS
- Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) from IMPACT - to be signed by all caregivers and copy uploaded into OneCase by DFPS in IMPACT.
- [Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care \(Form K-908-2530\)](#) -review with the child or youth, signed by the caseworker, child or youth and caregiver, provide a copy to the child or youth, and DFPS will upload a signed copy into OneCase in IMPACT within 72 hours and a signed copy in the physical case file.
- Provide a youth 10 years of age or older a copy of the Texas Foster Care Handbook at the time they enter conservatorship.
- INV/FBSS will document the Texas Foster Care Handbook was provided in a contact in IMPACT.
- DFPS will notify the caregiver that the child will need to complete a 3 day medical exam within 3 business days of removal.
- DFPS will inform Belong if an exception to the 3-day medical exam applies. See [3 in 30 Resource Guide](#)
- DFPS will ensure ALL signed placement documents are uploaded to OneCase in IMPACT.

If placement is identified outside the four (4) hours of documented emergency referral:

- DFPS Worker will transport the child or youth to an alternative location coordinated between Belong and DFPS Worker.
- For a child or youth's initial placement (brand new removal), when a placement has **not** been identified, DFPS Worker will remain medical consenter until a placement is identified.
- Since placement is not identified within four (4) hours and Belong has assumed supervision responsibilities of the child or youth and the DFPS Worker is not present at the placement with the caregiver, **the next business day**, after the child or youth's placement, Belong will send to DFPS Worker by e-mail relevant child or youth's placement information identified below.
- DFPS Worker will provide the **placement documents below, include the [CBC 2085 series forms](#)**, to Belong but will not sign the documents (see below for one exception). They are provided for use by Belong when placement is secured.

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Placement Authorization (Form 2085FC) – to be signed by caregiver and electronic copy provided to DFPS. ○ Designation of Medical Consenter (Form 2085B) – to be signed by consenter and electronic copy provided to DFPS. If DFPS will remain medical consenter (e.g. Backup), DFPS caseworker must sign Designation of Medical Consenter Form 2085B and provide to Belong prior to placement. ○ Designation of Education Decision-Maker (Form 2085E) - to be signed by decision maker and electronic copy provided to DFPS. ○ DFPS Placement Summary (form 2279) or Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b – to be signed by caregiver, copy uploaded into OneCase by Belong. ○ Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) from IMPACT - to be signed by all caregivers, copy uploaded into OneCase by Belong. Belong will notify DFPS when this is complete. ○ Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care (Form K-908-2530) – Belong will review with the child or youth, obtain the child or youth’s signature, and sign the form as the caseworker. Belong will obtain the caregiver’s signature, provide a copy to the child or youth, and upload a signed copy into OneCase in IMPACT (per policy may not exceed 72 hours). Belong will notify DFPS when this is complete. DFPS will upload a signed copy into OneCase. DFPS will contact Belong if they do not receive the records timely. ○ Provide a youth 10 years of age or older a copy of the Texas Foster Care Handbook at the time they enter conservatorship. ○ INV/FBSS will document the Texas Foster Care Handbook was provided in a contact in IMPACT. ○ DFPS will inform Belong if an exception to the 3-day medical exam applies. See 3 in 30 Resource Guide ● Belong will notify the caregiver that the child will need to complete a 3-day medical exam within 3 business days. ● Belong will ensure ALL signed placement documents are uploaded into OneCase in IMPACT. <p>For Additional information see the Child Sexual Aggression, Sexual Victimization, and Sexual Behavior Notification section.</p>
IMPACT Documentation	<p>DFPS Worker will, within four (4) hours of verbal referral to Belong:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update Person Information in IMPACT. <p>Belong will, within 12 hours of referral or by 7:00 pm the next calendar day:</p>

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If T3C placement is selected, create the recommended service package in IMPACT. • If T3C placement is selected, create the selected service package in IMPACT. • Create the placement entry in the placement information page of IMPACT and complete documentation in all sections of the placement information page. • Save and submit to placement entry to the DFPS Supervisor. • Create the Medical Consenter entry in IMPACT. • If the placement entry is not documented in IMPACT from Belong within 12 hours of the referral or by 7:00 pm the next calendar day, DFPS Worker will call the Belong Intake Supervisor or Director of Intake and Placement and request placement be documented. • If placement information is not documented in IMPACT within one hour of contact with Belong Worker, DFPS Worker will notify their supervisor. • The DFPS Supervisor will contact the Belong Intake and Placement Director for immediate resolution and will notify CBC Administrator. <p>DFPS Supervisor will, by 5:00 pm the next business day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and approve the placement and medical consenter documentation in IMPACT. • If there is an error, DFPS will send notice of rejection by e-mail to the Belong Intake staff and Intake and Placement Director. <p>DFPS Worker is responsible for ensuring all placement documentation is entered in IMPACT within current policy timeframes.</p> <p>See CPS Handbook policy 4142 Enter the Placement Change Information in IMPACT.</p>

**Additional
Documentation
Shared with
Belong Within 7
Days**

DFPS Worker will provide/complete, within seven (7) days, any remaining placement documentation to Belong including:

- Birth verification/certificate
- Social Security card or number (if available)
- Education portfolio
- Medicaid and STAR Health numbers or qualifying information (if available)
- Any external documentation (i.e. assessments, evaluations, or therapy notes) related to the care of the child or youth
- Removal affidavit
- Add Belong to the e-file notification using the mailbox courtbelong@sjrctexas.org
- Update person characteristics in IMPACT
- Update education log in IMPACT (with as much information as available)
- Update medical/dental page in IMPACT, as applicable

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any requested intake forms from the residential provider <p>Any external forms and written placement information not available in IMPACT should be emailed to Belong at Placementbelong@sjrctexas.org. E-mail must include subject line with “the oldest child or youth’s last name, first name” or “family name.”</p> <p>If a family is currently receiving services through PCS, DFPS worker will terminate any services authorizations in IMPACT under the DFPS contract. DFPS worker will provide service information being provided to family no later than the ICM. Belong will need to immediately re-establish any desired services under their contract.</p>
<p>Within 3 Business Days of Placement & Assessments Due Within 30 Days of Placement</p>	<p>Belong will provide notice of completion of the following by e-mail or written form to both DFPS Worker and Supervisor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the caregiver or residential provider complies with the required 3-day medical screening within 3 business days for all children and youth and that the caregiver provides confirmation and documents of the exam to DFPS worker within 1 business day of completion. Ensure the caregiver scheduled the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment appointment to occur within thirty (30) days in care. Ensure the caregiver schedules and completes the TX Health Steps checkup within thirty (30) days. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If child is placed in a T3C Service Package, ensure that the caregiver is aware that a CANS Assessor will be coordinating and scheduling the CANS assessment. Ensure any child under three years old is referred to Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) if the child is suspected of having a disability or developmental delay as a result of exposure to illegal substances, or the disability or developmental delay requires evaluation prior to their scheduled TX Health Steps check-up. In collaboration with the parent create the temporary visitation plan. Belong Permanency Specialist will file the temporary visitation schedule with the court by the Adversary hearing if required by the court. Bring the temporary visitation plan to the Adversary hearing. Obtain updated Form 2625 Child Caregiver Resource and file with the court no later than the 45-day Status Hearing. Belong Permanency Specialist will provide ICWA Status to DFPS legal representation. <p>DFPS worker will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up on the completion of the 3-day medical exam to ensure it occurs. Enter the 3-day medical exam into IMPACT

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule the first parent-child visit within five days of referral per Texas Family Code 262.115. <p>If a CANS Assessment is not scheduled by the ICM, Belong Permanency Specialist will call caregiver by the 14th day from the child entering into care to ensure an assessment is scheduled.</p>

Hospital Sitting

When Hospital Sitting is Needed at the Time of Removal

If a youth is admitted to the hospital and hospital sitting services are needed at the time of the referral to Belong, the time frame will follow the same as the 4-hour placement timeframe. The following tasks are needed before Belong takes over hospital sitting services:

1. The case needs to be referred to Belong placement Team and the Family Referral mailbox as mentioned on page 28.
2. A staffing between DFPS removal staff and Belong staff needs to be held as soon as possible to understand the needs of the child in the hospital setting. During business hours the Belong Supervisor and DFPS Removing staff will attend the staffing. After hours the staffing will occur with the [Belong Supervisor On-Call](#) and DFPS Removing staff.
3. A Belong Hospital Referral Form will need to be completed and sent to familreferralsbelong@sjrctexas.org and tmorris@sjrctexas.org to initiate hospital sitting at the time of removal.

Removing staff will continue to be primary on the case and primary medical consentor until the ICM is held and the case is transferred.

When Hospital Sitting is Needed After a Placement is Identified

If the youth is admitted to the hospital after placement has been found for the youth and hospital sitting services are needed, Belong will take over hospital sitting within 2 hours. The following tasks need to be completed before Belong assumes hospital sitting services for the youth:

1. Notify the Belong Placement Team that the child will now be hospitalized and will be needing hospital sitting services.
2. A staffing between removal staff and Belong staff will be held as soon as possible to understand the needs of the child in the hospital. During business hours the Belong Supervisor and DFPS Removing staff will attend the staffing. After hours the staffing will occur with the [Belong Supervisor On-Call](#) and DFPS Removing staff.
3. A Belong Hospital Referral Form will need to be completed and sent to familreferralsbelong@sjrctexas.org and tmorris@sjrctexas.org.

If Belong identifies the placement and the youth is in route to placement but needs medical/hospital services, the staff will take the youth to receive medical care and will continue the placement after care is received. Belong only assumes hospital sitting once the child is admitted to the hospital.

If there is a delay in admission for longer than 12 hours a staffing is held to determine what is the best interest of the youth and next steps. Removing staff will contact the Belong Permanency Director during normal business hours and DFPS Program Director or after hours Belong Director on-call and DFPS Program Director on-call to notify them a staffing is needed.

All other delays in placement are the responsibility of the staff placing the youth. For example but not limited to, immediate medical care is needed for the youth, youth refuses placement, etc.

****If there are placement challenges, barriers, or unique circumstances removing staff will work with DFPS staff and Belong Staff to determine next steps and what is in the best interest of the child.**

Kinship Placement and Case Management Referral

The Kinship placement process is used when DFPS makes a referral to Belong for a child or youth when an approved non-verified kinship placement has been secured by the CPI/CPS worker. Follow current policy regarding [4114.1 Preference for Relatives and Other Connections](#). If DFPS does not have an approved kinship home at the time of referral, then follow the [Emergency Paid Placement And Case Management Referral](#) process. CPI/CPS must notify Belong if an approved kinship placement is secured, or a potential kinship placement is being considered, after a referral for paid placement has been made.

****Note if the referral involves a sibling group and any child in the sibling group requires a paid placement, the Paid Placement Process will be followed.**

Process	Procedure
Placement of Child/Youth	<p>DFPS will complete the placement of the child in the kinship placement. This includes providing the caregiver with the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement Authorization (Form 2085KO) – to be signed by caregiver and electronic copy provided to Belong. • Designation of Medical Consenter (Form 2085B) - to be signed by consenter and electronic copy provided to Belong. • Designation of Education Decision-Maker (Form 2085E) - to be signed by decision maker and electronic copy provided to Belong. • DFPS Placement Summary Form 2279 or Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b – to be signed by caregiver, copy uploaded into OneCase by DFPS • Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) from IMPACT - to be signed by all caregivers and copy uploaded into OneCase by DFPS in IMPACT. • Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care (Form K-908-2530) -review with the child or youth, signed by the caseworker, child or youth and caregiver, provide a copy to the child or youth, and DFPS will upload a signed copy into OneCase in IMPACT within 72 hours and a signed copy in the physical case file. • Provide a youth 10 years of age or older a copy of the Texas Foster Care Handbook at the time they enter conservatorship. • INV/FBSS will document the Texas Foster Care Handbook was provided in a contact in IMPACT. • Information about the 3 in 30 included scheduling the 3-day medical exam • Kinship Manual and get the kinship caregiver’s signature on Form 0695 Kinship Caregiver Agreement. • Preliminary Kinship Caregiver Home Assessment form 6587 (if applicable)– CPI/CPS will include DFPS Criminal background checks on all individuals ages 14 and over in the home along with the Preliminary Kinship Caregiver Home Assessment Form. • DFPS will notify the caregiver that the child will need to complete a 3- day medical exam within 3 business days of removal. https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Resource_Guides/Three_in_Thirty.pdf <p>DFPS will ensure ALL signed placement documents are uploaded to OneCase in IMPACT.</p> <p>Provide electronic copies of the placement documents to Belong within 1 business day.</p>
Notification & Referral	<p>After placement has occurred, DFPS Worker will contact Belong during regular work hours or after-hours by sending notification to familyreferralsbelong@sjrctexas.org</p> <p>The e-mail subject line will read: KINSHIP: (last name, first name of oldest child). The e-mail will include the following information:</p>

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS Worker contact information; • DFPS Worker supervisor and contact information; • DFPS will enter the following in IMPACT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open the FSU and SUB stages in IMPACT ○ Create Belong Child Referral (SUB Stage) and Family Services Referral in IMPACT, email familyreferralsbelong@sjrctexas.org with a copy of the removal record and affidavit. Within 4 hours, the removing DFPS worker will receive a response from Belong of the name of the Permanency Supervisor to assign secondary to the FSU and SUB stages. See DFPS IMPACT Functionality Guide. Note: Primary assignment will be made no later than the ICM. <p>DFPS will provide the following documentation via email familyreferralsbelong@sjrctexas.org as a part of the referral packet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal Affidavit and court order (if applicable) • Kinship Referral form 2077, Request for Kinship Services (aka Universal referral Form) • Preliminary Kinship Caregiver Home Assessment form 6587 (if applicable) • Request for Kinship Home Assessment or Services Form 6581 • Placement Authorization (Form 2085KO) – signed by caregiver and electronic copy provided to Belong. • Designation of Medical Consenter (Form 2085B) - signed by consenter and electronic copy provided to Belong. • Designation of Education Decision-Maker (Form 2085E) - signed by decision maker and electronic copy provided to Belong. • DFPS Placement Summary Form 2279 or Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b – signed by caregiver, copy uploaded into OneCase by DFPS and electronic copy provided to Belong • Child Sexual History Report (Attachment A) from IMPACT - signed by all caregivers and copy uploaded into OneCase by DFPS in IMPACT and electronic copy provided to Belong. • Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care (Form K-908-2530) -reviewed with the child or youth, signed by the caseworker, child or youth and caregiver, copy provided to the child or youth, and DFPS will upload a signed copy into OneCase in IMPACT within 72 hours and a signed copy in the physical case file. • Information about the scheduled 3-day medical that was discussed and plan for follow up by caregiver • Provide Form 2625 Child Caregiver Resource if available • Include Belong on the referral for FINDRS

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS will inform Belong if an exception to the 3-day medical exam applies. See 3 in 30 Resource Guide <p>DFPS Worker will, based on the child or youth's needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify relevant regional CPS Subject Matter Experts (i.e. Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist, Well-Being Specialist, and Education Specialist) and when available Clinical Coordinator; • When possible, notify the Developmental Disability Specialist prior to the child or youth's removal; and • Request a staffing with the relevant Subject Matter Experts as needed. <p>NOTE: DFPS will no longer complete a referral for a home study to a DFPS contractor. Belong will be completing that step.</p> <p>Belong will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the Permanency Specialist assignment and will assign them to the FSU and SUB stage and notify DFPS for the purpose of coordination and collaboration. • Use the Preliminary Kinship Caregiver Home Assessment form 6587 (if applicable) to initiate the home study process within 48 hours of referral.
<p>IMPACT Documentation</p>	<p>DFPS worker will: Complete the placement entry in IMPACT and save/submit to their supervisor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update person characteristics in IMPACT. • Update education log in IMPACT (with as much information as available). • Update medical/dental page in IMPACT. • Upload the DFPS Placement Summary Form 2279, the Child Sexual History Attachment A and Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care (Form K-908-2530) in OneCase • Add Belong to the e-file notification using the mailbox courtbelong@sjrctexas.org <p>*DFPS worker is responsible for ensuring all placement documentation is entered in IMPACT within current policy timeframes. See CPS Handbook policy: 4142 Enter the Placement Change Information in IMPACT.</p>
<p>Within 3 Days of Placement & Assessments Due Within 30</p>	<p>DFPS will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up on the completion of the 3-day medical exam to ensure it occurs. • Enter 3-day medical information into IMPACT. Within one (1) business day of the screening,

Process	Procedure
Days of Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule the first parent-child visit within five days per Texas Family Code 262.115 and notify Belong Permanency Specialist so they are able to participate. • Provide Form 2625 Child Caregiver Resource to Belong Permanency Specialist if not provided at referral. <p>Belong will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the caregiver or residential provider complies with the required 3-day medical screening within 3 business days for all children and youth and that the caregiver provides confirmation and documents of the exam to DFPS worker. Ensure the caregiver scheduled the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment appointment to occur within thirty (30) days in care. • Ensure the caregiver schedules and completes the TX Health Steps checkup within thirty (30) days. • Ensure any child under three years old is referred to Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) if the child is suspected of having a disability or developmental delay as a result of exposure to illegal substances, or the disability or developmental delay requires evaluation prior to their scheduled TX Health Steps check-up. • In collaboration with the parent create the temporary visitation plan. • File the temporary visitation schedule with the court by the Adversary hearing if required by the court. • Bring to the temporary visitation plan to the Adversary hearing. <p>If a CANS Assessment is not scheduled by the ICM, Belong Permanency Specialist will call caregiver by the 14th day from the child entering into care to ensure an assessment is scheduled.</p>

When TMC is Dismissed at the Adversary Hearing

If TMC is dismissed at the Adversary Hearing, the SUB and FSU stages will be re-assigned primary to the removing staff for closure or stage progression whichever is needed. The removing staff will be responsible to notify all parties of the dismissal including Belong staff. When determining who will transport the child home, if needed, removing staff and Belong staff will work together to determine the best interest of the child.

*If there are challenges or unique circumstances, please staff with DFPS and Belong staff when needed.

Referrals for Case Management When Placement Is Not Needed Immediately but DFPS Has Obtained Conservatorship

This process is used when DFPS takes conservatorship of a child or youth, but due to the unique circumstances, an emergency placement is not being sought at the time of referral. An example would be when a child or youth is hospitalized. Belong will begin providing case management services upon referral.

Process	Procedure
<p>Notification & Referral</p>	<p>DFPS Worker will contact Belong during regular work hours or after- hours by sending notification to Placementbelong@sjrctexas.org and by phone at (210) 904-1137.</p> <p>The e-mail subject line will read: (NON-EMER HOSPITAL: last name, first name of oldest child). The e-mail will include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS Worker contact information; • DFPS Worker supervisor and contact information; • Provide Belong initial referral information (can be verbal). If an immediate response is needed such as an immediate need for hospital sitting, ensure that Belong Intake Specialist is provided with all the necessary information regarding the immediate case management need. • DFPS will enter the following in IMPACT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open the FSU and SUB stages in IMPACT ○ Create Belong Child Referral (SUB Stage) and Family Services Referral in IMPACT, Belong Intake Specialist will provide the name of the Belong staff to assign secondary on the FSU and SUB stage in IMPACT and DFPS primary on stages in IMPACT. See DFPS IMPACT Functionality Guide. Note: Primary assignment will be made no later than the ICM. ○ Belong will determine the Permanency Specialist assignment and will assign them to the FSU and SUB stage and notify DFPS for the purpose of coordination and collaboration. • For use when the child is ready for placement, complete child’s placement information in IMPACT by creating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alternative Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DFPS Placement Summary Form 2279 and ○ Child Sexual History Attachment A. <p>Based on the child or youth's needs, the DFPS Worker will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify relevant regional CPS Subject Matter Experts (i.e. Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist, Well-Being Specialist, and Education Specialist); • When possible, notify the Developmental Disability Specialist prior to the child or youth's removal; and • Request a staffing with the relevant Subject Matter Experts as needed.

Placements with Special Populations

Placements When Joint Managing Conservatorship is Obtained

Joint Managing Conservatorship (commonly referred to as JMC) is a legal status where two or more parties share the parenting rights and duties related to a child. Examples of some of those rights and duties include, but are not limited to, consent to medical and dental decisions, consent to psychiatric and psychological treatment, access to medical, dental, psychological, and educational records, and the right to confer on decisions about health, education, and welfare. Often these children need placements that can meet their higher acuity needs and the parent is willing to keep the child/youth in the home until a placement can be secured. For these it may be beneficial to have a pre-placement staffing.

If discussion between DFPS and Belong deems a Pre-Placement Staffing would be beneficial, or at the request of either agency, then a staffing will need to be scheduled.

Coordination	<p>Belong will arrange the pre-placement staffing. Pre-placement staffing will usually be conducted by telephone/virtually. However, pre-placement staffing may occur in-person as needed and determined by Belong and DFPS.</p> <p>The Belong Intake and Placement Director will coordinate with appropriate parties to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify scheduling options for pre-placement staffing; and • Work together with the DFPS Worker to assess the appropriateness and level of the child or youth and parent’s participation in the staffing; and • Belong will complete all logistical arrangements (date, time, location, conference call information, notices) for the pre-placement staffing. Belong
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	<p>will give all participants as much prior notice of the pre-placement staffing as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belong or their designee will facilitate the meeting.
Participants	<p>The following participants will be notified of the pre-placement staffing by Belong:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS Worker and Supervisor • Belong Intake Specialist and Supervisor • Belong Permanency Specialist and Supervisor • Child or youth • Parent(s) • Parents' attorney(s) • Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) • Guardian ad litem • Attorney ad litem • Other relevant subject matter experts (i.e., Developmental Disabilities Specialist Nurse, Education Specialist, Well Being Specialist)
Documentation	<p>Belong will record notes from the staffing discussion and ensure DFPS staff receive a copy. Additional copies of the notes can be distributed to participants upon request.</p>

Placing Children Who Have Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), Primary Medical Needs (PMN) or Complex Medical Needs

Placing children or youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), Primary Medical Needs (PMN), or complex medical needs require careful consideration to make the best placement matches to serve the special needs of these children and youth. The [Primary Medical Needs Resource Guide](#) describes the needs of children and youth who have PMN. The Foster and Licensed Facility Placements Process Resource Guide describes the needs of children and youth who have IDD needs.

New Placement with No Time for the PMN Meeting Before the Removal

Process	Procedure
<p>New Placement with No Time for the PMN Meeting Before the Removal</p>	<p>When a PMN child is initially removed after hours or on weekends and the child's care needs are unclear, the child's caseworker may contact the child's healthcare provider after hours, or have the child seen in the local ER when appropriate (examples: diabetic child with insulin pump, child on a ventilator or with other special medical equipment).</p> <p>Star Health does have a benefit available on a case by case basis. This benefit provides an observation stay in an inpatient setting for up to 48 hours, when placement or supports are not immediately in place during an emergent transition. If the stay exceeds 48 hours, staff must request an authorization for the inpatient stay, going back to the date of admission.</p> <p>The caseworker follows the processes below to access special support services. If the caseworker is unable to safely transport the child, the caseworker may contact an ambulance to transport the child.</p>
<p>Special Medical Transportation or Nursing Support</p>	<p>If the child requires special medical transportation (including ambulance transport) or nursing support during the move the caseworker requests assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the move occurs before the PMN meeting access through the regional Well-Being Specialist • If after hours, or on holidays or weekends, by contacting STAR Health at 1-866-912-6283. <p>If the placement is occurring outside of regular business hours or on a holiday, prior to placement, an immediate staffing will take place between DFPS and Belong, involving the Director level or above.</p> <p>This staffing is to ensure all of the child's medical needs will be met until a PMN staffing can take place with the Well Being Specialist. This staffing will not replace the required PMN staffing with the Well Being Specialist.</p> <p>For additional information see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Medical Needs Resource Guide. • CPS Policy 4117 Specific Placement Considerations for Children or Youth Who Have Primary Medical Needs and the subsections.

New Placement Referral with Time for PMN Staffing

DFPS workers should follow the process outlined in [New Placement And Case Management Referrals](#) process when requesting an paid foster care placement from Belong for a child with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (IDD), Primary Medical Needs (PMN) or Complex Medical Needs.

Process	Procedure
<p>Upon Placement Referral</p>	<p>When planning the removal of a child with PMN in a non-urgent situation, the caseworker should contact the Well-Being Specialist and placement staff to set up a PMN Meeting before removal, to plan for the safe transportation and placement of the child.</p> <p>In addition to the placement referral, the DFPS worker will upon placement referral or prior to the removal, when possible, coordinate a telephone staffing with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS supervisor and Program Director, • Regional CPS Subject Matter Experts (Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist, Well-Being Specialist), • Belong Intake Placement Specialist <p>To discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS is responsible for securing hospital sitting services either via DFPS contractor or use of DFPS staff until the child is released from the hospital and ready for placement. • Once the child has been placed within the Belong network of care, if there is a future need for hospital sitting then Belong will be responsible for meeting that need either via Belong contracted service provider or Belong staff. • The ability of available placement options to meet the child or youth's specific needs.
<p>After a placement for a child <i>with</i> PMN has been recommended by Belong</p>	<p>DFPS worker will contact the Well Being Specialist (WBS) to request a PMN Staffing to develop a plan to address the medical services, equipment and other needs during the transition to the new caregivers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WBS will coordinate, facilitate, and document the PMN staffing in IMPACT. • The staffing will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Belong Placement Specialist, ○ Selected caregivers ○ Their provider ○ Medical staff if applicable ○ Belong Permanency Specialist ○ Belong Permanency Supervisor and Permanency Director ○ Regional CPS Subject Matter Experts (Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist, Well-Being Specialist) ○ STAR Health and previous caregivers (when appropriate).

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PMN staffing must occur prior to placement if possible. If not possible, a staffing should occur and must be requested within 24 hours following the emergency placement.
<p>After a placement for a child with significant medical issues, but <i>not</i> PMN has been recommended by Belong</p>	<p>Belong Placement Coordinator or Permanency Specialist may contact the Well Being Specialist to request a Medical Staffing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WBS will coordinate, facilitate, and document the Medical Staffing. The staffing will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belong Placement Specialist Selected caregivers Their provider Medical staff if applicable, Belong Permanency Specialist Belong Permanency Supervisor and Permanency Director Regional CPS Subject Matter Experts (Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist Well- Being Specialist) STAR Health and previous caregivers (when appropriate). The staffing must occur prior to placement if possible. If not possible, a staffing should occur immediately following the emergency placement. When there is no time for a Medical Staffing prior to placement, contact the Well Being Specialist and/or Nurse Consultant to plan for a safe transfer of the child.
<p>After a placement for a child <i>with</i> IDD has been recommended by Belong</p>	<p>DFPS Removal Worker will coordinate with Belong Placement Specialist or Permanency Specialist for a staffing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staffing will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belong Placement Specialist Selected caregivers Their provider Medical staff if applicable Belong Permanency Specialist Belong Permanency Supervisor and Permanency Director Regional CPS Subject Matter Experts (Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist Well- Being Specialist) STAR Health and previous caregivers (when appropriate). The staffing must occur prior to placement if possible.

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DFPS Education Specialist should be included in the staffing as appropriate. • If possible, the staffing should occur prior to the child or youth arriving in his or her new placement, but no later than two business days after the child or youth's placement.

Placement Change Process for IDD or PMN

Belong Permanency Specialists will request a non-emergency paid foster care placement or placement change from their placement team for a child with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (IDD) or Primary Medical Needs when needed.

Process	Procedure
<p>Upon Placement Referral</p>	<p>As a part of the placement request process, the Belong Permanency Specialist will within 24 hours of the placement referral, coordinate a staffing to discuss the specific needs of the child or youth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belong will invite the WBS to the staffing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regional CPS Subject Matter Experts (Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist, Well-Being Specialist), ○ Belong Intake Specialist, • To discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DFPS is responsible for securing hospital sitting services either via DFPS contractor or use of DFPS staff until the child is released from the hospital and ready for placement. ○ Once the child has been placed within the Belong network of care, if there is a future need for hospital sitting then Belong will be responsible for meeting that need either via Belong contracted service provider or Belong staff. ○ The ability of available placement options to meet the child or youth's specific needs.
<p>After a placement for a child <i>with</i> PMN has been recommended by Belong</p>	<p>Belong Placement Specialist or Permanency Specialist will contact the Well Being Specialist to request a PMN Staffing to develop a plan to address the medical services, equipment and other needs during the transition to the new caregivers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WBS will coordinate, facilitate, and document the PMN staffing in IMPACT. • The staffing will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Belong Placement Specialist
Process	Procedure

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selected caregivers ○ Previous caregivers ○ Their provider ○ Medical staff if applicable ○ Belong Permanency Specialist ○ Belong Permanency Supervisor and Permanency Director ○ STAR Health. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The staffing must occur prior to placement if possible. If not, a staffing should occur immediately following the placement. ● When there is no time for a PMN Staffing prior to placement, contact the Well Being Specialist and/or Nurse Consultant to plan for a safe transfer of the child. ● For PMN children already in DFPS custody who experience a change in placement after hours, the Belong Permanency Worker can contact STAR Health Member Services’ Nurse Wise medical advice line at 1-866-912-6283, option 7 (available 24/7, after hours, holidays and weekends). <p>For additional information please see Primary Medical Needs Resource Guide.</p>
<p>After a placement for a child <i>with significant medical issues, but not PMN</i> has been recommended:</p>	<p>Belong Placement Specialist or Permanency Specialist may contact the Well Being Specialist to request a Medical Staffing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The WBS will coordinate, facilitate, and document the Medical Staffing in IMPACT. ● The staffing will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Belong Placement Specialist ○ Selected caregivers ○ Their provider ○ Medical staff if applicable, ○ Belong Permanency Specialist ○ Belong Permanency Supervisor and Director of Permanency ○ Regional CPS Subject Matter Experts (Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist ○ Well- Being Specialist) ○ STAR Health and previous caregivers (when appropriate). ● The staffing must occur prior to placement if possible. If not possible, a staffing should occur immediately following the placement.
<p>Process</p>	<p>Procedure</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When there is no time for a Medical Staffing prior to placement, contact the Well Being Specialist and/or Nurse Consultant to plan for a safe transfer of the child.

After a placement for a child *with* IDD has been recommended:

Belong Placement Coordinator or Permanency Specialist will coordinate staffing.

- The staffing will include:
 - Belong Placement Coordinator
 - Selected caregivers
 - Their provider
 - Medical staff if applicable,
 - Belong Permanency Specialist
 - Belong Permanency Supervisor and Director of Permanency
 - Regional CPS Subject Matter Experts (Nurse, Developmental Disability Specialist
 - Well- Being Specialist)
 - STAR Health and previous caregivers (when appropriate).
- The staffing must occur prior to placement if possible. If not possible, a staffing should occur immediately following the placement.

Placement of Children When CVS is Not Obtained/Temporary Placement is Needed

Under special situations, a child or youth may need a temporary, paid foster care placement in South Central & Hill Country area. A child or youth's legal region may not be from the South Central & Hill Country area catchment area. If this occurs, South Central & Hill Country area removal staff will refer the child or youth needing paid foster care placement to Belong per current protocols outlined in [Emergency Paid Placement and Case Management referrals](#).

Belong will then secure temporary, paid foster care placement for the child or youth with the following considerations:

- If the child or youth has emergency medical needs, then the CPI Worker will ensure written consent is received from the child or youth's parent/managing conservator, as needed;
- If the child or youth is hospitalized, the CPI Worker will work with the child's insurance provider to cover the expenses related to the days spent in the hospital.
 - If a child or youth needs a hospital sitter, CPI will request and pay for this service.
 - If a foster parent needs to be trained or needs time to bond with the child or youth while the child or youth is in the hospital, CPI will notify Belong and Belong will determine a proper course of action.

Belong will request payment for placement through current regional processes established with local child welfare boards. If payment is denied by a local child welfare board, then Belong will request a Manual Payment (form 4116) from CPS.

Note: Unless DFPS has custody or is in the process of obtaining custody, CPI maintains

possession of the child in DFPS regions and is responsible for all related care activities, including transport (e.g. an out-of-state child where CPI has no custody and not planning on obtaining but reaches out to Belong for a courtesy placement). The 4- and 7-hour CBC contract requirements do not apply for youth in this section, as this is courtesy assistance from Belong and the child/youth is not under the Belong continuum of care.

Placing Children or Youth in Certain Institutions

CPS and Belong will work together when considering and requesting placement of a child or youth in one of the following settings:

- CPS-Licensed Institutions for children or youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- State Supported Living Centers;
- Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) Residential Placements;
- Nursing Facilities; or
- Intermediate Care Facilities for the Intellectual Disabilities/Related Conditions (ICF/IID-RC).

Placing a child or youth in a certain institution should only take place when no other less restrictive placement is available that can meet the child or youth's needs.

Placement in a certain institution requires careful consideration, assessment, and justification. CPS and Belong will coordinate with the regional Developmental Disability Specialist to carefully assess the child or youth's specific needs and exhaust all least restrictive placement options before recommending a child or youth's placement in a certain institution.

Depending on the type of institutional placement requested for the child or youth, the CPS Worker must follow current CPS processes as provided for in the [Foster and Licensed Facility Placements Process Resource Guide](#). Also see [CPS Policy 4118 Additional Actions for Placing Children with Intellectual or Development Disabilities](#).

Special note: When an HCS placement is having issues with a child/youth and is not able to meet their needs:

- The Belong Specialist must contact the Local Intellectual Developmental Disability Authority (LIDDA) and the [Developmental Disability Specialist \(DDS\)](#) to seek another Home Community Service (HCS) placement.
- This possible disruption/change in placement should go through the DFPS DDS, *not* Belong.
- Belong will continue to provide case management services.

Psychiatric Hospitalization of Children or Youth in CPS Conservatorship

There may come a time when a child or youth in CPS conservatorship is determined to be a danger to himself or herself or others and is admitted to a psychiatric hospital. Hospitalization is an intervention designed to meet the child or youth's acute mental health needs and is not a long-term intervention. Admission to a psychiatric hospital is **not a placement** and should not be treated as or referred to as such. To ensure a child or youth's needs are met during this time, there are very specific steps Belong Workers must take immediately following notification of hospitalization (see [CPS Policy 6151.2](#)).

- When Belong Worker finds out a child or youth in conservatorship is admitted into a psychiatric hospital the Belong Specialist will immediately notify hospitalizationbelong@sjrctexas.org.
- Belong Clinical Coordinator will track hospital admissions and will identify any placement needs that may arise after hospitalization and will seek subsequent placements as needed.
- Belong will record the hospitalization as a temporary absence from placement in the Temporary Absence tab in IMPACT.
- CPS hospital liaison staff may be a resource to Belong for information and updates about a child or youth's needs or care while hospitalized. They may not search for placement for children or youth from Belong designated community areas.
- The Belong Caseworker will follow guidelines listed in [Psychiatric Hospital Contact Protocol](#) and e-mail the required information to all required parties.

New Removal - Child/youth is in Psychiatric Hospital at time of removal:

- DFPS obtains TMC or Joint Managing Conservatorship (JMC) of child
- Paid placement needed upon discharge a placement referral will be initiated and information regarding the urgency of the placement need will be provided
- CPI asks the hospital if they are willing to give us placement days
 - If "yes," Belong will request placement days through Star Health, Regional WBS or with the assistance of the Psychiatric Hospital Liaison and CPI should follow Scenario 1 (see below).
 - If "no," follow the [New Placement and Referral Process](#).

*If newly removed child remains in the psychiatric hospital past the day DFPS obtains conservatorship, DFPS enters the hospitalization in IMPACT in the Placement Page.

*DFPS will ensure that the proper documentation in IMPACT will be entered timely so that eligibility for STAR Health benefits start.

If Hospital Agrees to Placement Days but Star Health Does Not

If Belong requests placement days through Star Health, but Star Health refuses to grant the placement days, at that point, the referral would upgrade to an Emergency and the 4-hour/7-hour timeframes will be initiated.

Placement into an Intensive Psychiatric Stabilization Program (IPSP)

Belong will follow the Intensive Psychiatric Stabilization Program (IPSP) guidelines provide by their DFPS Contract Administration Manager (CAM).

- Belong will work with DFPS placement team to secure an IPSP placement. Belong will send the child or youth's referral packet directly to the DFPS IPSP Referrals Mailbox:
DFPSIPSPREFERRALS@dfps.texas.gov
- Within 1 business day, DFPS IPSP Program Specialist will review the child or youth's referral packet and determine if the child meets eligibility criteria for IPSP in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 572.001 (c-2).
- If the child meets eligibility requirements and is accepted into an IPSP the program specialist will send confirmation e-mail to Belong's intake team, field staff, and IPSP provider.
- The DFPS IPSP program specialist will complete a Child Specific contract.
 - A Resource ID will be provided once the Child Specific Contract (CSC) is complete. Belong will manually enter the placement as non-FPS paid until RID is provided by IPSP Program Specialist.
 - The DFPS IPSP program specialist will send the approved CSC to Belong's intake team, field staff, and IPSP provider.

To enter the DFPS placement, the SSCC Child Referral will need to be ended and restarted once the child exits the IPSP placement. Questions related to placement entry can be referred to the Community Based Care Administrator.

Please Note: The Belong will not be reimbursed the foster care blended rate for any placement into IPSP.

Requesting Exceptional Foster Care

After approval of the sub-acute program is received, the Belong may submit a request to use the Exceptional Foster Care Rate to pay for placement (see [Exceptional Foster Care Rate Request Process Appendix](#)).

It is important to include the CBCA on all Exceptional Care requests.

Please Note: The Belong will not be reimbursed the foster care blended rate for any placement into the Sub-Acute program.

When a Youth in Substitute Care is Pregnant or Parenting

The following is to address a youth parent in CPS' managing conservatorship who has a baby while in care or enters care with a baby.

The term *baby* refers to any youth parent's child regardless of the child's age.

See [Youth or Are Pregnant or Parenting in DFPS Conservatorship Resource Guide](#)

See [Procedures for IMPACT Data Entry Associated with Youth Parents in DFPS Conservatorship - 2450](#)

For circumstances that the procedures above indicate a need for a C-PB stage, Belong Permanency Specialist will:

- Contact SWI and request an Intake C-PB stage be created
- Belong Permanency Specialist can stage progress the open a Sub C-PB stage in IMPACT
 - *Note: If the youth is placed in a T3C Service Package, see the Texas Child-Centered Care (T3C) System and Placement Resource Guide for more information about entering a C-PB into IMPACT.*

When a mother in an Open CVS Case is Pregnant 6300 Services to Families

Visual representation of the pregnant and parenting process map



1. Mothers with an open CVS case becomes pregnant – two months prior to due date, Belong contacts DFPS Investigations POC.
2. Send a staffing request email to Rebecca.boubel@dfps.texas.gov. Include case name, Belong staff contact info, and expected due date.
3. Staffing is coordinated by DFPS Investigations POC, Rebecca Boubel, who will also invite a child safety specialist.
4. Staffing notes completed by DFPS POC and provided to all parties. Belong will input into IMPACT.
5. If parental rights are termed, a general intake should be called in if there are any concerns. Staffing can be completed if needed following the Same process.

Request for Placement into a CBC Catchment Area

Related Resources and Policy:

[Community-Based Care DFPS site](#)

[Request for Placement Into CBC Area Form 1508](#)

This process outlines the steps DFPS Caseworkers from outside the CBC area must take to request a paid foster care placement or adoption placement for a child or youth, who is legally from another part of the state, into a CBC Catchment area.

This process does not include:

- SSCC requests for placement into a different CBC catchment area; or
- Youth who desire a SIL placement.

Requesting CPI/CPS Region will

- DFPS workers will complete each section of [Request for Placement Into CBC Area Form 1508](#) and staff with their supervisor.
- The completed form will be emailed to receive approval from their chain of command: Supervisor/Program Director/Program Administrator/Regional Director.
- If the requesting Regional Director approves the child's placement located in the CBC catchment area, the Regional Director will email the completed [Request for Placement Into CBC Area Form 1508](#) to Placementbelong@sjrctexas.org and Samantha Uriegas at suriegas@sjrctexas.org and cc the Community-Based Care Administrator (CBCA) for that catchment area.

Belong will

- If the Placement Director of Belong agrees with the placement, she will notify the requesting Regional Director via email and cc the CBCA and assigned SSCC staff to provide courtesy supervision.
- If there is a disagreement about the child's placement into the CBC catchment area, Belong Leadership or requesting Regional Director can email the CBCA requesting a staffing on the case. The CBCA will set up a resolution staffing with the following in attendance:
 - Belong Regional Vice President
 - Belong Placement Director
 - Requesting Area Regional Director
 - Region 8 Regional Director

For all contact information on CBCA's and Belong Leadership please visit the Contact CBC section on the [Community-Based Care DFPS site](#).

Placement for Children from Other Regions Who

Are Recovered in an SSCC Catchment Area and SSCC Youth Recovered in Legacy Regions

This process primarily pertains to youth who have run away and are recovered. These types of situations are unique in their circumstances and decision-making regarding placement or temporary placement. Primary considerations must include child/youth safety and what is in the child/youth's best interest. The Belong and DFPS Legacy areas must work together to support children/youth in DFPS Conservatorship as needed to ensure their safety and well-being. **The 4- or 7-hour CBC contractual requirements do not apply for children/youth in this section, as this is assistance from the Belong.**

Possible scenarios include, but are not limited to:

- Belong child/youth recovered in a legacy region
- Legacy child/youth recovered in a CBC catchment area

Belong child/youth recovered in other CBC catchment areas will be covered in an agreement between the SSCC in that area and Belong.

When the circumstance does not support the child/youth being able to return to their legal region/catchment area immediately, a collaboration between DFPS legacy region and the Belong is required to develop a plan that meets the child/youth's immediate needs, including the possible need for securing temporary placement.

Circumstances that may require a temporary placement for the child/youth may include, but are not limited to:

- Recovery at a late hour and a distance from Legal Region/Catchment that would not support safe return at the immediate time of recovery.
- Weather conditions in either recovery or legal region/catchment that do not support a safe return to the Legal Region/Catchment at the immediate time of recovery.

Those involved in planning may include:

- Legal Region/Catchment DFPS/Belong Regional Director or equivalent depending on Stage I or II
- Recovery Region/Catchment DFPS/Belong Regional Director or equivalent depending on Stage I or II
- Belong Intake Director
- Community-Based Care Administrator

Note: On-Call DFPS and Belong staff would need to be involved in the planning after hours and on weekends or holidays.

Options to consider in resolving placement needs include, but are not limited to:

- Legal Region SSCC secures in-network placement in the recovery region if they have an available contract with an opening.
- Legal Region SSCC seeks assistance from Recovery Region's Centralized Placement Unit (CPU) for temporary placement.

- If this is the plan, Recovery Region Program Director facilitates the referral to CPU for assistance.
 - Legal Region CPU requests assistance from recovery designated community area SSCC for temporary placement.
 - Region 1 Panhandle area – Saint Francis Ministries Intake
 - 806-381-3573
 - TXreg1placement@st-francis.org
 - Region 2 Big Country & Texoma area – 2INgage Care Management
 - 877-254-6135
 - CMD@2ingage.org
 - Region 3b Metroplex West area – Our Community Our Kids (OCOK) Intake
 - 844-777-OCOK (6265)
 - Intake@oc-ok.org
 - Region 8b South Central & Hill Country area – Belong Intake
 - (210) 904-1137
 - Placementbelong@sjrctexas.org

The expectation for these types of temporary placements is that they are temporary and will **not** require multiple nights for placement. The Legal Region or the Legal Region’s BELONG will secure placement for the child/youth the following day after the child/youth is recovered and facilitate a least restrictive placement. In instances when DFPS cannot reimburse for placements that are less than 24 hours, payment will be made at the Emergency Shelter rate through Form 4116.

IMPACT Documentation for the Temporary Placement Would be as Follows:

	The placement has a DFPS contract only	The placement has both SSCC and DFPS contract	The placement has an SSCC contract only
Youth Legal Region is SSCC Catchment	Community-Based Care Administrator (CBCA) should be contacted and will aid in placement documentation. Payment will be directly paid to the provider and not through the SSCC. *See documentation steps below.	Placement documented under SSCC network and paid via 3-tiered placement under SSCC contract.	Placement documented under SSCC network and paid via 3-tiered placement.

	The placement has a DFPS contract only	The placement has both SSCC and DFPS contract	The placement has an SSCC contract only
Youth's legal region is a legacy region	Placement documented under DFPS contract and paid via 2-tiered placement.	Placement documented under DFPS contract and paid via 2-tiered placement.	CBCA should be contacted and will aid in placement documentation. Have the SSCC provide you with the specific Resource ID (RID) for the organization that only has an SSCC contract. Payment will then need to be requested for the organization using Form 4116 and will be made to the provider for the emergency shelter rate.
	The placement has a DFPS contract only	The placement has both SSCC and DFPS contract	The placement has an SSCC contract only

*Steps for CBCA to initiate placement documentation for SSCC Youth placed in DFPS only contracted placement.

- End placement referral to SSCC.
- Add placement to IMPACT under legacy contract (two-tiered placement).
- Notify primary worker and supervisor that placement entry has been started and they need to document placement discussion information and save and submit to supervisor for approval.
- Complete new referral to the SSCC to re-establish referral.

**Steps for CBCA to initiate placement documentation for Legacy Youth placed in SSCC only contracted placement

- On the Placement page, select Placement type as Non-FPS Paid.
- Then select placement resource using the RID. This should result in a two-tiered placement entry.
- Notify primary worker and supervisor that placement entry has been started and they need to document placement discussion information and save and submit to supervisor for approval.

IMPACT will not generate payment if placements are started and ended on same date.

- If this occurs, the SSCC or DFPS will notify the CBCA that a temporary placement for placement services across catchment boundaries that started and ended on the same date.

- The CBCA will verify the circumstances and contact the Contract Administration Manager (CAM) to request that payment be requested using Form 4116 at the Emergency Shelter rate.
- All placements that meet these criteria of having a start date and end date on the same date payment using Form 4116 should be directed to the provider.

DFPS Policy Regarding Recovery of a Runaway Child/Youth:

- [6460 When a Child or Youth is Missing from DFPS Conservatorship](#)
- [Locating Missing Children in DFPS Conservatorship-Resource Guide](#)
- [4280 Temporary Absence from Paid Placement](#)
- [Runaway/Missing Youth And Victims of Human Trafficking Resource Guide](#)

Initial Coordination Meeting

The Initial Coordination Meeting (ICM) is an internal, collaborative process between DFPS and Belong that focuses on the unique, individualized needs of the child or youth and outlines services to address those needs. The ICM process seeks to share all relevant information about a child or youth in CPS conservatorship who requires a new emergency placement within Belongs provider network. Relevant information includes assessments, evaluations, medical reports, recommended services, and all other information that pertains to the child or youth’s individual needs. During the ICM, DFPS and Belong jointly identify the child or youth’s initial and concurrent permanency goals.

The ICM takes the place of the traditional post-removal staffing.

Process	Procedure
Referral	<p>DFPS Removal worker at removal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete as much of the Removal Checklist as possible. • Complete Page 1-4 (up to the Discussion Points) of the CBC Initial Coordination Meeting (ICM) form. • Send ICM form to Belong ICM mailbox at casecarebelong@sjrctexas.org to be set for staffing
Coordination	<p>The Belong Family Engagement Specialist will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host the ICM and will coordinate all meeting logistics • Send calendar invite to participants with a meeting date, time, and location (virtual options are recommended) • Ensure all relevant participants are invited to the meeting; and • Provides notice (2 business days) of the ICM to all participants.

<p>Participants</p>	<p>At a minimum, the following participants will be notified of the upcoming ICM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal Worker, Supervisor and PD • Belong Placement Coordinator (if paid placement was required) • Belong Permanency Specialist and Permanency Supervisor • Belong Kinship Specialist and Supervisor, if placement is kinship • Paid Placement Provider • Other CPS/Belong staff or subject matter experts as needed (i.e. Developmental Disabilities Specialist, Nurse, Education Specialist, Well Being Specialist) • Additional CPS staff may be included in the notification • e-mail (i.e. DFPS Legal Representation)
<p>Documentation</p>	<p>During the ICM, the Belong Family Engagement Specialist will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record notes from the meeting discussion on the ICM form, including but not limited to the primary and concurrent permanency goals for the child or youth. • Gain information about the family to engage the family in a Single Case Plan Meeting; and provide the status, if any, of the family's agreement to participate in a Single Case Plan Meeting. • DFPS staff will upload into OneCase all external documentation so it is accessible to Belong that has not already been provided including, but not limited to, removal affidavit, diligent search results for relatives and/or parents, immunization records, birth records, birth certificates, social security cards, medical/dental reports or records, school records, progress notes, assessments, evaluations, etc. <p>After the ICM, the Belong Family Engagement Specialist will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record the ICM as a contact in the Family Substitute care (FSU) stage, Contact Detail page in IMPACT; • Ensure the notes from the meeting are recorded in the Contact Detail Narrative; and • Send the ICM notes to all participants in the meeting and those invited but were not in attendance.

Case Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary assignment of the FSU and SUB stages to Belong will take place at the ICM if they have not been transitioned previously. • DFPS will remain secondary until the adversary hearing and all INV or FBSS tasks have been completed. • See case transfer process under Case Documentation section for physical transfer of cases and electronic assignment.
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Foster Care Assistance

Foster Care Assistance consists of daily care (such as food, clothes and shelter) and medical coverage provided through Title IV-E or medical assistance only (MAO) foster care. DFPS Rules 40 TAC §700.315

Applying for Foster Care Assistance

DFPS worker is responsible for completing the initial Foster Care Assistance Application in IMPACT and submitting it to the foster care eligibility specialist. This includes sending the required documentation.

Determining Eligibility

The DFPS Foster Care Eligibility Specialist has the following roles in determining eligibility:

- Obtain birth verification.
- Verifies the child’s Social Security number.
- Searches other systems to obtain the child and family income and resource information.
- Processes the Foster Care Assistance Application and records in IMPACT.
- Maintains the eligibility file.
- Please see [CPS Policy 1500 Eligibility for Child Protective Service](#) for additional information regarding foster care assistance eligibility requirements.

Annual Review of Eligibility

DFPS must review the child’s eligibility for IV-E or Medicaid at least once every 12 months while the child is in foster care. The Belong Permanency Specialist will receive an IMPACT *Task To-Do* when a foster care review is due for the child. To complete the review, the Belong Permanency Specialist must:

- Complete the Foster Care Review in IMPACT and submit it to the assigned foster care eligibility specialist.
- If requested, provide copies of all child-specific court orders since the previous review or initial determination.
- Send the eligibility specialist documentation of the child’s citizenship or alien status, if new documentation has been obtained since the previous foster care review or initial

eligibility determination.

DFPS must annually review continued eligibility for older youth, 18 or older, who are in extended foster care.

- The Belong Permanency Specialist will receive an IMPACT *Task To-Do* when the review is due.
- The Belong Permanency Specialist must:
 - Confirm that the young adult is meeting one or more of the education and work-related criteria
 - Provide verification to the eligibility specialist.

For additional information see CPS Handbook Policy [10421 Eligibility for Extended Foster Care](#)

If the annual eligibility review is not completed in response to the IMPACT “To Do” the regional eligibility specialist will receive a monthly data warehouse report and send a notice to the primary worker and supervisor listing the children who have an annual review that is due. If there continues to be no response, the regional eligibility specialist will then send the report of pending reviews to the Permanency Director.

For additional information see CPS Handbook policy [1514 Annual Review of Eligibility](#).

Obtaining Certified Birth Certificates and Screen-Printing Birth Records

A Belong Permanency Specialist should always attempt to obtain a birth certificate from the child’s parents, relatives, or guardian instead of requesting a copy of the birth certificate through the Birth Verification System (BVS) system. If a Belong Permanency Specialist obtains a copy of the birth certificate, he or she submits it to the eligibility specialist to serve as documentation of a child’s birth and citizenship or alien status when submitting the documentation for the Foster Care Assistance Application.

Please refer to CPS Policy [1520 Obtaining Certified Birth Certificates and Screen Printing Birth Records](#) to learn more regarding which type of birth verification is required for specific case management circumstances and the documentation required to support the request.

The Foster Care Eligibility Specialist is the subject matter expert that can assist in getting birth certificates. Please refer to CPS Policy [1521 Requesting Certified Birth Certificates](#).

The DFPS points of contact for Region 8b birth certificates are [Foster Care Eligibility Specialists](#).

Beginning in June 2019, the request for birth certificates for youth **who turn age 15** are handled at CPS State Office. The certified copy (or original) birth certificate, photocopy of the birth certificate, and a cover memo with instructions will be mailed to the Belong Point of Contact. The Belong Permanency Specialist will deliver the birth certificate to the youth in person and have them sign [Form 2527 Personal Documents Checklist - 15](#) or [Form 2528 – Personal Documents Checklist - 18](#). In addition, the worker will check the new indicator box on the Child’s Plan of Service in IMPACT.

Any birth certificate requests that do not meet CPS Policy [1520 Obtaining Certified Birth Certificates and Screen Printing Birth Records](#) guidance prior to the child turning 15 will require Belong completing the request for the certificate and providing any funds needed.

The Belong Point of Contact for birth certificate related issues is BirthCertificateRequestbelong@sjrctexas.org

Requesting a Social Security Card

When a Social Security Card is needed for a youth in foster care, the Belong Staff will send an email to the SSI mailbox to request a Social Security Card for a foster youth in care.

SSI Mailbox: R08SSICOORDINATOR@dfps.texas.gov

After Belong staff sends a request to the SSI mailbox, DFPS SSI staff will provide the SSA-5 form to Belong staff. Belong staff will provide the following to the SSI mailbox to request the Social Security Card:

- SSA-5 Form- needs to be completed and signed by the caseworker. If youth is over 18 and in foster care, youth will need to sign the SSA-5 form.
- Court Orders need to be provided for the child. One of the three examples listed below need to be returned with the request. Copies of court orders are sufficient, but they must be signed.
 - Original Petition
 - Order for Protection
 - Removal Affidavit,
OR
 - Temporary Order following Adversary Hearing
OR
 - Order of Termination
- If this is an original request, meaning the first time a youth has requested a social security card, a copy of the birth certificate will need to be provided.

Social Security cards will be delivered to the DFPS Pickwell Office headquarters. SSI DFPS staff will contact Belong staff to pick up the Social Security Cards at the DFPS Pickwell Office. Belong staff must sign for the Social Security Cards at the time of picking up the cards.

DFPS SSI Contacts

Leslie Gandara

email: Leslie.Gandara2@dfps.texas.gov

Phone Number: 210-337-3115

Barbie Caballero – SSI Liaison

email Barbie.Caballero@dfps.texas.gov

Phone Number: 210-337-3089

Review policy to ensure child is eligible to apply for Social Security Card. [CPS Policy 6452 Personal Documents Provided to Youth](#)

Social Security Administration Guidelines <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0110205400>

Case Documentation

Documentation and Communication

When a child is placed in substitute care, Belong staff must document in IMPACT the:

- Contacts, assessments, and services provided to the child and the child's family.
- Key decisions made, and actions taken during care that affect the child and the child's family.

Belong must enter in IMPACT any face-to-face contact with the child or parent within 24 hours. Belong must enter all other case information into IMPACT as soon as possible, but no later than seven calendar days from the date of the event being documented, unless there are different timeframes to document the event.

Please see CPS Policy below for additional information regarding documentation

requirements: [1430 Documentation in the Case Record](#)

[6133.21 Documenting Contacts Using the Contact Details](#)

[Page 6133.22 Documenting Monthly Contacts and Visits](#)

[6133.23 Requirement Narrative Content](#)

[6133.24 Contacts and Visits with the Child, Parent, Kinship, Relatives, and](#)

[Caregiver 6133.25 CPS Contact with Collaterals, Court, and Legal Parties](#)

[6133.26 Supervisor Consultation](#)

External Documentation

Primary Case Assignment

Between the Child and Family Referral and the 14th day, Belong Permanency Specialist and the removal worker must cooperate in completing and filing all required legal forms and documents, attending court hearings, and ensuring that all required visits take place. The removal worker can request that the Belong Permanency Specialist make them secondary on the FSU and SUB Stages if needed. Note that any pre adversary discovery that may be needed will be primary responsibility of the removal worker and DFPS.

External Case File Transfer After the transition to Stage II, if CPI or FBSS remove a child, all documents and interviews will be uploaded to OneCase. Any documents uploaded that do not need to be stored in the original physical format are shredded after performing a quality assurance check to verify files were successfully uploaded and reviewed for clarity and completeness. Documents or audio/video material that should not be shredded after upload or cannot be uploaded due to size or format are sent to the **Records and Imaging Operations (RIO)** using **CaseTrack**. This should be done within 7 days of the Adversary Hearing taking

place. Documents or audio/video that must be kept in original physical format are safely stored and preserved by DFPS Records Management Group (RMG). If a stored document or audio/video is needed in the future, a request for research is submitted through OneCase in IMPACT.

External Case Documentation

The following documents must be included in OneCase. This list is not all-inclusive. South Central & Hill Country area may have additional requirements for documents that must be included in the case file. The DFPS worker and Belong Permanency Specialist must ensure that as they are obtained, the documents are included in OneCase in IMPACT.

- Birth/citizenship records
- Health records, including a copy of any recent medical exams
- School records
- A copy of the signed foster care assistance application
- Copies of signed court orders, affidavits, and other court documents
- The court's determination that CPS made reasonable efforts to prevent removal, reunify the family or seek other permanency goals for a child
- CPS notice to caregiver of court hearings, PPMs/administrative review. Caretakers include relatives, foster parents, and pre-consummated adoptive parents
- Placement and medical authorizations including medical consent forms
- Designation of education decision-maker
- Correspondence
- Other possible documents, such as photographs, authorizations, and letters

DFPS worker will provide the Educational portfolio to the caregiver at the time of placement, with any documents available at that time. If the DFPS worker is not present at the time of placement, they may provide the portfolio to the caregiver at any post placement visits or seek assistance from Belong. Belong Permanency Case Manager is responsible for the monthly review of the educational portfolio and ensuring that it's kept up to date by the placement.

See CPS Handbook policy [6134 External Documentation](#)

Ensuring Safety

Abuse and Neglect Investigations on Child/ren in Conservatorship

When a report of abuse or neglect is received on child/ren in conservatorship, Belong staff will need to follow all steps outlined in specific policies.

See policy [4221.1 RCCI Notifying CPS of Alleged Abuse or Neglect in Foster Homes](#) for RCCI's steps and responsibilities in notifying the SSCC of abuse and neglect in foster homes and the SSCC's responsibilities when an intake is Priority None (PN) and a Home History review is completed.

See policy [4221.2 CPS Responsibility and Procedure after Receiving a Notification of Abuse or Neglect by Either RCCI or CPI](#) for Belongs responsibility and procedures after receiving a notification on an investigation of abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child in DFPS conservatorship.

If a report involves alleged child-on-child victimization, the Belong Permanency Specialist must follow the protocols in [Appendix 4623: Protocol for RCCI Investigations Involving Child-On-Child victimization in Foster Care](#).

If the report alleges child sexual aggression, the Belong Permanency Specialist must follow the protocols in the [Child Sexual Aggression Resource Guide](#).

See [6419 Working with Children Who Are Sexually Aggressive, Have Sexual Behavior Problems, or Are Victims of Sexual Abuse](#).

See policy [4221.3 CPS Protocol During an Investigation Involving a Child in Conservatorship](#) for Belongs responsibility during an investigation.

RCCI Investigations

The RCCI investigation is a separate record that RCCI maintains. After RCCI concludes the investigation, the Belong Permanency Specialist save as PDF and upload to OneCase. (See CPS Policy 4221.3)

CPI Investigations

See [4221.3 CPS Protocol during an Investigation Involving a Child in Conservatorship](#)

Notifications When an Intake is Received

Upon receiving an Intake involving children in conservatorship or on a home in which a child in conservatorship resides, the investigation supervisor will notify by email the:

- Belong Permanency Specialist
- Belong Permanency Supervisor
- Belong Permanency Director
- Add LPS if applicable to this list.

If the investigation involves a kinship placement, the investigation supervisor must also notify by email the:

- Belong Kinship Specialist
- Belong Kinship Supervisor
- Belong Permanency Director

If the investigation is out of region, LPS should be added to the notification.

These notifications must occur no later than 7 p.m. the next calendar day.

When There Are Risk and Safety Concerns or Danger Indicators

If there are any risk or safety concerns, or danger indicators, then the CPI caseworker will immediately inform the:

- CPI Supervisor
- CPI Program Director
- Belong Permanency Specialist
- Belong Permanency Supervisor
- Belong Permanency Director
- Belong Kinship staff, if assigned
- Belong LPS staff is assigned

CPI and Belong staff will coordinate together any need for a new placement. If a new placement is needed, staff must follow policy for notifying legal parties.

Investigation Conclusion

Once CPI has completed the investigation, the CPI supervisor informs the CVS or SSCC supervisor about the information gathered during the investigation and the investigation disposition.

- CPI forwards a copy of the notification letter to the CVS or SSCC supervisor once the investigation is closed.
- The CPI supervisor emails the CVS or SSCC caseworker, supervisor, and program director to notify them that the investigation is complete in IMPACT by 7 p.m. the next calendar day.
- The email includes the following:
 - Disposition.
 - Information gathered during the investigation.
 - Any follow-up tasks or referrals that CVS or the SSCC needs to complete.
 - The CPI supervisor attaches a copy of the case closure letters to the email.

Office of Accountability Risk Managers

OOA Risk Managers may conduct:

- Multi-Stage Staffing's when a new Investigation has been opened on an ongoing CPS case
- Case Reviews as requested by Regional Leadership
- Provide training
- Other tasks/job duties as determined by their Lead (supervisor)

Requests for staffing's with the OOA Risk Manager should be made to the following:

OOA Risk Manager for South Central & Hill Country contact is Kathleen McInnis

DFPSRegion8FbssinvReReferral@dfps.texas.gov or Kathleen.mcinnis@dfps.texas.gov

The OOA Risk Manager's Supervisor is Zaida Rodriguez, Child Safety Lead

Zaida.rodriguez2@dfps.texas.gov

MULTI-STAGE STAFFINGS FACILITATED BY OOA RISK MANAGERS NEW INVESTIGATION ON OPEN CVS CASE/FRE STAGE OF SERVICE:

When a new investigation is opened on an already open FRE stage of service where the victim and AP are still in the home; the Risk Manager facilitates a staffing with CPI or CPS and Belong.

Supervisors or Program Directors can make the request, and the Risk Manager will schedule the staffing within 72 hours of the notification.

NEW INVESTIGATION ON OPEN FBSS, CVS OR KIN:

When a new intake/investigation is opened on an already open FBSS, CVS, or KIN that is not a FRE case; CPI and CPS or CBC can decide if they want to request a Risk Manager facilitated staffing.

Supervisors or Program Directors may make the request, and the Risk Manager will schedule staffing within 14 days of the request.

MISC FOR ALL STAFFINGS:

A supervisor (or Program Director) from each stage of service must be present;

One person from each stage of service should know the CPI/CPS history;

The Risk Manager will document the staffing notes in each stage of service; and

If a staffing is scheduled and must be rescheduled due to conflicts, after the 2nd canceled staffing, the Risk Manager will refer the cases back to the Program Directors to complete.

See [Risk Manager](#) page on Safety Net for additional information.

When Children Not in DFPS Conservatorship Are in Immediate Danger

Belong staff can take immediate action to have a child removed from a dangerous situation when the child is in DFPS Conservatorship due to the authority provided in the TFC authorizing Community-Based Care. See [Legal Basis for Single Source Continuum Contractor to Act on Behalf of CPS](#).

There will be situations when Belong is working with a family where some of the children in the family are not in DFPS conservatorship. Should the Belong Permanency Specialist feel the child(ren) are in immediate danger, the following actions can be taken depending on the severity of situation:

- Staff with Belong Supervisor for direction
- If at risk of immediate physical harm call 911
- Stay on site and call in a intake to Statewide Intake (SWI) and inform of the new safety concerns and that immediate response is needed
- Stay on site. Once Intake reference number is obtained call the local CPS office for assistance from the on duty INV worker.
- If it is after hours, refer to the On-Call calendar for INV located in IMPACT.

Payment for Temporary Absences from Paid Placement

When a child or youth is temporarily absent from a paid placement, Belong will follow the DFPS policies:

- [1537 Foster Care Payments During Absences From Foster Care Placements](#)
- [4280 Temporary Absence from Paid Placement](#),
- [4281 Criteria for Paying for Foster Care During a Child's Absence](#), and
- [4282 Payment Time Frames](#).

For Foster Care payment approvals, Belong will follow the same approval process outlined in DFPS policy above and [TAC 700.323](#) requiring approval by Belong staff in positions equivalent to DFPS positions identified.

These include:

- Belong Permanency Supervisor and Permanency Director must approve payment for an absence of not more than 14 days. *Note that the supervisor is responsible for notifying the foster care eligibility specialist when an approved temporary absence situations exceeds 14 days. The eligibility specialist will monitor the situation until the end of the temporary absence and update the child's Title IV-E eligibility status.
- Belong Vice President of Permanency or Vice President of Placement and Support Services must approve payment for an absence between 15 and 30 days.
- DFPS Regional Director and Director of Placement must approve payment for an absence between 31 and 90 days
- In unusual circumstances, payments may continue for an absence of longer than 90 days with prior written approval by the CPS Assistant Commissioner or designee.

Approvals will be documented in comment box on the Temporary Absence page for the specific episode that is approved for payment.

See [DFPS Temporary Absence from Placement Job Aid](#) for instructions on how to complete the IMPACT entry.

When a Child or Youth is Missing from DFPS Conservatorship

Runaway Incident

Belong and its provider network will follow the [HHSC Minimum Standards](#) for reporting missing children.

If a child in DFPS's managing conservatorship is discovered to be missing, runs away, or is suspected to have been abducted from a substitute care placement, and the child's whereabouts are unknown, the Belong Permanency Specialist should follow the entire process identified in the [Locating Missing Children in DFPS Conservatorship Resource Guide](#). Part 1 of the guide addresses steps to be taken when it is discovered a child is missing or runs away and Part 2 covers initial case management actions that must be taken, and Part 3 covers ongoing efforts to recover the child.

- Required notifications include:
 - Belong Clinical Coordinator, Tiona Morris email: tmorris@sjrctexas.org who

serves as the Belong Regional Missing Children Coordinator (RMCC), the point of contact for missing children. The RMCC:

- Oversees and coordinates missing children issues for the region.
 - Helps to ensure assignment of the Special Investigator.
 - Maintains an Excel tracking spreadsheet listing children and youth from the catchment who are missing.
 - Liaisons with DFPS State Office staff on tracking, data reconciliation, policies and protocols, and other needs.
- Belong Missing Children Email Box SIRequestsbelong@sjrctexas.org
 - DFPS Special Investigations Point of contact: SIRequestRegion08@dfps.texas.gov
 - Appropriate law enforcement officials in the jurisdiction where the child went missing.
 - National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at the [web portal](#) for child welfare reports or the 24-hour call center: 1-800-THE LOST (1-800-843-5678).
 - Belong Clinical Utilization Team.
 - Special Investigation Department via SIRequestRegion08@dfps.texas.gov, after the Belong Permanency Specialist files a missing person or runaway report with the law enforcement agency (LE) with jurisdiction for the location from which the child went missing and with NCMEC. DFPS Special Investigations notification should include completed [CPS Missing Child Preliminary Sheet Form 4100](#).
 - Belong staff will input any needed information into IMPACT to generate a missing child event. All other persons described in [6151.3 Notification Requirements and Schedule](#).

The Belong Permanency Specialist must provide these notifications immediately and no later than 8 hours after learning the child is missing.

Discharge from Placement Following Missing Event

- Current placement for a child/youth on missing status can be held/paid for 14 days (five days for emergency shelter placements) with Belong supervisor and PD approval (See [DFPS Policy 4281 Criteria for Paying for Foster Care During a Child's Absence](#) for additional requirements).
- If the placement is held the placement will remain open and the absence will be reflected on the IMPACT *Missing Child* tab and the *Temporary Absence* tab.

Recovery of the Child/Youth

The Belong Permanency Case Manager Belong Permanency Specialist and/or the DFPS Special Investigator (SI), whoever made first contact with the child, must interview the child to do the following:

- Determine the reasons the child was absent from care.
- Get information about the child's experiences while absent from care.

- Screen to determine whether the child was a victim of abuse or neglect, or a victim of sex or labor trafficking, while absent from care.

If the interview identifies the child as a victim of a crime, including trafficking, the Belong Permanency Specialist must immediately, but no later than 8 hours after becoming aware of the victimization, report the situation to local law enforcement and the SI mailbox.

If the child is identified as a victim of abuse or neglect or familial trafficking, the Belong Permanency Specialist must also notify Statewide Intake to make a report.

If the Belong Permanency Specialist completes the interview, the Permanency Specialist must share the information with the SI, and if the SI completes the interview, the SI must share the information with the Permanency Specialist.

If the reasons the child was missing from care are revealed during the interview, the Belong Permanency Specialist must, to the extent possible, address those factors in the child's current and future placements.

Belong Point of contact: Clinical Coordinator Tiona Morris email: tmorris@sjrctexas.org

Belong Missing Children Email Box: SIRequestsbelong@sjrctexas.org

DFPS Special Investigations Point of contact: SIRequestRegion08@dfps.texas.gov. They will assign appropriate SI.

See [42 U.S.C §671\(a\)\(35\)\(A\)](#).

See CPS Handbook [Policy 6461.5 Caseworker Actions When a Missing Child Returns to Care](#).

If a Missing Child tab needs to be fixed in IMPACT please submit a Missing Child Fix Request to DFPSMissingFixRequest@dfps.texas.gov with the following information:

- **Region:**
- **Case ID:**
- **Child PID:**
- **Child Name:**
- **Missing Child Episode Date:**
- **Request Type(s):**
 - Deletion - Permanent (for false/incorrect missing episode entry)
 - Deletion - Temporary (for placement fixes)
 - Missing Child Detail Change/Update
 - Child Recovery Detail Change/Update
- **Summary of Request:**

Please be as detailed as possible when making your request by including an explanation for the change/update/deletion, the information needing to be changed/updated as well as what the information will be changed/updated to. Expect follow-up questions for clarification before any fixes or deletions are completed.

Notifications for Identified or Suspected Victims of Human Trafficking

If a child in DFPS conservatorship is identified as a Confirmed or Suspected-Unconfirmed victim of trafficking, whether familial or non-familial, the caseworker must assess the child's current service array and refer the child to appropriate services, as needed. Confirmed and Suspected-Unconfirmed victims of trafficking must be referred to the local Care Coordination Team (CCT), where local CCT is in operation. The Belong Permanency Specialist must document the assessment and referrals in a case narrative.

The caseworker must inform local law enforcement immediately, but no later than 8 hours after identifying or suspecting that a child, youth, or young adult (ages 0 – 20) has become or may become a victim of sex or labor trafficking.

All needs and services identified for the child or youth must be addressed in the child's plan of service.

See [Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation](#) for services and resources available to children who are placed in other regions and/or counties.

The caseworker must enter into IMPACT each *Sex or Labor Trafficking* event that is *Suspected-Unconfirmed* or *Confirmed* as a trafficking record on the *Trafficking Detail* page within 48 hours of making the assessment or receiving notification.

A trafficking event is *Suspected-Unconfirmed* when specific information regarding the child or youth and the surrounding circumstances creates a reasonable belief that the child or youth has been trafficked. Note: A runaway episode, in and of itself, is not equal to *Suspected-Unconfirmed*.

A trafficking event is *Confirmed* when evidence supports the conclusion that the child or youth has been trafficked. Note: The supporting evidence must be more than just an allegation or suspicion and does not have to be a direct outcry from the child or youth.

Each trafficking event should only have one entry on the *Trafficking Detail* page, unless a *Suspected-Unconfirmed* event is later confirmed, in which case there would be both a *Suspected-Unconfirmed* and a *Confirmed* event listed.

For additional information see [6462 Confirmed or Suspected Victims of Human Trafficking](#)
See for more information US Government Code: 42 U.S.C §671(a)(9)(C), 42 U.S.C §671(a)(34)(A) and 42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(xxiv)

DFPS Protocol for Care Coordination

On February 11, 2020, the DFPS Protocol for Care Coordination (CCT) was launched. The DFPS Protocol for Care Coordination outlines the agency's expected and coordinated response when working with a specific Texas Care Coordination Team. All staff are required to comply with the Protocol for Care Coordination when a child is placed in a county with an active Care Coordination Team.

The Protocol for Care Coordination addresses how DFPS collaborates with other anti-trafficking

partners in identification and recovery of victims and subsequent service provision using the following:

- [Care Coordination Teams](#)
- [Advocate Agencies for Human Trafficking and Commercially Sexually](#)

[Exploited Youth](#) The DFPS Protocol for Care Coordination excludes: Bexar, Dallas, Harris, Travis and Tarrant counties who are operating under the DFPS [Human Trafficking Response Protocol](#).

Youth Recovery Meeting

A Youth Recovery Meeting is to engage a child/youth returning from runaway status and identifying support in creating a plan to address the child/youth's fears and concerns and increase the likelihood of him or her remaining in a safe placement.

Process

As soon as a child or youth in foster care is located and back in DFPS care, the Belong Permanency Specialist and Permanency Supervisor will immediately notify all legal parties (CPS Attorney, CASA, Ad-Litem, Legal Parents and Parent's Attorney(s)).

Notification will also be sent to the Youth Recovery Meeting mailbox at YouthRecoveryBelong@sjrctexas.org so the Family Engagement Staff can offer and organize a Youth Recovery Meeting. During the Youth Recovery Meeting, the team will work with the child/youth to process the reason for running away, concerns about their experience in foster care, and any solutions to prevent him or her from running away in the future. If the youth has a Care Coordination Team Meeting, and they participate in the meeting when they are recovered, that this counts in place of the Youth Recovery Meeting.

These meetings will be scheduled as soon as possible. The goal is to hold the meeting within 24 to 48 hours from the time the child/youth returned to DFPS Care.

The following individuals should be invited to participate in these meetings:

- Child/Youth
- Belong Permanency Specialist
- Belong Permanency Supervisor
- CPS Legal
- Belong Legal
- Attorney Ad-Litem
- CASA
- Guardian Ad-Litem
- Legal Parents (if no Termination of Parental Rights (TPR))
- Parent Attorney(s)
- Placement (if one has been secured)
- PAL
- Youth Specialist
- Child Advocate, if assigned

Subsequent Meeting

In the event a child/youth runs away after their initial Wrap Around Meeting, the Permanency Specialist, Permanency Supervisor, and Permanency Director should evaluate the previous goals and tasks developed to assess whether another meeting should be held to develop new strategies. If follow-up is not required for the goals and tasks of the previous Emergency Transition Plan Meeting another meeting may not be necessary. The child welfare team should make attempts to get the child/youth to recommit to the current plan and continue making efforts toward accomplishing the goals and tasks.

When Children or Youth From Other Regions Are Recovered In The South Central & Hill Country Area

See [Placement for Children from other Regions who are recovered in an SSCC Catchment Area and SSCC Youth Recovered in Legacy Regions](#) for additional information.

For additional information see:

- [Placement for Children/Youth From Other Regions That Have Been Missing And Are Recovered In An SSCC Catchment Area Or SSCC Children/Youth Recovered In Legacy Regions](#)
- [6460 When a Child or Youth is Missing from CPS Conservatorship](#)
- [6461.5 Caseworker Actions When a Missing Child Returns to Care](#)
- [6462 Confirmed or Suspected Victims of Human Trafficking](#)
- [Locating Missing Children in CPS Conservatorship Resource Guide](#)
- [Runaway Prevention Resource Guide](#)
- [Runaway/Missing Youth and Victims of Human Trafficking Protocol Resource Guide for Bexar, Dallas, Harris, Tarrant, and Travis Counties](#)
- Appendix: [Utilizing Background Checks Unit & DFPS Special Investigators](#)

Subject Matter Expert Support in Providing Services To Children and Families

These DFPS support positions are a resource to DFPS and SSCC's operating under a Community-Based Care model. This is intended to be a resource to help Belong identify DFPS positions that may be able to provide assistance or expertise.

- For DFPS state office subject matter expert contact information, visit [Region 12: State Office Resources](#).
- For South Central & Hill Country area subject matter experts and contacts visit [Region 8 Resources](#).

Behavioral Health Specialists

The Behavioral Health Specialists, specializing in Trauma Informed Care, act as a primary liaison between CPS and SSCC direct delivery regional staff, CPS State Office staff, service providers and stakeholders. Their purpose is to raise awareness and improve access to services

for children in CVS or children in families receiving FBSS services, when there is a history of trauma and behavioral health needs related to child abuse and neglect. We aim to foster and promote collaboration across child welfare systems. We want to collaborate with local court systems, SSCC staff, community stakeholders, and Star Health to coordinate behavioral health/trauma informed training for CPS staff.

For more information see http://intranet/CPS/Well-Being/mental_health.asp

Developmental Disability Specialist (DDS)

The Developmental Disability Specialists (DDS) are regional subject matter experts and liaisons when an infant, child or youth is suspected or diagnosed with an intellectual and/or developmental disability (IDD).

When to contact the DDS?

- Whenever there is an infant, child, or youth that comes into care, at any stage, who is diagnosed with IDD or you suspect an IDD is present. *
- If you are unsure if an infant, child, or youth has IDD and you would like a consultation.

Why contact the DDS?

There are a number of reasons why DFPS and/or SSCC staff might want to contact the Developmental Disability Specialist. Not only are they experts in the field of IDD, but they also maintain regional and statewide resource networks and contacts specific to infants, children, and youth with IDD.

DDS can:

- Provide training and support to staff about working with infants, children, and youth with IDD.
- Serve as liaisons between DFPS, SSCC and Health and Human Services for community-based services through the youth's Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority (LIDDA). This includes:
 - Making referrals to the Medicaid waiver interest list for long-term services and supports.
 - Making referrals to HHSC Office of Guardianship, if appropriate.
 - Making referrals for Home and Community Services (HCS) for youth and facilitating referrals for Determination of Intellectual Disabilities (DIDs).
 - Referring to and participating in Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCG's).
- Address the unique challenges of young adults transitioning out of care into the community and help address resources needed for future support.
- Serve as consultants to DFPS/Belong staff regarding cases and participate in transition planning meetings, case reviews, circles of support, and permanency conferences.
- Assist in locating and facilitating the placement process for youth needing specialized placements. These specialized placements can include:
 - Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF-IDD)
 - State Supported Living Centers (SSLC)
 - Nursing Facilities

- Home and Community Based Services (HCS)
- General Residential Operations (GRO)
- Mission Road

Developmental Center For additional information see:

- [DFPS Safety Net page for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#)
- [6411.3 Contact with Children in IDD, GRO, SSLC and ICF Facilities](#)
- [6411.31 Responsibilities of Developmental Disability Specialist](#)
- [6411.32 Responsibilities of the Primary Conservatorship Caseworker When a Child Has an Intellectual or Developmental Disability](#)

Education Specialists

DFPS Regional Education Specialists serve as advocates and expert educational resources. They serve as liaisons between local school districts and DFPS/Belong staff in providing the best educational outcomes for children in DFPS conservatorship.

For additional information see:

- [Education for Children Resource Guide](#)
- [CPS Policy 15000 Education for Children](#)
- [Safety Net Education Page](#)

Faith-Based and Community Engagement

The Office of Faith-Based and Community Engagement partners with foundations, advocates and volunteers to improve service delivery for children, families and adults whom we serve.

In addition, the office:

- Establishes policies and procedures for volunteers.
- Trains and supports community engagement staff on volunteer management.
- Develops outreach and public awareness events.
- Coordinates and facilitates Family & Protective Services' Council quarterly meetings.
- Oversees advisory committees.

For contacts, see [Faith-Based and Community Engagement Coordinators](#).

Fatherhood Initiative

The goal of the Texas Fatherhood Initiative is to build greater capacity within DFPS to serve fathers by shedding light on effective models of service that engage fathers - even if those fathers do not currently live in the homes of their children or are not actively involved in their children's lives.

For more information see [Fathers Matter: The Responsible Fathering Initiative](#)

The DFPS Fatherhood Specialist compiles a report of the children's cases that do not list a father and will provide that report to Belong.

FINDRS Search

FINDRS is short for Family Inquiry Network/Database Research System. Using multiple online resources, FINDRS investigators can perform simple or complex database searches and provide locating information on individuals. You can find the information to request a FINDRS search on the [Submit a Search Request to FINDRS](#) page. On this page you can also access the [FINDRS Resource Guide](#) and [Search Request Tip Sheet](#) for additional assistance.

Immigration Specialist

Immigration Specialists serve as subject matter experts. The Immigration Specialists identify and track children with immigration needs who are in DFPS care.

See DFPS Safety Net: [Immigration Specialist](#) for more information.

Nurse Consultant

Nurse Consultants consult with and educate DFPS and/or SSCC staff about health care issues related to children on their caseloads. They are licensed registered nurses but do not function in a clinical direct patient care role for the agency. Their primary duties include: providing one on one consultation to caseworkers, reviewing medical records and interpreting medical information, and facilitating referrals to the Forensic Assessment Center Network (FACN).

Advocacy for Children's Healthcare Needs

The DFPS Nurse Consultant may advocate for DFPS and/or SSCC staff and children receiving DFPS services by discussing the medical needs of children with medical and special needs in all open cases and making recommendations. The DFPS Nurse Consultant accomplishes this by:

- Participating in staffing's.
- Engaging in discussions with the children's direct medical providers.
- Attending meetings, such as Family Team Meetings (FTM), Family Group Conferences (FGC), regional removal staffing's, case staffing's involving children with medical needs, hospital staffing's, child death reviews, etc.

How to Request Assistance from Your DFPS Nurse Consultant

The Belong Permanency Case Manager may request assistance from the DFPS Nurse Consultant in person, or by phone or email. Regional staff should consult with the DFPS Nurse Consultant covering their region regarding the best way to make a referral.

For the most current list, visit the [DFPS Nurse Consultants](#). More information on the DFPS Nurse Consultant role can be found in the [Medical Services Resource Guide](#).

Forensic Assessment Center Network (FACN)

The Forensic Assessment Center Network (FACN) is comprised of physicians who specialize in child abuse and neglect. They provide case consultation, including medical evaluations, expert witness testimony for court proceedings, and training to DFPS.

When and When Not to Use the FACN

- In most instances, staff consult the FACN about an original incident of abuse that was investigated or assessed.
- For instance, if FBSS/Permanency staff is working on a case, identifies additional information about the original incident, and needs clarification from the FACN, it would be appropriate for FBSS/Permanency staff to consult the FACN.
- If any staff needs court testimony, staff may consult the FACN to see if the FACN can provide appropriate support.
- It is also appropriate to consult the FACN when staff has general ongoing medical questions pertaining to specific cases.
- Staff may not use the FACN for direct examinations of children or for medication services to children in DFPS conservatorship.

See CPS Handbook policy: [2232 Making a Referral to the Forensic Assessment Center Network](#)

Psychiatric Hospital Workers

Psychiatric Hospital Workers serve as advocates, liaisons, and expert coordinators between local psychiatric care centers and DFPS/Belong staff in providing the best acute psychiatric treatment outcomes for children in DFPS conservatorship.

These staff are solely dedicated to ensuring continuity of care and services for a youth experiencing an acute psychiatric hospital stay, with the aim of reducing the length of the hospital stays and positively impacting the permanency and well-being outcomes for every child. Psychiatric Hospital caseworkers are available to provide consultation and/or liaison support for Belong Permanency Staff who have a child or youth admitted for an acute psychiatric hospital stay.

See [Psychiatric Hospital Contact Protocol](#), and [Psychiatric Hospital Workers Safety Net](#) page for additional information including specific protocols that must be followed anytime a youth is admitted for psychiatric treatment.

Statewide Parent Collaboration Group and Local Parent Support Group

Statewide Parent Collaboration Group (PCG)

The statewide Parent Collaboration Group (PCG) is a partnership between the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and parents who have been recipients of

DFPS services. The PCG is a venue for gathering and incorporating parental feedback to enhance DFPS policy and practice. Belong will identify a representative to participate in this group to represent their catchment. Belong will also aid in recruiting parents to be a part of this group as needed.

The PCG provides:

- Information to staff regarding what parents experience as recipients of DFPS services.
- Recommendations for improvement.

Local Parent Support Group

The local Parent Support Groups (PSGs) are informational support groups for parents receiving family-based safety services (FBSS) or conservatorship (CVS) services. These groups are led by a parent who has successfully navigated the DFPS system, INV/FBSS, and Belong Community Prevention Coordinator

Local PSG meetings are held at least once a month in communities around the state, and provide:

- Information about the DFPS/Belong system
- Hope and support
- Engagement and encouragement, including the personal story of the parent leading the group
- A short question and answer session
- Information about various community services

Referrals to Parent Support Groups

It is the Belong Permanency Specialist's responsibility to ensure that parents being served by DFPS/Belong are aware of the local PSGs in their area. Regional fliers and information are available from regional DFPS liaisons.

For additional information please refer to CPS Policy [1143 Statewide Parent Collaboration Group and Local Parent Support Group](#) and [Parent Collaboration Group](#) Safety Net page.

Local Kinship Collaboration Group

The Kinship Caregiver Collaboration Group, or KCG, model provides a mechanism to include Kinship Caregivers who have received services from CPS in the design, implementation and evaluation of CPS programs. This initiative encourages collaboration with Kinship Caregivers who are affected by the CPS service delivery system and provides a unique and valuable perspective on how to improve services to families and children.

See [Kinship Collaboration Group](#)

SSI Coordinators

SSI Coordinators are responsible for applying for SSI Benefits for children in foster care who may have a disability. SSI Coordinators also serve as a point of contact with the Social Security Administration regarding children in DFPS conservatorship who are on SSI or RSDI.

See [SSI Coordinators Safety Net Page](#)

State Office Divisions Collaboration

Divisions within CPS State Office will add representatives from Belong to existing workgroups and communications. Example, Belong Vice President of Permanency will be invited to participate in Conservatorship Program Administrator calls and meetings. Belong will also be added to communication d-lists as needed to ensure they are receiving information related to service families and children.

Additionally, program specialists and subject matter experts from CPS divisions in State Office will be available to provide support and technical assistance to Belong just as they provide support and technical assistance to regional conservatorship programs.

Substance Abuse Specialist

Substance abuse specialists support DFPS practice in working with children and families with substance use disorders throughout each stage of service. They are subject matter experts who assist staff in providing technical assistance relating to protocol, policy, and practice regarding substance use, abuse and treatment.

For more information see [Substance Abuse Safety Net Page](#).

Well-Being Specialist (WBS)

Well-Being Specialists are subject matter experts who assist DFPS/Belong staff, caregivers, and STAR Health in addressing basic and specialized behavioral and physical healthcare needs for children in all stages of service, including dental, vision, and pharmacy services. Their primary duties include troubleshooting for complex cases related to physical and behavioral health needs, serving as the DFPS Liaison to Superior for STAR Health services and facilitating primary medical needs staffing's.

Well-Being Specialist duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Troubleshooting for Complex Cases related to Physical and Behavioral Health Needs.
- Participate in placement staffing's to assist placement staff with resolving barriers to placement, particularly in cases where children have special physical or behavioral health needs.
- Assist staff and caregivers in resolving medical billing issues.

- Respond to psychotropic medication concerns through education and coordination.
- Ensure there is no interruption or delay in services for the child by coordinating communication between medical providers, STAR Health, and staff.
- Assist workers in obtaining prescription medications for children and young adults.
- Identify medical barriers to placement and request recommendations for on-going treatment through consultation with medical staff.
- Work closely with caseworkers and eligibility staff around Medicaid eligibility issues.
- Assist staff with out of state access to healthcare services for children placed through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) process.
- Assist DFPS/Belong staff and caregivers in addressing any denial of services by STAR Health.

CPS Liaison to Superior/Cenpatico

- Serve as Subject Matter Experts for STAR Health, Medical Consent policy, Medicaid policy, and the “3 in 30” (Texas Health Steps, CANS and 3 Day Medical Exam).
- Respond to STAR Health inquiries, including medical consent confirmations, service management denials, refusal of Texas Health Steps Outreach by Kinship family, Eligibility issues, and outreach to staff.
- Manage provider complaints and quality of care concerns.

Child Specific Staffing’s

- Coordinate and facilitate Primary Medical Needs (see the Primary Medical Needs Resource Guide) and Medical staffing’s for any child entering DFPS conservatorship or changing placements, who has specialized medical needs, for the purpose of ensuring the child's medical needs are met.
- Participate in placement staffing’s with STAR Health and Placement to trouble shoot barriers to placements for medically fragile youth.
- Participate as needed in:
 - Initial Coordination Meeting
 - Circles of Support
 - Family Team Meetings
 - Case Planning Meetings

For additional information, see [DFPS Intranet CPS Medical Services](#).

Access to DFPS Office Resources

Access to DFPS Resource Rooms

Resource Rooms (RRs) are stocked with donated items Belong Permanency Case Managers can access to meet the needs of children and families served at the time of removal or initial placement. Independent volunteer groups generously coordinate the many aspects of the rooms. Belong will have access to these rooms during regular DFPS business hours. DFPS staff

who assist with managing access to the rooms will assist Belong with access as needed. The Community Resource Coordinators can provide additional guidance on the use of the Resource Rooms. Belong staff can coordinate with the CMO team to gain access to Resource Rooms when located in a DFPS building.

Access to DFPS Conference/Visitation Rooms

DFPS Building Access for Belong Staff

Belong staff may be granted access to a DFPS building by signing in/out, like any other provider/contractor/visitor. Contractor badges will be provided at each DFPS building. Belong staff will sign in/out and wear the contractor badges while in the DFPS building. When exiting the DFPS building, Belong staff will sign out and leave the contractor badge. Although there is no space designated for Belong staff to work from, they may use mobile work space when in the office and have a need to work periodically. Belong staff can reserve the conference rooms and visitation rooms. Belong staff will coordinate with the CMO team to make reservations to the building and to coordinate access in the building.

Belong will have access to DFPS conference or visitation rooms during DFPS business hours. When Belong needs to utilize DFPS visitation rooms, the following applies:

- CMO team will schedule all room reservations for Belong staff.
- Belong employees must present their badge and sign in and out at the front desk. Belong employees will only have access to the conference and visitation rooms and designated restrooms in buildings.
- Visits can only be scheduled during normal business hours.
- DFPS staff will need to be on site for a visit to occur.
- Belong staff will need to coordinate entry to the DFPS building with the CMO team member that reserves the room.
- CMO team will make the reservation for the room using Outlook for the Belong staff. Regional DFPS Point of Contact for access to DFPS visitation, conference rooms, or resource rooms is the CMO team.

Below is a list of Point of Contacts for the rural DFPS office locations. CMO staff can utilize the Point of Contacts in effort to ensure a DFPS staff will be at the building when a room is reserved by Belong staff.

DFPS Point of Contact:

Office Location	Point of Contact
Boerne	Julia Niemier (CMO) Julia.Niemeier@dfps.texas.gov
Crystal City	Leticia Pichardo Musinga (CPI HST) Leticia.PichardoMusinga@dfps.texas.gov

Office Location	Point of Contact
Cuero	Janelle Zamarripa (CPI Supervisor) Janelle.Zamarripa@dfps.texas.gov
Del Rio	Gracie Zuniga (FBSS Admin) Graciela.Zuniga@dfps.texas.gov
Eagle Pass	Carlos Aguirre (CPI Supervisor) Carlos.Aguirre@dfps.texas.gov
Floresville	Johanna Krellwitz (CPI Admin) Johanna.Krellwitz@dfps.texas.gov
Gonzales	Jeannie Padilla (CPI Admin) Jeannie.Padilla@dfps.texas.gov
Hondo	Nelda Garcia (FBSS Admin) Nelda.Garcia@dfps.texas.gov
Jourdanton	Denise Gonzalez (CPI Admin) denise.gonzalez2@dfps.texas.gov
Kerrville	Sarah Baimbridge (CMO) Sarah.Baimbridge@dfps.texas.gov
New Braunfels	Debbie Weers (CPI Admin) Debbie.Weers@dfps.texas.gov
Pearsall	Joanne Martinez (CPI Supervisor) Joanne.Martinez@dfps.texas.gov
Seguin	Lilliana Banuelos (CPI PD Clerk) Liliana.Banuelos@dfps.texas.gov
Uvalde	Brittani Leal-Aguirre (FBSS HST) Brittani.Leal@dfps.texas.gov
Victoria	Lenore Gaona (FBSS HST) Lenore.Gaona@dfps.texas.gov

Purchased Client Services

DFPS authorizes Belong to provide purchased client services as part of the Family Referral process. When Family Referral is created in IMPACT, the system also creates a series of service authorizations that allows Belong to provide purchased client services and to them be reimbursed by DFPS for those services provided. This is commonly referred to as the 71 series of service authorizations. It is critical that a Family referral be created at the time of removal and referral to Belong to enable these authorizations.

Payment for Purchased Client Services When No Family Referral is Present

There may be times when the Department has PMC of a child and there is no longer a FSU or FRE stage open and there is a need for a purchased client service for the family or child that is not covered by Star Health or other means. An example may be a relative is being considered for placement and requires a home assessment.

These and other purchased client services are covered by the 71 series of service authorizations that are opened for the case at the time of the referral. IMPACT will allow for individual 71 series service authorizations to be opened in the SUB stage to cover the costs for services when needed.

Daycare Services

Foster Daycare Services

Foster Child daycare is available for children in a Foster Home when:

- The child does not turn six years of age by September 1, and
- All caregivers are employed and work at least 40 hours per week (daycare is available for children up to age 13 for school summer breaks).

Daycare Request Process and Procedures

Process	Procedure
Caregiver Daycare Verification	<p>When foster daycare services are needed for a child, who is legally from South Central & Hill Country area and placed within Belong provider network Belong staff will provide to the regional daycare coordinator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foster/Relative & Other Designated Caregiver Daycare Verification (form 1809) for each foster parent household each time an application for daycare services is requested. This form is required for both initial requests and renewals. <p>Note: Foster parent e-signatures are acceptable (completed/signed/scanned copy of Form 1809 or on-</p>

Process	Procedure
	<p>line completion of Form 1809 with foster parent approval in return e-mail).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Belong Daycare Liaison will need to verify caregiver employment. Acceptable verification includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Copies of the caregivers last three paystubs, ○ Statement from the employer attesting to being employed full-time for 32 hours a week; or in the case of self-employment, a completed Form 1806 Caregiver Statement of Self-Employment Income , and ○ Waivers, if applicable. • All Caregivers must be informed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Only DFPS can authorize DFPS-funded day care services. ○ DFPS is not responsible for the payment of the day care services that eligible children may receive until after DFPS returns the approved IMPACT Form 2054 Service Authorization to the Child Care Services Agency (CCS) authorizing day care services. ○ If a child receives day care services before the child care services agency receives the approved Form 2054, DFPS will not pay for those days of service.
<p>Sending to DFPS District Daycare Coordinator</p>	<p>Belong staff will send an e-mail to the DAYCARE2@dfps.texas.gov mailbox that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject line: Region, Foster Parent’s Name, Oldest Child's Name needing daycare, Case ID, Belong Unit #, (do not only enter the foster parents name, the child’s name must be included) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If only one child’s name is entered in the subject line but there are multiple children that requests were completed for, all of their names must be provided in the body of the e-mail; ○ The body of the e-mail must have the Belong staff and their supervisor’s approval. If there is no supervisor approval in the body of the e-mail, regional daycare coordinators cannot process the impact daycare requests; ○ A statement explaining what verification has been provided for the employment verification and the number of hours each caregiver works (note employment verification must also be provided for renewals); and

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attach the Following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed Foster/Relative & Other Designated Caregiver Daycare Verification (form 1809), unless an exception is met as described below. • The Belong staff will complete the Daycare Request in IMPACT. • Communication with the Belong staff can be made to Daycarebelong@sjrctexas.org
Exceptions	<p>For the initial daycare authorization, the requirement for the foster parent to complete form 1809 may be waived if it is determined the verification would prevent an emergency placement in the child’s best interest. Such an emergency placement would be one where the placement cannot be sustained or is unlikely to be sustained if the person requesting daycare was required to verify the unavailability of community resources. The required waiver must be approved by the Belong Permanency Director and Belong Vice President of Permanency. The waiver should only be utilized where the foster parent has exercised reasonable diligence but has been unable to verify community resource unavailability. If such a waiver is approved, the foster parent will be required to verify the unavailability of community resources at the time of the first daycare renewal.</p>
District Daycare Coordinator Approval and Processing	<p>After receiving the daycare request e-mail and the daycare request in IMPACT and has approved day care services, the DFPS Daycare Coordinator will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate the service authorization in IMPACT and send to CCS. • The service authorization must be approved and sent to the appropriate CCS before DFPS will pay for the caregivers to use the day care services. <p>For more information see policy 8235.4 Child Day Care Services.</p>

Kinship Daycare Services

Belong may request Kinship Child Daycare for a child in DFPS conservatorship who is placed with kinship caregivers if:

- There is an approved kinship home assessment on file for caregivers who are not verified or licensed foster care providers.
- The caregivers have signed [Form 0695](#) Kinship Caregiver Agreement.

- The caregivers are employed either inside or outside the home, work at least 40 hours per week and provide employment verification.

To request Kinship Daycare Services, follow the above [Daycare Process and Procedures](#) above including the Kinship Caregiver information instead of the foster parent.

Please see CPS Policy [8235.5 Kinship Child Daycare](#) for additional eligibility criteria.

General Protective Child Daycare

General Protective daycare can be used for a Kinship placement of a child in DFPS conservatorship where the caregivers do not have an approved home study or have not signed the caregiver agreement when:

- The child does not turn 6 by September 1 (there is no before or after school daycare),
- Where all caregivers are employed and work at least 32 hours per week (daycare is available for children up to age 13 for school summer breaks), and
- Caregivers must complete and sign Form 1809 Foster/Relative & Other Designated Caregiver Daycare Verification

To request General Daycare Services, follow the above [Daycare Process and Procedures](#) above including the Kinship Caregiver information instead of the foster parent.

Family Reunification Cases

Where the children are living with their parents there is no work requirement but daycare services during the school year are limited to children who have not reached age 6 by September 1 (no before or after school daycare but daycare is available for children up to age 13 for school summer breaks).

To request Daycare Services, follow the above [Daycare Process and Procedures](#) above including the Reunification Caregiver information instead of the foster parent.

Responsibility for Contact and Services Across Regional Lines

When a child or youth resides outside of the region that has legal jurisdiction, DFPS/Belong can request to maintain contact, provide services, and monitor the child's or youth's safety:

- Courtesy supervision
- Courtesy contact with incarcerated parent
- Local Permanency Supervision
- Kinship services including home assessments and addendums
- Kinship Adoption Studies

- Adoption Preparation Services
- Adoption Supervision Service

Courtesy Supervision

When a CPS/Belong unit provides courtesy supervision, the unit providing the supervision must:

- Maintain the required contacts with the parent and child; and
- Follow the procedures in [6411 Contact with the Child](#) and its sub items.

DFPS units outside South Central & Hill Country area may make request for supervision assistance from Belong and likewise, Belong may make request for supervision assistance from CPS units outside of the South Central & Hill Country area/Region 8 .

Courtesy Services within Region 8

The primary kinship, conservatorship, or adoption caseworkers in Region 8 will continue to serve youth in their legal county that are placed in any county in Region 8. CPS staff in Region 8 and Belong staff will not utilize courtesy services for youth that are placed in any county in Region 8.

For example, if a youth’s legal county is Bexar County, but the youth resides in a placement in an 8b county, the youth’s primary caseworker will continue to provide all services to that youth. If a youth’s legal county is Val Verde County (8b catchment area), but the youth resides in a placement in Bexar county, the youth’s primary caseworker will continue to provide all services to that youth. Kinship, conservatorship, and adoption cases served by CPS or Belong will follow this procedure. CPS and Belong will continue to collaborate on a case-by-case basis if a courtesy or emergency request is needed.

For additional information see:

- [6314.1 Coordination Between Primary Caseworker and Courtesy Supervision Caseworker](#) and all of its sub items.
- [6320 Conducting Visits with the Family](#)

CPS/Belong can request courtesy supervision when a parent is residing outside of the region and/or when a child or youth in conservatorship is placed outside of the region that has legal jurisdiction and is residing with a parent.

For additional information see [6314 Services to Children and Parents across Regional Lines](#).

Local Permanency Supervision

Local Permanency Case Manager are secondary caseworkers for children and youth placed outside the region that has legal jurisdiction but are not placed with a parent. The Local Permanency Case Manager acts as an extension of the primary caseworker and aids the primary caseworker in ensuring that the child or youth's needs for safety and well-being are being met. The Local Permanency Case Manager also works to ensure that the child or youth achieves permanency.

See CPS Handbook policy: [6412.2 Local Permanency Supervision](#)

Kinship Home Assessment Requests

Before CPS can place a child with a kinship caregiver, or recommend to the court that the child be placed, the child's caseworker or a contracted provider must assess the caregiver's suitability by completing the packet that includes:

- A written assessment of a kinship caregiver's home, using [Form 6588 Kinship Caregiver Home Assessment](#).
- A risk assessment, using [Form 2049 Risk Assessment](#).

Either Belong staff or a contractor may complete the written home assessment and risk assessment.

Please see [6623 Completing a Risk Assessment, and a Written Home Assessment of the Kinship Caregiver](#) for additional information regarding Kinship Home Assessments.

Requesting Services Across Regional Lines from Belong

[Request for Kinship, Conservatorship and Adoption Services \(aka Universal Referral Form\) Form 2077](#) is used to request Kinship, Conservatorship and Adoption services. The Belong mailbox identified to request all case assignments is ChildSafetybelong@sjrctexas.org. Belong will assign the case within 2 business days and notify the caseworker from the sending region of the caseworker assigned.

Please see the [Request for Kinship, Conservatorship and Adoption Services \(aka Universal Referral Form\) Form 2077](#) instructions for additional information.

For Courtesy Worker requests send form 2077 to: ChildSafetybelong@sjrctexas.org

For Kinship Worker requests send form 2077 to: kinshipbelong@sjrctexas.org

For Adoption Worker requests send form 2077 to: ChildSafetybelong@sjrctexas.org

[Services Across CBC Stage II Areas/Regions – Resource Guide](#)

Belong Requesting Services from Another SSCC Catchment or DFPS Region

Belong will also use the [Request for Kinship, Conservatorship and Adoption Services \(aka Universal Referral Form\) Form 2077](#) to request services from other catchments or DFPS Regions. Please follow the instructions on the [Form 2077 Instructions](#) for additional information regarding completing and submitting the form to the region services are requested from.

Payment for Purchased Client Services/Home Assessments

Primary and secondary case management staff must work closely together to ensure the coordination and payment of purchased client services to family members and caregivers across regional lines.

Payment for Purchased Client Services

If...	Then...
Belong Permanency Specialist requests purchased client services (i.e. counseling) for a parent or caregiver who resides in another DFPS Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Belong primary case manager will manage the payment for services through Belong’s billing system. • CPI, CPS courtesy, LPS, and KDW staff will NOT initiate a Service Authorization (form 2054) for any purchased client services for family members served by Belong.
Another DFPS Region requests purchased client services for a parent or caregiver who resides in an SSCC catchment area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary DFPS case manager will issue payment for services by submitting a Service Authorization (Form 205)4 in IMPACT using a DFPS contracted provider. All service requests, including required attachments, should be emailed to childsafetybelong@sjrctexas.org for processing.

Payment for Kinship Home Assessments

If...	Then...
Belong primary case manager requests a kinship home assessment on a caregiver that resides in another DFPS Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Belong primary case manager will manage the payment for services through Belong’s billing system. • CPI, CPS courtesy, LPS, and KDW staff will NOT initiate a Service Authorization (form 2054) for any

If...	Then...
	<p>purchased client services for family members served by Belong.</p>
<p>Another DFPS Region requests a kinship home assessment on a caregiver who resides in an SSCC catchment area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The primary DFPS case manager will issue payment for services by submitting a Service Authorization (Form 2054) in IMPACT with the using service code (68A) and selecting the SSCC as the provider. The home study referral packet, including all required attachments should be emailed to familyreferralsbelong@sjrctexas.org for processing.

Extraordinary Medical Conditions

Enrollment and Participation in Certain Drug Research Programs

[Texas Family Code §266.0041](#) requires a court order before a child in DFPS conservatorship may enroll or participate in a drug research program, unless the person enrolling the child is the child's parent and has been authorized by the court to make medical decisions for the child.

In the [Medical Services Resource Guide](#), see *Enrollment and Participation in Certain Drug Research Programs*.

See CPS Policy [11710 Enrollment and Participation in Certain Drug Research Programs](#)

End of Life Medical Decisions

If a child in DFPS conservatorship has been diagnosed with an "irreversible condition" or a "terminal condition" and medical professionals suggest withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining treatment, the regular process for medical consent does not apply.

See CPS Policy [11720 End of Life Medical Decisions](#) for specific guidance and requirements for approvals.

Organ Donation/Anatomical Gifts

There are specific requirements regarding organ donation in the event a child dies while in care.

Please see CPS Policy [11730 Organ Donation/Anatomical Gifts](#) for additional guidance.

Pregnancy

See [CPS Handbook §11740 Pregnancy](#)

Confidential Illness

See CPS Policy [11500 HIV Testing and Care for Children in DFPS Conservatorship](#)

Legal Services

After the Adversary hearing is complete, Belong will assume responsibility of court-related duties regarding the child, including but not limited to:

- Providing required notifications or consultations.
- Preparing court reports.
- Attending judicial and permanency hearings, trials, and mediation.
- Complying with applicable court orders.
- Ensuring the child is progressing toward the goal of permanency within state and federally mandated guidelines.

For additional information see:

- [CPS Policy 5000](#) regarding Legal Services.
- Belong Policy and Procedures manual regarding legal services.
- Appendix: Subpoena Protocol for SSCC Workers.

Process For Transferring A Legal Case Between Belong and DFPS

If...	Then...
A Court/Judge orders a case to transfer from South Central & Hill Country area to another area. See CPS Regional Resources if area is not a CBC area, or the CBC SafetyNet page if it is a CBC area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Belong Permanency Specialist notifies their chain of command up to the Belong Vice President of Permanency.• The Belong Vice President of Permanency will verify the receiving court has accepted the case.• The Belong Vice President of Permanency notifies the receiving area's Program Administrator of case transfer by email within 2 business days.
A Court/Judge orders a case to transfer from a DFPS/SSCC area to South Central & Hill Country area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The sending area notifies their chain of command up to the Program Administrator.

If...	Then...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Program Administrator will verify the South Central & Hill Country court has accepted the case and scheduled a hearing. • The sending Program Administrator notifies the Belong Vice President of Permanency of case transfer by email within 2 business days.

The Belong Vice President of Permanency and the other area’s Program Administrator or designee must set up a case staffing/transfer between the sending and receiving area within 5 business days of notification.

Attendees should include Permanency/Program Directors, Supervisors, and case manager/caseworkers.

- Legal representation for both the sending and receiving counties (Regional attorney, county attorney or ADA) should be notified and invited to staffing.
- Staffing should result in a plan with identified tasks, timeframes, needs of children, youth and family members, and who will be responsible for them.
- All participants will receive a copy of the agreed upon plan developed from the staffing (the sending region should be responsible for taking notes) and a copy of the transfer order if available.

A case is not officially transferred from one region to another until:

- A judge signs an order to transfer and the court file is received by the receiving county and docketed for a court hearing.
- The Permanency Director/DFPS Program Director for the receiving region must regularly follow up with the attorney to determine if the case has been received.
- The case is reviewed by the sending and receiving supervisors to ensure that all agreed-upon tasks have been completed. Once the supervisors agree that tasks are complete the case is reassigned to the receiving region in IMPACT. The physical case file must be sent to receiving region within 1 business day after the case is assigned to the receiving region in IMPACT.
 - When the case transfers the receiving region will need to update the following in IMPACT:
 - Update the Legal Status to reflect the County, Court and Cause Number the case transferred to;
 - Enter a Legal Action for the Transfer of Jurisdiction.
 - If the case is transferring from Belong to a DFPS/SSCC region, then Belong staff will need to end the Belong child and family referrals as well as the Belong

Service Authorizations in IMPACT before assigning the case to the receiving DFPS/SSCC staff.

- If the case is transferring to Belong from another region, Belong will create an SSCC referral once they are made primary on the case.

Paying for Court-Related Services

Resources to cover legal expenses varies by Individual County in the South Central & Hill Country area. Examples of legal services which may incur a fee from the service provider include, but are not limited to:

- Mediation
- Out of State service
- Private Process service
- Court Reporter
- Court transcripts
- Witness travel
- Expert witness testimony
- Citation by Publication postings

For any legal services that are required by the court and not covered through Purchased Client Services funding, STAR Health, or county funds, Belong will decide, in coordination with the Contract Administration Manager (CAM), on how the services will be paid.

If the decision is that DFPS will pay the provider, Belong will submit the following items as soon as possible to the CAM:

- Detailed description of the specific legal service that includes the court information, cause number, and case ID.
- Copy of the invoice or bill from the person or entity providing the service. The DFPS CAM will create a requisition for payment through CAPPs Financial.

Referring Cases to the Office of the Attorney General for Paternity Testing

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is responsible for paternity testing.

When the court orders paternity testing in a foster care case in Comal County, the Belong Permanency Specialist must thoroughly complete Foster Care Referral to the Office of the Attorney General [Form 1702](#) and return the form to the OAG Office. In all other cases, the Regional Attorney's office will complete this request following a court order.

Court Orders for Healthcare Related Treatment and Services

When a court orders a healthcare service, treatment or testing for a child in DFPS conservatorship, or enters an order that declines to follow the recommendation of a health care professional who has been consulted regarding a health care service, procedure, or treatment for a child in DFPS conservatorship, Belong Permanency Specialist will take the following steps immediately:

- Notify the Belong Permanency Supervisor about the order. The Belong Permanency Specialist and supervisor will notify the attorney representing DFPS/Belong if there is a concern that the order needs to be appealed in any way.
- Notify the regional [Well-Being Specialist](#) and provide a copy of the written order when it is received.

Completed court orders will be escalated by the Well-Being Specialist to STAR Health. They will be tracked with communication going back and forth between a STAR Health Liaison and the Well-Being Specialist. Note, verbal court orders will not be accepted by STAR Health and court orders must be signed to be considered complete.

Exceptions: Court-Ordered Medical Services Not Covered by Medicaid or STAR Health

If the judge orders a child to undergo a specific type of medical service, treatment, or testing that may not be covered by Medicaid, Belong will take the following steps:

- Immediately inform the attorney representing DFPS/Belong (within 3 days of the court's rendering of the order) that Belong cannot guarantee a doctor will agree to order the specific service, treatment, or test. This allows the attorney to take immediate action in court to inform the judge or pursue legal remedies, such as asking the judge to reconsider the order.
- If and when the court order is issued, inform the child's Medical Consenter (if it is someone other than the Belong Permanency Specialist) about the order, and direct him or her to:
- Ask the doctor to order the service, treatment, or test at the child's next visit with a STAR Health general practitioner.
- Make sure the doctor knows that Belong has been told that Medicaid does not generally cover the service, treatment, or test.
- Encourage the doctor to request prior authorization and confirm medically necessary coverage before ordering the service, treatment, or test.

Doctor Refuses to Order Medical Services, Treatments, or Tests

If the doctor refuses to order the service, treatment, or test, Belong Permanency Specialist will immediately get the doctor to provide written documentation of the doctor's refusal.

Belong Permanency Specialist will provide the doctor's documentation to the attorney representing DFPS/Belong. Ensure that the documents are filed with the court and provided to the parties in the case.

Belong Permanency Specialist will file the documentation in the case record.

Doctor Orders Medical Services, Treatments, or Tests

If the doctor orders the service, treatment, or test, Belong Permanency Specialist will notify the supervisor and inform the attorney. At the next court hearing where medical care is discussed, Belong Permanency Specialist will report back to the judge the results and any subsequent medical care the doctor prescribes.

When Medicaid Does Not Pay

When Medicaid will not pay for the service, treatment, or test, Belong will decide, in coordination with the CAM, how the provider will be paid. If the decision is that DFPS will pay the provider, Belong will submit the following items as soon as possible to the CAM:

- Signed copy of court order directing that the child be provided the specific medical service, treatment, or test.
- Proof that Medicaid denied paying the claim (an email from the provider is sufficient).
- Copy of the invoice or bill from the laboratory or provider.

The DFPS CAM will create a requisition for payment through CAPPs Financial.

When Medicaid Does Pay

If Medicaid does pay for the service, treatment, or test for a child, no documentation needs to be sent.

Follow this process for all new judicial orders in any region, at any kind of hearing, directing specific medical care that may not be a part of STAR Health coverage.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

If a Conservatorship case involves a Native American Child, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) may apply. If so, the legal requirements change dramatically.

Please see [CPS Policy 5740 Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\)](#) for additional information.

Subpoena Protocol for SSCC Employees

The DFPS Subpoena Policy for Single Source Continuum Contractors explains the procedures to be followed when a party:

- seeks information for the purpose of serving an SSCC employee or the custodian of records with a subpoena regarding a DFPS case; or

- has served an SSCC employee or custodian of records with a subpoena regarding a DFPS case.

Subpoenas for DFPS Records in Open and Closed Cases

When a subpoena is directed to a SSCC caseworker regarding a pending or closed CPS matter or concurrent criminal case, the caseworker follows the procedure described in Section 2000 of the DFPS Subpoena Policy for Single Source Continuum Contractors.

These matters are highly time sensitive. Subpoenas must be sent to the [DFPS Region 08 Subpoenas](#) mailbox within two (2) hours of receipt by the caseworker.

See [SSCC Subpoena Policy](#)

Subpoenas for Contractor Records

SSCC Contractors have separate records not maintained by DFPS. For subpoenas received by a contractor for personnel records or records maintained by the contractor, DFPS may give guidance as to how DFPS legal handles such requests generally but will then refer the contractor to their in-house counsel for specific instructions and legal advice.

Notice Requirements for Elevating Certain Court Orders

CPS regional management, legal representatives, and DFPS state office, must receive notification immediately but no later than the next business day about court orders that may create problems for the CPS program or may require immediate legal action. Belong staff will ensure notices to Belong Attorney, Region 8 Managing Attorney and cc Regional Director.

See CPS Policy [5311 Notice Requirements for Elevating Certain Court Orders](#).

The types of orders that require timely notification include, but are not limited to, the following:

- CPS Policy [5312 Court Orders that Must Be Elevated to State Office](#)
- CPS Policy [5313 Notice Requirements for Court- Ordered Placements with Unapproved Facilities](#)
- CPS Policy [5314 Court Orders That Violate the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children](#)

Permanency Care Assistance

When a Region South Central & Hill Country area child/youth's permanency plan calls for a change to permanent managing conservatorship by a relative or fictive kin (regardless of the relative/fictive kin's location) with intent to pursue permanency care assistance, Belong staff must follow current CPS Handbook policy [6680 Permanency Care Assistance](#).

When a prospective permanent managing conservator is nearing completion of the required six consecutive months as a verified foster parent, the child’s Belong Permanency Specialist must begin working with the caregiver to apply for assistance. The Belong Permanency Specialist must follow current [CPS Handbook Policy 6680 Permanency Care Assistance](#).

Applying for Permanency Care Assistance

Process	Procedure
<p>Applying for Permanency Care Assistance</p>	<p>Belong will follow the application process for Permanency Care Assistance identified in CPS Policy 6685.</p> <p>90 Days Prior to Anticipated PMC Transfer date Belong Permanency Specialist will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the child is in a T3C placement, a LOC review is not needed and the recommended service package will be used to inform subsidy negotiation. • Request level of care from Youth For Tomorrow (YFT) <p>Documentation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be sure to inform YFT that the purpose is for PCA. ○ If the provider that has licensed the caregiver is also scheduled for review in the near future, please inform YFT of that at the time of the request. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last 30 days documentation: therapy notes, incident reports, daily notes, school reports if any. • CANS Assessment. • For children/youth with emotional disturbance: Psychological or psychiatric evaluations, completed within 14 months. • For children/youth with primary medical needs: An evaluation by a physician (MD), physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner, describing medical conditions or disabilities. • If the YFT LOC review results in a Moderate LOC or above, email the YFT Utilization Review and Reauthorization Service Form (completed by YFT) to CPS Fed/State Support Program Specialist amanda.freeman3@dfps.texas.gov upon receipt of the form from YFT. • Verify the correct Authorized Level of Care (ALOC) listed in IMPACT is correct and accurate for each child. • Request the VENDOR ID by submitting the request to the VENDOR ID mailbox at vendor@dfps.texas.gov • Complete the PCA application packet. Refer to CPS policy 6685.1 Completing a Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) Application

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the PCA application for each child in IMPACT in the SUB stage and submit to the assigned Eligibility Specialists • The checklist requires a Belong Supervisor’s original signature and date for each child. • Scans or faxes are not accepted. • The application document needs to have original signatures and dated within 90 days • If a sibling group, a complete set of forms is required for each child. • Send packet for final review and approval to the Belong Permanency Supervisor 45 days prior to the planned PMC transfer date. <p>The Belong Permanency Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send request to the ADO Supervisor or ICPC Coordinator to create the FAD stage in IMPACT • After final review and approval, send the completed PCA packet to the eligibility specialist no later than 30 days prior to the transfer of PMC to the caregiver, as there must be enough time for eligibility to be determined and a PCA signed with the family prior to transfer of PMC. See Foster Care Eligibility Specialist table to determine the appropriate Specialist. <p>The eligibility specialist will within 3 business days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review each packet for completeness • Determine if the child is eligible • Will forward the packet to the PCA/ADO negotiator, Yesenia Moreno at yesenia.moreno@dfps.texas.gov <p>The PCA/ADO negotiator will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with the family to negotiate subsidy benefits • Email the Belong Permanency Specialist the agreements for the family to sign. <p>The Belong Permanency Specialist will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain signatures on the agreements from the caregivers

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers must sign the agreement in ink and they must be dated no later than the day of the hearing. • Mail the original, signed, hard copy documents to the AA/PCA Negotiator <p>**Alert Do <u>NOT</u> proceed with transferring PMC until PCA benefits have been negotiated and the Negotiator has notified Belong the negotiation has been completed. If a hearing is held and PMC is transferred prior to the PCA benefits being negotiated, then the caregiver cannot receive PCA benefits.</p>
Tasks After Transferring PMC	<p>Belong Permanency Specialist will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the final court hearing, scan the order signed by the judge and send to the appropriate Eligibility Specialist – Foster Care Eligibility Specialist • In the SUB stage, update legal status with “PMC to REL/FK” • End placement in the SUB stage with reason “Child placed in PCA”. • Email the Eligibility Specialist to end billing/FC benefits. • Close SUB stage after FC eligibility has been ended • Enter placement in the PCA stage using the RID for the RAD stage that was created. • Assign the PCA and FAD stages to the Eligibility Specialist as primary.

Adoption

Belong will be responsible for the full array of adoption services in South Central & Hill Country area as outlined in [CPS Policy 6900 Adoption Preparation and Support Services](#).

Out-of-state Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) adoption services requests will follow established [ICPC protocols](#).

Belong will work with the DFPS Adoption Subsidy Negotiator and Eligibility Specialist in securing adoption assistance for eligible families.

Applying for Adoption Assistance and Finalizing Adoption.

Related Resources and Policy:

[CPS Handbook §6900 Adoption Preparation and Support Services](#)

[CPS Handbook §1700 Adoption Assistance Program](#)

Process	Procedure
Applying for Adoption Assistance	Belong will follow the eligibility and application process for Adoption Assistance Program CPS Policy 1700 .
Process	Procedure

The Belong Adoption Supervisor or Designee will

Open the ADO stage in IMPACT.

Belong Adoption Specialist will:

- If the child is in a T3C placement, a LOC review is not needed and the recommended service package will be used to inform subsidy negotiation.
- Request level of care from Youth For Tomorrow (YFT)
Documentation includes:
- Last 30 days documentation: therapy notes, incident reports, daily notes, school reports if any.
- CANS Assessment.
- For children/youth with emotional disturbance:
Psychological or psychiatric evaluations, completed within 14 months.
- For children/youth with primary medical needs: An evaluation by a physician (MD), physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner, describing medical conditions or disabilities.
- If the YFT LOC review results in a Moderate LOC or above, email the YFT Utilization Review and Reauthorization Service Form (completed by YFT) to CPS Fed/State Support Program Specialist Amanda.freeman3@dfps.texas.gov upon receipt of the form from YFT.
- Ensure the correct Authorized Level of Care (ALOC) listed in IMPACT is correct and accurate for each child.
- Request the VENDOR ID by submitting the request to the VENDOR ID mailbox at vendor@dfps.texas.gov
- Complete the adoption assistance application for each child in IMPACT in the ADO stage
- Complete the Adoption Subsidy packet. Refer to [Adoption Assistance Checklist/Guide-Form 2368](#)
- The family forms require a Belong Supervisor's original signature and date for each child.
 - [Adoption Assistance Request Form 2250](#),
 - [Adoption Assistance Worksheet Form 2253A](#) and
 - [Adoptive Family Resources Form 2253B](#)
 - Scans or faxes are not accepted.

Process

Procedure

- If a sibling group, a complete set of forms is required for each child.
- Send packet for final review and approval to the Belong Adoption Supervisor or Designee 45 days prior to the planned consummation date.

The Belong Adoption Supervisor or Designee will

- Send request to SSCC Designee to create the FAD stage in IMPACT.
- After final review and approval, email the completed Adoption Subsidy packet to the eligibility specialist no later than 30 days prior adoption placement, as there must be enough time for eligibility to be determined and an Adoption Subsidy agreement signed with the family prior to consummation. See [Foster Care Eligibility Specialist](#) table to determine the appropriate Specialist.
- Send via mail the original complete packet documents to the AA/PCA Negotiator.

The eligibility specialist will

- Review each packet for completeness
- Determine if the child is eligible
- Email the Preliminary Determination notification to the Belong Adoption Specialist, Supervisor
- Forward the packet to the PCA/ADO negotiator Yesenia Moreno at yesenia.moreno@dfps.texas.gov

The PCA/ADO negotiator will

- Meet with the family to negotiate subsidy benefits
- Email the Belong Adoption Specialist the agreements for the family to sign at the adoptive placement.

The Belong Adoption Specialist will

- Obtain signatures on the agreements from the caregivers
- Ensure that caregivers sign the agreement in ink and they must be dated no later than the day of the hearing.
- Mail the original, signed, hard copy documents to the AA/PCA Negotiator

[Belong] will follow the eligibility and application process for Adoption Assistance Program CPS Handbook §1730 Medicaid Coverage, the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance, and Adoption Assistance.

- The EAA forms are submitted in conjunction with the Adoption Assistance Forms listed above.
- The forms require a [Belong] Adoption Specialist, Adoption Supervisor and Program Director original signature and date for each child.
 - [Enhanced Adoption Assistance Request Form 2421](#)
 - [Enhanced Adoption Assistance Cover Memo 2422](#)
 - [Documentation for Enhanced Adoption Assistance 2425](#)
- The completed EAA packet will be submitted to the AA Eligibility Specialist for processing.
- Once the packet is processed and assigned to a AA Negotiator, the negotiator will submit the EAA packet to the State Office Adoption Program Specialist at adoption.policy@dfps.texas.gov for approval or denial.

Process	Procedure
Tasks if Child Does Not Qualify for Adoption Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if you think the child will not qualify for adoption assistance the Adoption Assistance Packet will be submitted to the Adoption Eligibility worker. • If the Belong Adoption Specialist is unsure about the child’s eligibility, a packet should be submitted, and the adoption eligibility worker will determine eligibility and notify all parties. • If an AA packet is not submitted, the Belong Adoption Specialist will need to email the adoptive parent’s home study and the child’s name and PID to the Adoption Assistance Negotiator at least 10 business days prior to the planned adoptive placement so that a FAD stage can be created. • Adoption placement will be completed in IMPACT by the Belong Adoption Specialist using the RID for the FAD stage created. • Following the adoption consummation, the Belong Adoption Specialist will email the petition to adopt and the adoption decree upon receipt to the adoption eligibility worker.
Tasks After Adoption is Final	<p>Belong Adoption Specialist will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the final court hearing, scan the file stamped order signed by the judge and send to the assigned Adoption Assistance Eligibility Specialist • <i>For the SUB Stage:</i> • Email the AA/PCA Eligibility Specialists to end foster care eligibility billing/FC benefits for non-subsidy eligible children. • Complete a closing summary in the SUB stage • Once foster care eligibility has been ended, submit SUB stage for closure. • <i>For the ADO stage:</i> • Enter placement in the ADO stage using the RID for the FAD stage that was created. • In the ADO stage, update legal actions with “Agreed Orders No Hearing” and legal status with “Adoption Consummated” • Change the children’s names to the new adoptive names on the person list in the ADO stage. • Change the stage name of the ADO stage to the new adoptive name under the case management tab. • Complete a closing summary in the ADO stage.

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the eligibility specialist has entered the subsidy benefits in IMPACT, end the child referral and close the SUB and ADO stages • Close SUB stage after FC eligibility has been ended • A PAD stage will be automatically generated (if child is subsidy- eligible) once the ADO stage is closed. • Assign the PAD and FAD stages to the Adoption Assistance Eligibility Specialist as primary .
Issues That Cause a Delay with Adoptive Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption Assistance Packet does not have original signatures from family or supervisor. • AA checklist not fully completed. • Child’s name or date of birth does not match what is on the birth certificate or legal documents • Source documentation missing. • Home study update/addendum not included (within 1 year of placement). • Vendor ID not obtained and entered into IMPACT prior to placement. • ADO stage not opened prior to adoptive placement occurring. • Online AA application not submitted. • ALOC issues where family is disputing Basic ALOC for child at negotiation

Authorization of Adoption Services

Process	Procedure
Authorization of Adoption Services	<p>Belong Adoption Specialist will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Service Authorization (Form 2054) for the identified adoption service to Belong in IMPACT; • For straight adopt both service codes 88F and 88G will be utilized; • For Foster to Adopt use only service code 88G. • All siblings being placed together should be added to the one Service Authorization form (2054), with the oldest child as the primary client. • In the comments section of the Form 2054, add the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child(ren)’s Name (s). ○ Person Identification Number(s) ○ The Child Placing Agency CPA name ○ Whether Form 2054 is for a sibling set; and if yes, how many siblings ○ The type of adoption (i.e., Foster-to- adopt/) ○ The YFT LOC Determination for the child/youth

Process	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send e-mail notification to Belong at permanencybelong@sjrctexas.org and attach the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completed and approved Service Authorization (Form 2054); and ○ Completed and signed Adoption Placement Agreement (Form 2226) <p>See Appendix K: CBC Adoption Placement/Service Authorization Process for more information. In order to ensure placement stability, Belong is responsible for obtaining and delivering services to children/youth placed with adoptive families prior to consummation of the adoption.</p>

Post Adoption Services

To help adopted children and adoptive parents adjust to their adoptions post adoption services are available. Most of these services are provided by contracted providers. For detailed information about providing postadoption services through contracted providers, see [8410 Post Adoption Services](#). All families of children adopted through DFPS can obtain post-adoption services. This service is available to families along with Title IV-E and state-paid adoption subsidies from DFPS.

Belong Regional Post-Adoption Liaison will facilitate referring the family to the local post-adoption service provider.

Since funding is limited, there are times that children/youth require out of home placement to meet their mental health needs and funds are not available through traditional Post Adoption Services. Refer to CPS Policy [6961 Post Adoption Substitute Care Services](#) for these situations.

Post Adoption Liaisons responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Fielding calls from post adoption families who may be in crisis or in need of Post Adoption Services and referring them to the appropriate provider.
- Working as a facilitator between, CPI, post adoption provider and the family.
- If any child/youth has the potential to enter Post Adoption Substitute Care Services and DFPS may be seeking Joint Managing Conservatorship, the CBCA, Belong Post ADO Liaison, as well as Belong Permanency Director will need to be notified and participate in any staffings.
- Be a subject matter expert for South Central & Hill Country area and for CPI and other CPS staff to reach out to with questions.
- Review service plans completed by the post adoption provider as appropriate.
- Coordinate, facilitate, and attend staffings with post adoption families, post adoption providers, CPI (If applicable) to assist in identifying steps and roles if needed for [Return to Care](#) placement.
- Be a point of contact for their regional post adoption providers.
- Stay in communication with the Belong Adoption Specialist as well as attend quarterly providers meetings (conference lines will be available).
- The Post Adoption Liaison or their designee will process, which includes entering and approving 2054 service authorizations for the post adoption cases.

Belong will notify the CBCA of any children/youth that are unable to be served by Post Adoption Services.

See CPS Handbook policy [8400 Post Adoption Services](#) and [Adoptions Support Programs Safety Net Page](#)

Also see [Placements When Joint Managing Conservatorship is Obtained](#) for additional information for this population.

Services to Older Youth in Care

Belong will work to prepare older youth in DFPS conservatorship who are transitioning from substitute care to adulthood. Belong, in general, will be responsible for all the provision of transitional living services for older youth.

For Additional information see:

- [CPS Policy Section 10000: Services to Older Youth in Care](#)
- [Transitional Living Services Resource Guide](#)
- [Extended Foster Care Resource Guide](#)
- [Trial Independence and Return Resource Guide](#)
- [Preparation for Long Term Care and Support Resource Guide](#)

Birth Certificates for Youth

Please refer to CPS Policy [1520 Obtaining Certified Birth Certificates and Screen Printing Birth Records](#) to learn more regarding which type of birth verification is required for specific case management circumstances and the documentation required to support the request.

The Foster Care Eligibility Specialist is the subject matter expert that can assist in getting birth certificates. Please refer to CPS Policy [1521 Requesting Certified Birth Certificates](#).

The DFPS points of contact for Region 8b birth certificates are [Foster Care Eligibility Specialists](#).

Beginning in June 2019, the request for birth certificates for youth **who turn age 15** are handled at CPS State Office. The certified copy (or original) birth certificate, photocopy of the birth certificate, and a cover memo with instructions will be mailed to the Belong Point of Contact. The Belong Permanency Specialist will deliver the birth certificate to the youth in person and have them sign [Form 2527 Personal Documents Checklist - 15](#) or [Form 2528 – Personal Documents Checklist - 18](#). In addition, the worker will check the new indicator box on the Child’s Plan of Service in IMPACT.

Any birth certificate requests that do not meet CPS Policy [1520 Obtaining Certified Birth Certificates and Screen Printing Birth Records](#) guidance prior to the child turning 15 will require Belong completing the request for the certificate and providing any funds needed.

[Belong contact: BirthCertificateRequestbelong@sjrctexas.org](mailto:BirthCertificateRequestbelong@sjrctexas.org)

Credit Checks for Youth

Every youth in the conservatorship of DFPS age 14 up to age 18, receives a copy of their consumer credit report annually. In addition to ensuring that a youth's credit is checked, and any discrepancies are found and disputed, the Belong Permanency Specialist is also required to share the credit report with the youth, provide the youth with a copy, and explain the importance of maintaining good credit.

Belong Liaison for Credit Checks for Youth is: Belong Independent Living Coordinator

For additional information see [Credit Reports for Youth](#) on the DFPS Safety Net.

Transition Plan Development

- Beginning when the youth turns age 14, the transition plan is enhanced over time until the youth leaves substitute care or ages out of care. The plan must address the issues that are important for the youth as he or she leaves care and enters the adult world.
- See CPS Handbook policy [6252 Permanency Planning Meetings for Youth 14 and Older](#)

Requests for assistance in transitional plan development for youth who are placed but not Primary Case Worker.

If a primary case worker not from the South Central & Hill Country area needs assistance in transition planning for a youth, please follow the process for [requesting services across regional lines](#) from Belong. On the [Form 2077](#), complete a request for Local Permanency Services and indicate that the service requested is Transitional Plan Development assistance.

Point of Contact: Family Engagement Specialist at CircleofSupportbelong@sjrctexas.org

Preparation for Adult Living (PAL)

Belong will ensure the development and delivery of PAL Life Skills Training for eligible youth:

- All youth from South Central & Hill Country area placed in paid and non-paid placements (including kinship) within and outside the designated community area.

For eligible youth, please see policies [10211.1 Targeted Priority Population](#) and 10211.2 Additional Eligible Population.

As part of the delivery of PAL training, Belong will ensure the arrangement for the Casey Life Skills Assessments and its interpretation to be shared and discussed with the youth and caregiver. Belong will ensure that experiential and community-based learning is included in all PAL training and services.

CPS Handbook policy [10222 Life Skills Training](#).

Belong point of contact: Belong PAL Email Box: palbelong@sjrctexas.org

Extended Foster Care/ Return to Extended Foster Care

Belong will identify young adults from South Central & Hill Country area for either Extended Foster Care or Return to Foster Care programs.

Note: Youth who desire to return to foster care during their 6- or 12-month trial independence period are in Extended Foster Care. Youth who desire to return to foster care after their Trial Independence period are considered youth in Return to Foster Care.

Extended Foster Care

When a young adult from South Central & Hill Country area is interested in staying in extended foster care, Belong will:

- Follow their Case Management Policy when serving young adults in these programs.
- Assist the young adult with completing the [Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement \(Form 2540\)](#).
- Provide the completed [Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement \(Form 2540\)](#) to the CPS Foster Care Eligibility Specialist.

Return to Foster Care

A young adult who was in DFPS conservatorship when turning 18 and leaves foster care may return to Foster Care at any time prior to the month before the young adult's 21st birthday, provided the young adult meets the requirements in [10420](#) Qualifying for Extended Foster Care, or at any time prior to the month before the young adult's 22nd birthday if they are regularly attending high school or in a program leading to a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED). Return to Foster Care does not include young adults who are in Trial Independence (see [10510](#) Trial Independence).

Referrals for a young adult who wants to return for Extended Foster Care may include young adults whose legal case was outside the South Central & Hill Country area, but the young adult now lives in the South Central & Hill Country area. Young adults residing in South Central & Hill Country area who are not from the South Central & Hill Country area that indicate to their PAL Coordinator a desire to Return to Care in South Central & Hill Country area will be prescreened for their sincerity and eligibility for returning to care and then referred to the Belong Independent Living Specialist (re-Entry Liaison).

Belong Re-Entry Liaison : PALbelong@sjrctexas.org

If placement is found:

Belong Permanency Specialist will:

- Ensure the young adult completes the [Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement \(form 2540\)](#)
- Provide completed [Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement \(form 2540\)](#) to the CPS Foster Care Eligibility Specialist

See CPS Handbook policy:

[10400 Extending Foster Care for Young adult Who Are Age 18 or Older](#)

[10500 Trial Independence and Return for Extended Foster Care](#)

Supervised Independent Living (SIL)

Supervised independent living (SIL) placement settings are living arrangements offered through the Extended Foster Care program that allow young adults to reside in a less restrictive, non-traditional foster care setting while continuing to receive casework and support services to become independent and self-sufficient.

To be eligible for SIL, young adults must be able to live independently in a setting with minimal

to no supervision. Through conversations with the young adult and the initial assessment, the young adult will be placed in the setting which best meets his or her needs. In order to maintain placement in the SIL program, young adults must comply with the [Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement \(form 2540\)](#). Young adults can move through the settings offered based on behaviors, enhancement of skills, or overall progress made in the young adult's current setting. The SIL case managers will maintain documentation of the young adult's progress in case notes, as well as in the subsequent service planning meetings, which will be filed in the young adult's case record.

Belong will continue to follow established protocol regarding SIL placements for Young Adults being served that are from a legal county within the South Central & Hill Country area and those that are from another legal county that desire SIL placement in the South Central & Hill Country area.

Please refer to [Supervised Independent Living \(SIL\) Flow Chart](#) for additional guidance. Please note that Belong is now responsible for actions previously identified as CVS or PAL responsibilities.

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

NYTD Outcomes Survey

The NYTD survey is a federal survey that states administer to certain youth and young adults at age 17, 19 and 21.

Belong Independent Living Specialist must track survey completion, assist youth with taking the survey and enter survey responses in IMPACT according to the federal survey reporting requirements.

- The NYTD Information Page in IMPACT alerts Belong about youth from their designated community area who have been identified to take the survey, status of the survey, and due date of the survey during each survey period (A or B).
- Belong will check the NYTD Information Page in IMPACT to determine which of their assigned youth needs to take the survey.
- Belong will take the lead in notifying the identified youth or youth adult their survey is due, obtain survey responses and enter their survey responses in IMPACT.
- CPS State Office Youth and Transitional Services office will monitor Belong's NYTD survey completion progress and will send out periodic information about the status of Belong's survey completion rate.
- When requested, Belong will update CPS State Office on progress and plans to get surveys completed by period data entry due dates.
- Belong will maintain current contact information in IMPACT for youth placed within their provider network.

NYTD Data and Information Errors

- Belong must check the NYTD Information Page in IMPACT for DATA and

INFORMATION errors in IMPACT and make corrections and updates.

- DATA and INFORMATION errors correspond to surveys and services provided during the reporting period.
- When requested, Belong will update CPS State Office on progress and plans to get DATA and INFORMATION errors completed by period data entry due dates.
- Details on correcting data and information errors can be found in the NYTD Manual in SMILEY.

NYTD Services

- Belong will enter services provided to successfully transition youth to adulthood in the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) stage in IMPACT.
- Services entered in IMPACT must be either paid for or provided by Belong.
- When requested, Belong will update CPS State Office on progress and plans to get services entered by period data entry due dates.
- Details on entering services in IMPACT can be found in the NYTD Manual in SMILEY and in the PAL Staff Manual.

See the [Transitional Living Services Resource Guide](#), NYTD Manual in SMILEY and PAL Manual for information on completing the survey, correcting data and information errors and entering services.

PAL Aftercare Services

PAL Aftercare services and programs are available for young adults from South Central & Hill Country area and the resources for these services will be shared between Belong and DFPS. Please see [10200 Preparation for Adult Living \(PAL\)](#) for additional information regarding these services and their eligibility requirements.

To access, Belong Independent Living Specialist will complete a Service Authorization (2054) to the contractor providing the service and the contractor will bill DFPS directly.

Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

The following regional protocols have been developed to manage Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) specific situations in the South Central & Hill Country (8b) area.

For more information on ICPC processes, see CPS Handbook policies [4500 Interstate Placements](#) and [9000 Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children \(ICPC\)](#).

For additional information regarding processes for referrals for services related to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) please see the [ICPC Resource Guide](#) on listed with [CBC Resources](#) on the DFPS Safety Net.

Out of State and Out of Country Travel for Foster Youth in Conservatorship

In-State, Out-of-State, and Out-of-Country Travel for Children in Conservatorship

For information on children traveling in-state please follow the [CPS Policy 6471.1](#) and for children traveling out-of-state please follow [CPS Policy 6471.2](#) in regard to approvals and communications. For children traveling outside of the U.S court approval is needed. [Form 2069 Caregiver Declaration Regarding Out-of-County Travel](#) must be filled out and submitted to the Belong caseworker. Belong will then follow the steps outlined in [CPS Policy 6474.1](#) by following

Belong's chain of command. Once all approvals are obtained from Belong leadership, an Acton Memo addressed to the Assistant Commissioner, will then be submitted to DFPS State Office Program Support, Regina Perez at regina.perez@dfps.texas.gov, who will route for final review. Refer to [CPS Policy 6474](#) for additional information.

For additional information see [When a Child or Youth in CPS Conservatorship Travels Resource Guide](#)

Out of State Request for Residential Treatment Center (RTC) Placements for Children from Texas

Belong may seek an out-of-state Residential Treatment Center (RTC) for placement of a child from South Central & Hill Country (8b) catchment area.

- When an out-of-state RTC is located, Belong will initiate and create a contract with the out- of-state Residential Treatment Center.
- The Belong Permanency Worker will submit the ICPC Residential Treatment Center out-of- state placement request through IMPACT.
- State Office ICPC will process the outgoing RTC request to the receiving state.
- Once the ICPC request is completed, State office ICPC will upload the decision 100A into IMPACT.
- If the placement is approved, Belong, as part of case management, is responsible for setting up a contract for supervision of the child in the out of state placement.
- Belong is responsible for monitoring the out-of-state placement for the timeframes specified within the sub-contract with the Residential Treatment Center.

Out of State Request for Parent or Relative Home Study and Placement for Children from Texas:

Outgoing Parent or Relative Home Study Requests and Placement

- Belong will complete and submit the outgoing ICPC request, including all required documents, through IMPACT and follow current ICPC process.
- Placement will remain with Belong during the ICPC process.

- If the out-of-state placement is approved by the receiving state, State Office ICPC will notify the Belong ICPC Coordinator via uploading the home study in IMPACT.
- Belong will prepare the child for transition into approved out-of-state placement.
 - This will include notifying the Well-Being Specialist, preferably 30 days before the child's placement, as they will assist in arranging for medical needs or assessing services for children before placement outside of Texas. See CPS policy [4515 Placing the Child in the Other State if the Placement is Approved](#)
- Belong Permanency Worker will be responsible for the out-of-state physical placement of the child.
- Once the child is in the out-of-state placement, the Belong Permanency Specialist will complete the 100B in IMPACT, submit it to the unit supervisor who will approve and send to the Belong ICPC Coordinator who will:
 - Submit the 100B in IMPACT within **3 business days** to State Office ICPC indicating placement has been completed.
- If there is a placement disruption in the out-of-state placement, Belong will secure possession of the child from the out-of-state caregivers and return the child to Texas.
- If a non-licensed kinship placement decides to become a licensed foster placement, the Belong will resubmit ICPC request in IMPACT and follow the [Outgoing Foster Home and Adoption Study Request](#) process.

Request to Place with a Non-Offending Parent

Non-offending parent home study requests are only processed on parents that have been found to be unfit. State Office ICPC will only process a parent home study request on a Non-Offending Parent if ordered by the Court. State Office ICPC will screen all parent home study requests prior to sending to receiving state.

If a Texas Caregiver Moves to Another State

If a child's caregiver moves to another state, and it is in the child's best interest to move with the caregiver, Belong must ask the other state for permission to continue the placement there. Please see CPS Policy [4513.6 If a Texas Caregiver Moves to Another State](#).

When a Belong Worker Receives an I&R in IMPACT and/or Notification from Texas ICPC of a Report of Alleged Child Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation in Another State

When notification is received, the Belong Permanency Specialist must follow CPS Policy 4221.2 CPS Responsibility and Procedure after Receiving a Notification of Alleged Abuse and Neglect by Either RCCI or CPI and take the following actions:

- Immediately review the abuse, neglect, or exploitation report in IMPACT.
- Immediately discuss the intake with the supervisor.
- Contact the investigator from the other state for additional information.
- Consult with the program director about the circumstances surrounding the investigation no later than 7 p.m. the next business day.

- Document an *I&R A/N Notification Staffing* contact type in the child's *Sub* stage no later than 7 p.m. the next business day after notification of the report.
- The contact documentation must include the following:
 - A copy of the I&R.
 - Discussions with supervisor and program director.
 - Consideration of the child's safety needs and any related actions.
 - Any plans for future actions.

The Belong Permanency Specialist must document the execution and results of any follow-up actions as normal contacts in IMPACT when they are completed.

The Belong Permanency Specialist must document as a contact in IMPACT a summary and the disposition of the investigation once the investigation is concluded.

ICPC Violations

Court orders that violate the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) include orders that:

- place a child in another state without an approved ICPC homestudy;
- send a child into another state on visits that extend past 30 days: or
- dismiss DFPS from its lawsuit without the other state's agreement.

The exception involves placement of a child with a noncustodial parent who resides in another state. This type of placement is not subject to the ICPC but requires following a specific protocol. See [4513.1](#) Placing a Child with an Out-of-State Non-Custodial Parent.

For Subject Matter Assistance regarding ICPC matters, please contact [Texas Interstate Compact Office \(TICO\)](#)

[Belong ICPC Contact: ICPCbelong@sjrctexas.org](mailto:ICPCbelong@sjrctexas.org)

Additional reference:

[Hearings and Legal Proceedings Resource Guide.](#)

CPS Policy [5314 Court Orders That Violate the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children](#)

WHEN A CHILD DIES DURING AN OPEN CVS CASE

Notifying DFPS Staff When a Child Dies While in DFPS Conservatorship

Immediately, but no later than 24 hours the Belong caseworker notifies:

- Child's parents (may be notified even if rights terminated) or relatives who have been involved with the child if parents cannot be found.
- State-Wide Intake (SWI).
- Belong Supervisor and Belong Permanency Director.
- Medical examiner or justice of the peace.

- Law enforcement when necessary.
- The court.
- The child’s attorney ad litem.
- Parents’ attorneys.
- The child’s guardian ad litem.
- Attorney representing DFPS in child’s case.
- DFPS regional attorney.
- Licensed Child Placing Agency Administrator (LCPAA).
- Community-Based Care Administrator for Belong (CBCA)
- CPS Regional Director for the regional area
- DFPS Media Specialist for the regional area

See [6490 If a Child Dies While in Substitute Care](#)

Submitting Form 2701 (Part A)

Within 24 hours of receiving notification of the child’s death (excluding weekends and holidays), the regionally designated Belong staff completes Form 2701 Part A and forwards it by e-mail to the appropriate [Child Safety Specialist for Region 8](#) with the Office of Accountability. The Child Safety Specialist reviews the form and then sends an e-mail with the 2701A attached to the appropriate staff, including the Community-Based Care Administrator for Belong, Crystal Smith (830) 317-0503 .

Throughout the investigation Belong staff will work with the Office of Accountability and the DFPS investigation divisions to provide any necessary information needed.

SSCC Process on Funeral/Burial Procedures and Invoicing

CPS Handbook §[6491](#), 6492 and [§8512](#) (\$4,500 max per policy)

Belong will arrange a funeral for any child or youth who dies while in CPS managing conservatorship or any young adult, age 18 or older, who dies in extended foster care.

Funeral arrangements include burial or cremation as specified in CPS Policy Funeral and Burial Services for Children in DFPS Conservatorship. Children or youth placed with relatives or in the birth home at the time of death are eligible for financial assistance for funeral arrangements if CPS was the managing conservator.

To ensure proper arrangements are made, the caseworker must complete the following steps in the order outlined:

- Inquire About Children’s [Funds](#)
- Involve Biological [Parents](#)
- Involve Foster Parents and Other Significant [Individuals](#)
- [Involve Community Partners](#)

- [Access CPS Funding](#)

Involve Biological Parents

The Belong Case Manager should involve the child's biological parents in the funeral arrangements to the maximum extent possible, even if parental rights have been terminated, if the case manager determines doing so is appropriate. For example, parental involvement:

- may not be appropriate if rights have been terminated and the child was in a pre- consummated adoptive placement; or
- could be appropriate if a parent has remained in contact and the child was in a placement not intended to be permanent.

Regardless of legal status, a parent may wish to help with arrangements, express preferences, and contribute resources to cover the costs of a child's funeral. The case manager may not ask the biological parents to pay for all or some of the funeral expenses. However, parents may contribute directly to the funeral home if they choose.

- The Belong Case Manager must document in the child's case record the:
 - date the case manager spoke with the parents
 - content of the discussions
 - outcome; and
 - date the parents responded.

Involve Foster Parents and Other Significant Individuals

The Belong Case Manager should also invite foster parents and other individuals significant to the child's life to participate in planning the child's funeral arrangements. The Belong Case Manager does not solicit contributions from foster parents and other significant individuals. However, if they voluntarily indicate that they wish to contribute to some of the funeral expenses, they may do so by paying the funeral home or other vendor directly.

Involve Community Partners

The external community is often a key partner in securing funeral arrangements for a child who died while in CPS conservatorship. When a community partner expresses a desire to assist with funeral arrangements, CPS coordinates with those partners. CPS is legally authorized to accept donations, gifts, or in-kind contributions to cover funeral expenses.

Access CPS Funding

If resources are not available to fully fund the cost of a funeral for a child who died while in conservatorship, the caseworker may authorize up to \$4,500 per child for reasonable and necessary burial or cremation expenses. The Belong Case Manager must contact the regional burial liaison, CBC Region 8b Contract Administration Manager (CAM), to make the request for funds. If the Belong staff determines funding in addition to the \$4,500 is needed for the child's funeral, the CPS region must seek approval for additional funding from the CPS Assistant

Commissioner. Additional funds may be expended to cover the funeral costs as described in CPS policy Funeral and Burial Services for Children in DFPS Conservatorship.

For the Funeral Home to receive payment, the following is needed:

Prior to Belong staff signing any agreement you must send the itemized contract/agreement from the funeral home to the CBC Region 8b CAM, Veronica Alvarez to review for allowable/unallowable items. The contract must be signed by Belong designated staff and the authorized funeral home staff.

The allowable expenses for funeral services are limited to:

- transportation of the body
- embalming
- a coffin
- burial or cremation
- grave plot
- headstone or memorial marker (**required**); and • other reasonable and necessary burial expenses.

Unallowable expenses

Burial funds may **not** be used for:

- floral arrangements, cards, registry; or
- limousine transportation for the family or other individuals.

The Belong caseworker uses as much of the DFPS burial funding as is needed to cover the allowable expenses after applying contributions provided by the parents and community partners. Contributions from parents and community partners may be used for floral arrangements, police escort, limousine transportation, or catering depending on their preferences but must not be included in the funeral home contract/agreement.

- A complete Form 4116 Purchase Voucher. This form must be signed by funeral home representative and SSCC designated staff. Funeral home can contact the CBC Region 8b CAM, Veronica Alvarez for help in filling out this form (210) 478-0559.
- A complete Form AP-152 Application for Texas Identification Number and 74-176 Direct Deposit Authorization.

Important Notes:

- Only include the items that DFPS is paying for on the [Form 4116](#) in box #20 Description of Good and Services.
- Funeral home representative signature authority will need to sign next to the X (above box #24), including phone number. Print name and phone number in #24
- Belong authorized staff must sign the first line in box #26 include phone number and date.

- Email all completed documents to the CBC Region 8b Contract Administration Manager: Veronica Alvarez and CC Community-Based Care Administrator, Crystal Smith.

Administrative Related

Title IV-E University Training Program

Refer to: DFPS Policy [3000 Introduction to the Title IV-E Program](#) , [4000 Title IV-E Training Contracts With Universities](#)

Belong Title IV-E University Training Program for Current and Non-Employees

This section explains the:

- Process for applying to the Title IV-E University Training Program; and
- How the Belong training academy managed by the Belong training division support that effort.

Each year, DFPS awards federally funded training to eligible Belong employees and eligible state universities for students preparing for employment with Belong. The number of awards is based on the number of Title IV-E-funded positions that Belong anticipates each year.

The awards are made to eligible Belong employees who are interested in a Master of Social Work (MSW) and eligible students who are enrolled in academic programs that lead toward a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) or Master of Social Work (MSW).

The Belong training academy provides basic skills development training to these trainees to prepare them for Belong employment.

Applying for Title IV-E Training with Belong for Prospective Employees

To request admission for a student, the university's coordinator for the Title IV-E Child Welfare Program sends an email to:

- The CPS Regional Operations Support Administrator (ROSA)
- Belong Director of Human Resources
- The DFPS Title IV-E contract manager

The email must contain the applicant's:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Social Security number; and

- Type of degree (BSW or MSW)

For BSW students, the coordinator sends the email at least three months before the start of the student's *final* semester. For MSW candidates, the coordinator sends the email at least three months before the candidate's *first* semester.

Each applicant submits the following to the university coordinators. The University will then provide the information to the ROSA and the Belong Director of Human Resources. The ROSA will maintain all original documents for the Title IV-E stipend program.

- University acceptance letter
- Statement of interest
- Three professional letters of recommendation from professors or employers
- Copy of students most recent unofficial transcript from University
- Waivers as appropriate
- Certified copy of the applicant's driving record
- Volunteer application, Form 0250
- Authorization for a background check, Form 0250b An HHS Acceptable Use Agreement, Form HHS-AUA
- Form 0261 Volunteer Program Work Rules, Standards of Behavior and Performance
- Volunteer Confidential Statement Form 0251
- TB Test Results

To enable the applicant to take any required pre-employment test/assessments, the university's coordinator directs the applicant to apply for a Belong specialist position in the appropriate Belong unit. Taking this step creates a profile in the Belong human resources system that allows the applicant to access any required tests/assessments.

Once the applicant has applied for a Belong specialist position, the Belong designee forwards copies of the following to the Centralized Background Check Unit (CBCU), so that appropriate checks can be performed:

- A certified copy of the applicant's driving record
- A volunteer application, [Form 0250](#)

The CBCU forwards the results of the checks to:

- The ROSA
- Belong Director of Human Resources and
- The contract manager.

If the results are questionable, the ROSA or Belong Director of Human Resources reviews them and determines whether the applicant is employable.

If the checks are acceptable, the ROSA sets up interviews which includes the ROSA, Belong Hiring Manager, and Belong personnel. If the interview is acceptable, the ROSA or Belong Director of Human Resources notifies each University coordinator who will prepare a Stipend

Student Information Form for each student. The university coordinator will then forward the information form to the contract manager who prepares an agreement for each student.

If the results of any of the above assessments are not satisfactory, the ROSA or Belong designee:

- Prepares a disapproval memo; and
- Forwards it to the university coordinator who will notify the student.

The ROSA sets up an orientation meeting to review and sign the stipend contract agreement.

Participants include the ROSA, Belong Director of Human Resources, the university coordinator and the students. These contracts are not executable until they are signed by Belong.

During the orientation meeting, the following topics are covered:

The terms and conditions of the agreement, including any payback responsibilities. Repayment if eight calendar months of employment in an IV-Eligible position for each semester which the stipend was paid to the employee. Repayment of the stipend through full time employment begins the first day of employment. The commitment that students must make to accept any statewide employment with Belong on completion of their training.

The ROSA then forwards all signed agreements, along with a completed checklist for each contract, to the Belong Director of Human Resources for final approval. Once signed, the ROSA will send the original signed agreement to the State Office Contract Manager for final processing.

After each agreement is approved:

The State Office Contract Manager will send a signed copy of the agreement to the stipend student.

The ROSA or Belong Director of Human Resources completes a Move, Add, or Change form (known as an eMAC) to obtain a log-in ID for access to DFPS systems

The interns are ready to attend training offered by the Belong.

The Belong Director of Human Resources will designate a unit supervisor for the intern to be placed under for training through the duration of the placement, communicate the information/location to the University liaison and intern.

The Belong Director of Human Resources will send training orientation invites to the Belong interns before the intern reports to the placement location.

Interns must maintain satisfactory performance while participating in the program. If an intern fails to complete training or is disqualified from the program, he or she must pay back the award, in accordance with the agreement.

Two months before university graduation, each student must submit an employment application to Belong for a Title IV-E eligible position.

Each intern must accept any Title IV-E eligible position offered statewide within 60 days of graduation.

The ROSA or Belong Director of Human Resources notifies the Title IV-E contract manager that the intern has been placed in a Title IV-E position.

Calendar dates for submitting and processing non-employee stipend students must be followed as below:

- Fall Semester:
 - May 15: All names submitted by University along with background forms, etc during this week.
 - June 1: All applicants must have taken any pre-test/assessments required by Belong
 - June 15: Set up interview during this week
 - July 15: All contracts ready this week.
 - Mid-August: Semester begins
- Spring Semester:
 - October 1: All names submitted by University along with background forms, etc during this week
 - October 15: All applicants must have taken any pre-test/assessments required by Belong.
 - November 1: Set up interview during this week
 - December 1: All contracts ready this week.
 - Mid-January: Semester begins
- Summer Semester:
 - February 15: All names submitted by University along with background forms, etc during this week
 - March 1: All applicants must have taken any pre-test/assessments required by Belong.
 - March 15: Set up interview during this week
 - April 15: All contracts ready this week.
 - Last week of May: Semester begins

Inventory and Equipment Agreement

Since Title IV-E interns do not receive Tablet PCs, they require a separate process through the Belong to ensure accessibility to the required computer equipment. The Belong Director of Human Resources will ensure the Title IV-E interns under Belong receive necessary computer equipment.

Records Management

DFPS Records Management Group will support Belong with the same services it provides to DFPS. For more information about services see [Records Management Group Safety net page](#).

RMG adheres to the nine-level priority list established by Texas Administrative Code when fulfilling redaction records requests. The detailed priority list from highest to lowest priority ranking is as follows:

1. Records provided in response to a subpoena or court order that has been properly served on DFPS.
2. Records provided in response to discovery in a lawsuit to which DFPS is a party.
3. Records provided to a prospective adoptive family before an adoption may be consummated.
4. Records provided to a party or the administrative law judge in an Employee Misconduct Registry administrative hearing.
5. Records provided to a party or the administrative law judge in a hearing conducted by the State Office of Administrative Hearings.
6. Records provided to a duly authorized person documenting the results of a school investigation as required by Texas Family Code [§261.406](#)
7. Records provided to a party in an administrative review of investigative findings that is conducted by DFPS.
8. Records provided to an adult who was previously in the conservatorship of DFPS, if the request is for a copy of the adult's own case record as defined by Texas Family Code [§264.0145](#)
9. Records provided to all other requesters entitled to receive the requested records, which are fulfilled in the order they are received.

All Belong Unit Admins will have access to RMG Case Track system.

Belong POC for Records management requests: RecordsRequestbelong@sjrctexas.org.

All records requests should be submitted directly to DFPS Records Management by submitting the request for records through OneCase in IMPACT.

Exceptions for not requesting records through OneCase:

- District and District and County Attorney Offices may submit an email requesting discovery directly to the RMG mailbox when the office is representing DFPS.
- When a SSCC caseworker receives an email directly from a District or County Attorney requesting discovery, the SSCC caseworker may upload the email into OneCase in lieu of the required discovery court order.

DFPS Records Management email: records@dfps.texas.gov

Belong Permanency Specialist On-Call

Belong will be expected to have a Permanency Case Manager On-Call Schedule. To reach the on-call staff member, please contact the **Belong Care Management division at (210)-904-1137**.

Link to the on-call schedule for Belong is listed below. Belong's on-call schedule is listed with the other regions on-call listed on the Safety Net.

[CPS On Call Schedule - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

The CPS PA Admin, Lester.Velazquezpo2@dfps.texas.gov will ensure the on-call schedule on the Safety Net is updated with the Belong contact information.

Reporting Threats or Incidents

Physical attacks on employees are rare. However, because employees must often interview people who are angry, fearful, and occasionally hostile or aggressive, it is wise to take precautions and ensure that information about threats or incidents are reported and information is shared with both Belong and DFPS. DFPS Worker Safety Support staff will disseminate and track threats or incidents and will ensure that information is shared with Belong and DFPS.

Examples of incidents that DFPS Worker Safety Support could be involved in related to work by Belong because there is a need to ensure the safety of DFPS staff and buildings:

- Client makes a threat to come to a shared location and cause harm.
- Client makes a threat to Belong worker that is tied to a case decision and DFPS staff could be perceived as in danger due to the nature of statement/action.
 - *Example:* Client's visitation is suspended and makes a threat to physically harm anyone that gets in the way of them and their children.
- Client makes a threat toward DFPS staff or a DFPS building to an Belong worker.
- There is an outburst by a client in a shared location that causes damage to the building.
- Law enforcement is called to a shared office to respond to a safety concern for staff.
- Vandalism of a car on state property or DFPS leased facility.
- Internal worker safety issue between a DFPS staff and Belong staff.

Examples of incidents that DFPS Worker Safety Support would *not* be involved in when working with Belong:

- Client shows up at a Belong workers home.
- Client makes a threat to Belong worker and there is no perceived concern for DFPS staff
 - *Example:* Client threatens Belong based on the way they perceived Belong staff treated them.
- Client calls a Belong building and threatens harm to staff or the building.
- Client taking pictures of Belong worker car license plates on state property.

- Client posting on social media Belong worker information or making threats.
- Client assaults Belong worker outside of a shared location.
- Worker Safety issues between two Belong staff.

*In all above situations DFPS Worker Safety Support is available to consult on safety information that may be applicable to the threat, but Belong management would be responsible for providing guidance on how to ensure the safety of their workers. Ongoing communication is encouraged between DFPS and Belong to ensure safety of all staff.

Notification of a worker safety incident is made to WSS at workersafetysupport@dfps.texas.gov

Notification of a worker safety incident to Belong is made to: hr@sjrctexas.org

Additionally, Belong staff should document worker safety information in the IMPACT case record. This can be documented in the Case Summary page, under the Special Handling drop down section by checking the box next to Worker Safety and adding details regarding the safety concern in the comment box.

Belong staff should also follow any internal procedures for incident reporting that may be outlined in the Belong Operations manual.

Child and Family Services Review

The CPS division of **Federal and Program Improvement Review (FPIR)** provides continuous quality improvement services to all regions in Texas to support successful outcomes for children and families served by CPS. The division is made up of:

- Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Team.
- Parental Child Safety Placement (PCSP) Review Team.
- Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS) Critical Case Review Team.

The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Team will be randomly selecting cases that are served by Belong as part of their review.

For Additional information see Federal and Program Improvement Review Safety Net page.

Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) Assignments

Belong will develop their internal protocol to address OCA/FCO/Legislative Inquiries to adhere to time frames required by the division requesting the response.

- OCA/FCO/Legislative Inquiries will be sent directly to Belong via the following email box consumeraffairsbelong@sjrctexas.org. The Regional Director's Administrative Assistant (RDAA) and Regional Director Assistant (RDA) will be cc'd on requests.
- Belong will respond to OCA/FCO and any legislative inquiries within required timeframes as directed by divisions requesting response.
- If a substantiation results from the inquiries, Belong will create a corrective action plan with staff involved to address policy violations.
- If Belong believes the substantiation is not valid, they can ask for a review of findings.
- If the substantiation is upheld, they will continue with their corrective action plan.
- The Belong corrective action plan will be emailed to the RDAA/RDA.
- The RDA will input the information into the State Office OCA/FCO

SharePoint. For more information see: Office of Internal Affairs webpage

Ombudsman for Children and Youth in Foster Care Process (FCO)

Same process as above. For more information see [HHS Ombudsman Foster Care Help Page](#)

Legislative Inquiry Process

Same process as OCA/FCO; however, there is no corrective action unless there is an inquiry/complaint that accompanies it with a substantiation.

Solution-Based Communication

There may be times when CPS and Belong (and network paid placement providers) may not agree on a case decision or what should happen with a child/youth and/or family.

Solution-focused communication is goal-oriented communication which focuses on the solution rather than the problem. The emphasize is on strengths and resources and how these can be utilized to achieve a positive outcome.

There will be instances when there may be an issue that cannot be agreed upon by CPS and Belong. During this time, all parties involved will need to work together and communicate by e-mail, phone calls, in person, or virtually to ensure that the best interest of child/ren and youth take precedence. The safety and best interest of the child/youth should always be paramount in making the case decision and finding a solution to a barrier or disagreement.

The following section outlines the protocol to resolve case disagreements between CPS and Belong.

Solution-Based Communication Process

Step 1

- CPS workers and supervisors, Belong, and/or provider (who are closest to the issue) will work together to resolve case specific issues informally. This will be done through an objective, solution-driven discussion or meeting (e.g., phone call or virtual meeting).
- If a mutually agreeable solution is not achieved in **three (3) business** days or as necessary prior to a scheduled court hearing, those involved will notify the other individuals the plan to involve their chain of command. The disputed issue will be elevated to the Program Director and/or Program Administrator level in CPS and the Director level at Belong for possible resolution. The disputed issues should be elevated in writing.
- A meeting will be scheduled by either Belong or DFPS to discuss the issue and come to an agreed upon solution. DFPS and Belong will select an uninvolved party to the specific case to listen to the issue and assist with coming to an agreement. If an agreeable solution is not achieved during the meeting, it will be elevated to step 2.
- Disputes proceeding to Step 2 will be elevated to a knowledgeable, independent staff member (Community-Based Care Administrator) who understands the philosophy and goals of community-based care and is not a direct supervisor of the individual involved in the appeal.
- Belong must ensure continuity of services, as defined by CPS, to the child/youth or family affected while seeking to resolve case-specific disputes.

Step 2

Escalation

- The escalating party will send an e-mail with supporting documentation to the Community-Based Care Administrator and Belong's Director of Consumer Affairs with a subject line of "Solution-Based Communication".

Resolution

- Once a dispute is escalated (appeal), the Community-Based Care Administrator will provide a written decision to the appeal within **five (5)** business days. The written decision will be e-mailed to the Belong's Director of Consumer Affairs with the subject line of - "Solution-Based Communication Appeal Decision."
- If the Belong's Director of Consumer Affairs chooses, he/she will have **three (3)** business days from receipt of the notification from the Community-Based Care Administrator to appeal the decision to the CPS Regional Director. The CPS Regional Director will have **five (5)** business days to decide on the Belong's Director of Consumer Affairs appeal.
- If the Belong's Director of Consumer Affairs chooses not to appeal, they will notify the

Community-Based Care Administrator. The Community-Based Care Administrator will distribute the decision to the appropriate staff and management.

- If the Belong's Director of Consumer Affairs appeals the decision of the Community-Based Care Administrator to the CPS Regional Director, the CPS Regional Director will distribute their decision to the appropriate staff and management.

Situations Requiring Immediate Notification Between Belong and DFPS

Situations that require immediate notification between Belong and DFPS include:

- When a child, who is referred or placed with Belong, is in a life-threatening situation **and/or**
- Any time the media is involved with a child placed with Belong.
- When a court hearing is imminent and DFPS disagrees with Belongs recommendation as to the child's permanency.

Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

- Child Fatality
 - If a child fatality occurs in an open conservatorship case and meets the qualifications for an OCA Child Fatality Review, please follow the process outlined in the appendix [OCA Child Fatality Review Process](#)
 - See [Child Fatality Protocol Handbook](#) for additional information
 - Belong will be included in QRT team as appropriate
- Confirmed Abuse or Neglect situations that may attract media attention
- Child abductions
- Investigation or serious incident in kinship placement
- Abuse or neglect investigations involving SSCC staff and youth in conservatorship
- Staff acting inappropriately that may attract media attention or has been posted on social media
- If contacted directly for legislative inquiry
 - See Government Relations Handbook [Policy 3000](#)
- Natural disasters where children are displaced Notification

Immediate Notification

Notice of the incident should be sent immediately upon knowledge. The SSCC regional director equivalent will send notification via e-mail or text message the CPS Director of Field, CPS Regional Director, CBC Operations Director, Director of FCL and Government Relations and include the following information (if there is a lack of detailed information about the incident or event, SSCC Regional Director Equivalent will notify that more information will follow):

- Case ID, Youth PID
- Situation and reason for escalation
- Next steps for managing the Incident/event
- Point of Contact should additional information be needed with urgency

Following notification

- The Regional Director will contact and inform the Regional Media Specialist and Community-Based Care Administrator of the situation.
- Regional Media Specialist will contact and inform the Media Relationship Manager; and
- Contact and coordinate media message with Belong prior to releasing any information or comments to the media about the situation.

Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) Abuse or Neglect Investigations

A CPI investigation is considered an employee abuse or neglect investigation when:

- A DFPS employee or Belong employee is alleged to have abused or neglected a child in his or her own family.
- A DFPS employee, contracted staff, volunteer, or intern or an Belong employee is alleged to have abused or neglected a child in DFPS conservatorship, and the child is in an unlicensed setting.

Special investigators are assigned to conduct employee investigations meeting the above criteria. If a special investigator is the alleged perpetrator in an employee investigation, CPI conducts the investigation.

Belong will follow steps outlined in policy [2121.1 DFPS Employee or Single Source Continuum Contractor \(SSCC\) Abuse or Neglect Investigations](#).

For additional information see policies:

[2120 CPS Authority for Investigating Reports of Abuse or Neglect](#)

[1260 Administrative Review of Investigation Findings \(ARIF\)](#)

Other Miscellaneous Administrative Items

Forms and Publications

If an Belong needs to re-order DFPS forms or publications, one designated person from the Belong can order by emailing formsandpublications@dfps.texas.gov

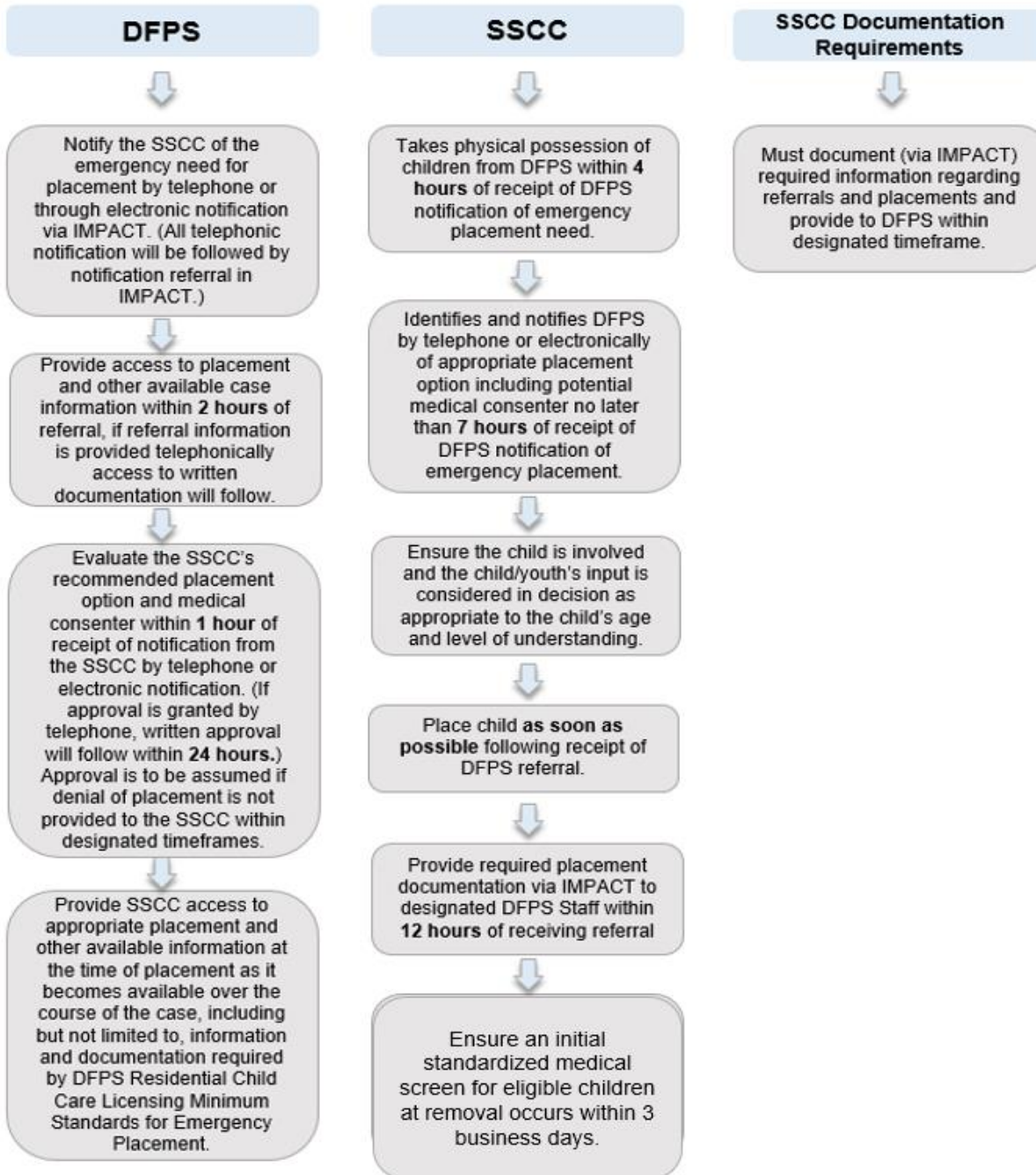
Appendix A: Belong Organizational Information

Additional information about Belong and their organization can be found at <https://sjrcbelong.org/>

Appendix B: Emergency Placement Process Flow Charts

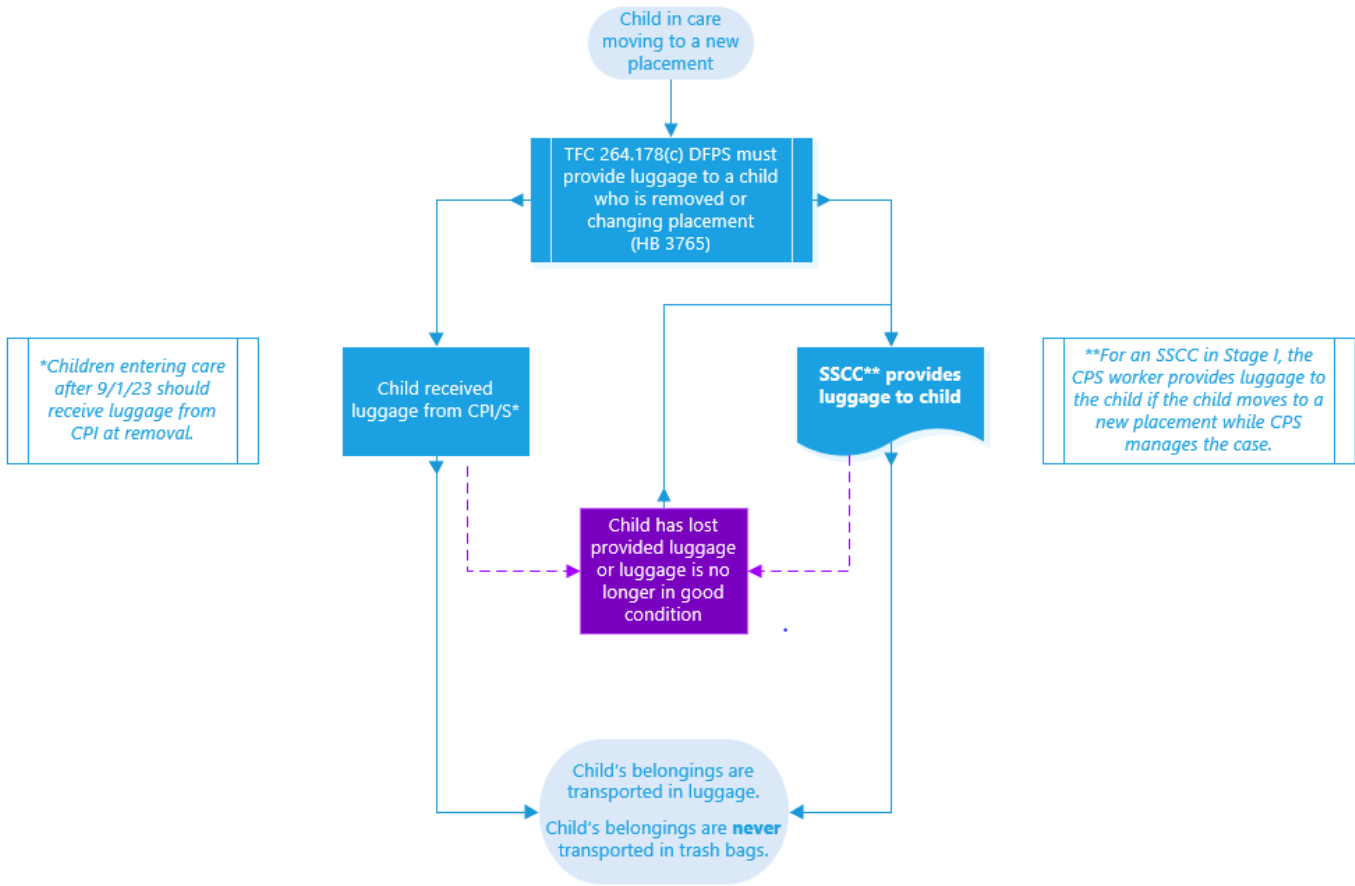
https://intranet.dfps.texas.gov/CBC/documents/Exceptional_Care_Rate_Request_Resource_Guide.pdf

DFPS Emergency Placement

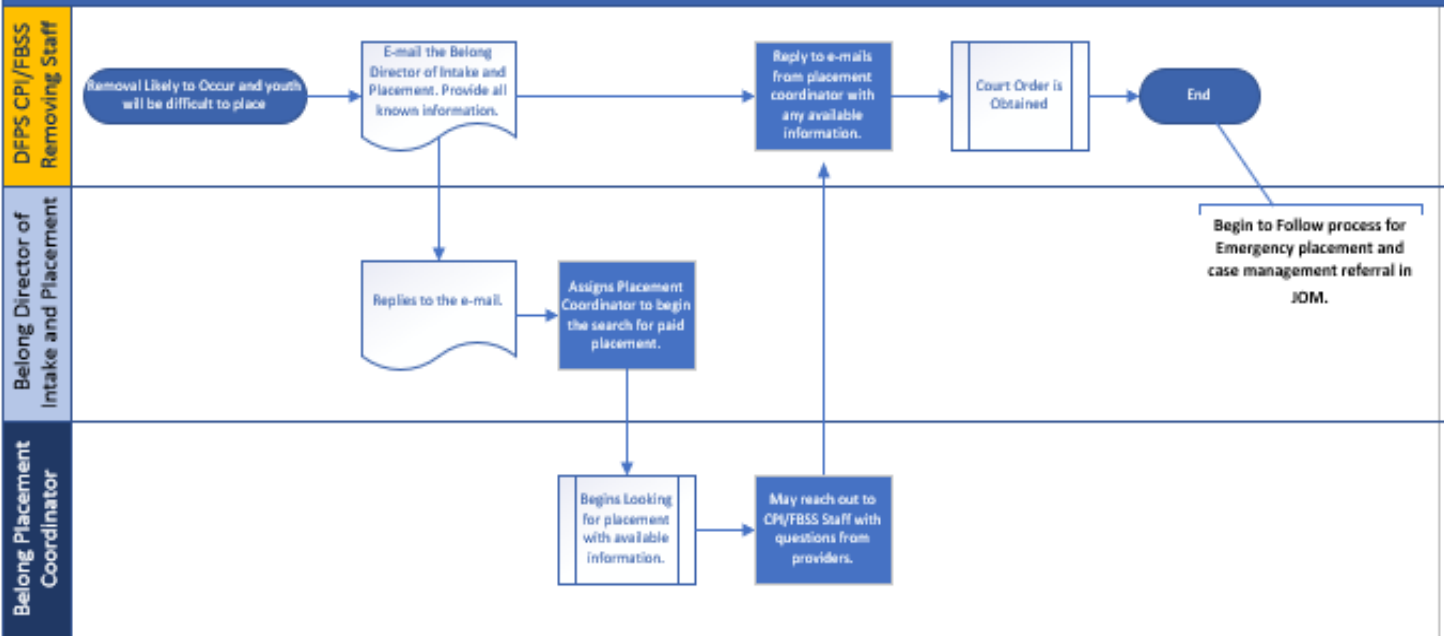


Appendix C: Providing Luggage to Children_____

Children in foster care have the [statutory right](#) to have their belongings transported in luggage. At least one piece of luggage is provided to every child that enters foster care beginning 9/1/2023, or at the first placement change occurring after that date. Children’s belongings may never be transported in a trash bag.



Notifying Belong Intake Team when a removal is likely to occur and the youth(s) will be difficult to place. (pg. 29, JOM)



Belong Points of Contacts

Intake and Placement Team

- (210) 904-1137
- Placementbelong@sjrctexas.org

Mariana Pino (Intake and Placement Director)

- (830) 252-2342
- mpino@sjrctexas.org

Samantha Uriegas (Supervisor for Intake and Placement)

- (830) 252-024
- suriegas@sjrctexas.org

Assumptions

1. This process **will not occur for all removals**. Difficult to place youth refers to youth with complex medical/behavioral health needs. Youth being discharged from a facility (i.e. juvenile detention, psychiatric hospital, medical hospital).
2. Belong's **Placement team will not be provided all of the required paperwork** that is include in the formal referral process in the JOM. A court order will not have been obtained.
3. The **4 hour time period to locate placement will not begin** until the formal referral process has begun, which includes all required paperwork, and the formal acceptance of the referral by Belong.
4. At anytime, a staffing may be coordinated to discuss the pending removal/ placement needs for the youth to ensure everyone is on the same page. The community based care administrator may assist with coordination.

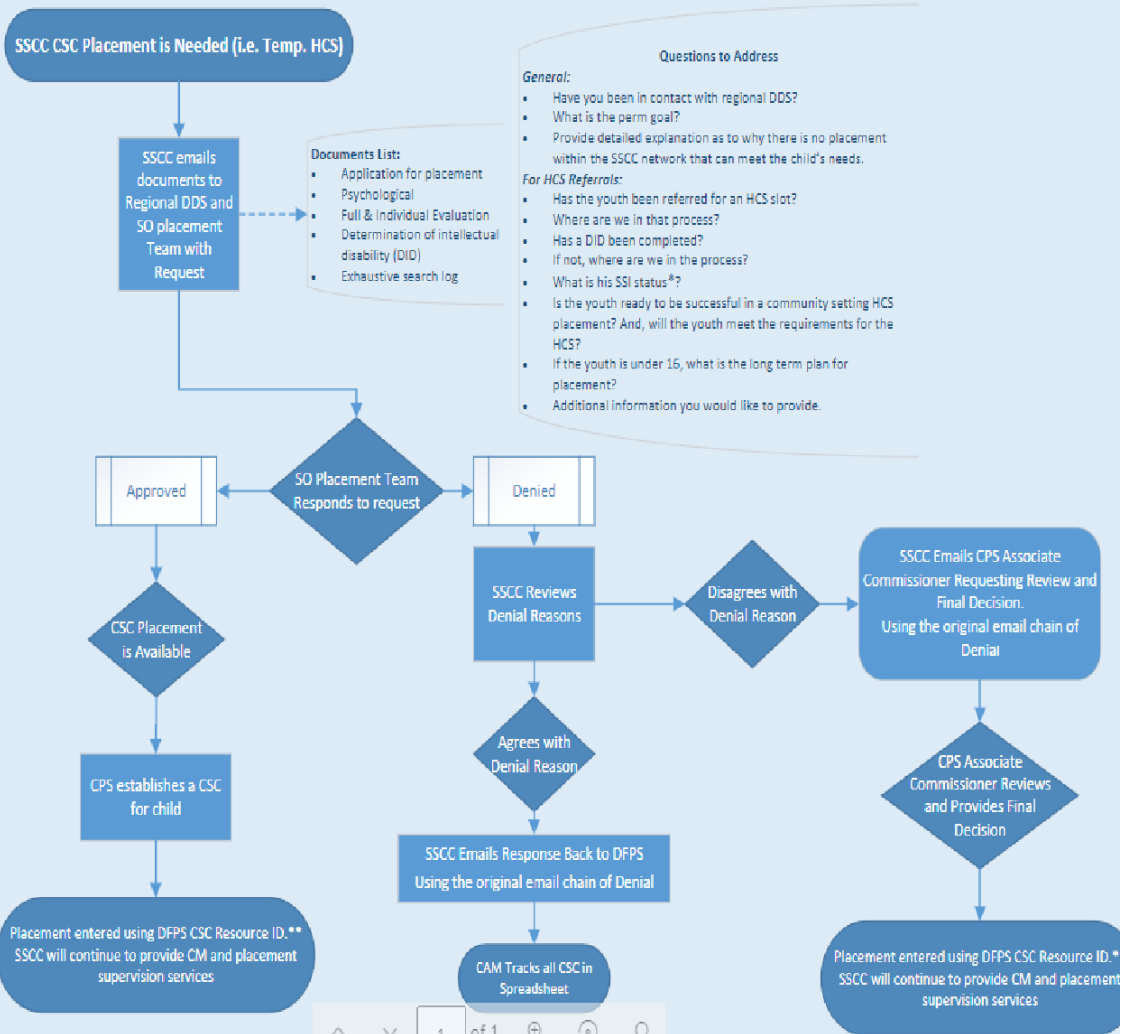
Legend



Appendix D: When a Child Specific Contract Placement is Needed by the SSCC

When a Child Specific Contract Placement is Needed by the SSCC

A Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) Child Specific Contract (CSC) should be considered a placement option of last resort. HCS CSC placements are not monitored by HHSC and don't provide the same services as a HCS placement. HCS CSC placements are meant to be short term placements while a placement option more in line with a youth's permanency goal is found. The expectation is the SSCC will continue to search for a permanent placement while the youth remains in the CSC. The CSCs are evaluated periodically to ensure the team is working to move the youth from the CSC. Prior to approval of a CSC, all other contracted placement options need to have been exhausted, and the SSCC should be able to justify why the CSC placement is needed and is in the best interest of the youth.



- Questions to Address**
- General:**
- Have you been in contact with regional DDS?
 - What is the perm goal?
 - Provide detailed explanation as to why there is no placement within the SSCC network that can meet the child's needs.
- For HCS Referrals:**
- Has the youth been referred for an HCS slot?
 - Where are we in that process?
 - Has a DID been completed?
 - If not, where are we in the process?
 - What is his SSI status*?
 - Is the youth ready to be successful in a community setting HCS placement? And, will the youth meet the requirements for the HCS?
 - If the youth is under 16, what is the long term plan for placement?
 - Additional information you would like to provide.

* A CSC placement for SSI requires that the SSCC complete SSI paperwork and submit to the regional SSI Coordinator before submitting request, unless it's an emergency placement situation or a court ordered CSC. If the latter is the case, the SSI paperwork should be completed immediately.
 ** Once approved and placement located, the DFPS Placement Division staff will send placement IMPACT entry information and guidance.

Appendix E: Psychiatric Hospital Contact Protocol for Children/Youth in DFPS Conservatorship

There may come a time when a child/youth in DFPS conservatorship is determined to present a risk of serious harm to himself or herself or others and is admitted to a psychiatric hospital. Hospitalization is an intervention designed to meet the child/youth's acute mental health needs and is not a long-term intervention. Admission to a psychiatric hospital is not a placement and should not be treated or referred to as such. In order to ensure a child/youth's needs are met during this time, there are very specific steps caseworkers must take immediately following notification of hospitalization. Those steps are outlined in this document, but it is important to note that all other policies and procedures must still be followed.

The steps outlined in the attached protocol apply to both children/youth in DFPS conservatorship at the time of hospital admission and children/youth who are admitted to a psychiatric hospital during the course of an investigation which results in DFPS taking conservatorship.

Notification Required Actions

Immediately, but no later than one (1) business day after notification that a child/youth on your caseload has been admitted to a psychiatric hospital, the primary Belong Permanency Specialist (INV caseworker if Belong not assigned) must send an e-mail to those who have a role in ensuring the child/youth's needs are met, as outlined below. Staff must also follow requirements for notification to the legal parties of the case as described in [6151.3 Notification Requirements and Schedule](#).

The Subject line must state: Psychiatric Hospital Admission – Child/Youth's Last Name, First Initial, and PID. The body of the e-mail must include the following information:

- Hospital name;
- Patient Access Code, if known;
- Date of admission;
- Reason for hospitalization;
- Indicate if the child/youth will be returning to the placement after discharge from the hospital or if a new placement is needed;
- Indicate if child/youth needs an updated psychological evaluation;
- Name and Contact Information for Designated Medical Consenter/ or attach current Form 2085B Designation of Medical Consenter;
- Name of school in which child/youth is currently enrolled; and

- Indicate if the child/youth needs translation services (i.e., foreign language, deaf or hard of hearing).

The e-mail **must** be sent to each of the following, unless indicated as not appropriate:

- [Psychiatric Hospital Referral Mailbox](#) for the Region where the hospital is located – For children/youth hospitalized out of state, the e-mail must be sent to the Psychiatric Hospital Referral mailbox for the child/youth’s legal region and will be routed as appropriate.
- Regional Placement Team Mailbox (except in situations where the child/youth is being served by a Single Source Continuum Contractor as a part of Community-Based Care) - Even if the child/youth is expected to return to the same caregiver after hospital discharge, notification to the Placement Team Mailbox is required as circumstances often change.
- [Single Source Continuum Contractor \(SSCC\)](#) - If the child/youth is being served by an SSCC as part of Community-Based Care, communication must be sent to the designated SSCC personnel per their regional joint operational manual.
- [Education Specialist](#) - If the child/youth remains admitted to a psychiatric facility for more than three days, the education specialist will coordinate educational services for the child/youth.
- [Well-Being Specialist \(WBS\)](#)- For a child/youth with complex behavioral healthcare needs, the WBS is available to assist in multidisciplinary staffings, referral to internal and external resources, etc. (see the [Medical Services Resource Guide](#) for detailed information). The WBS will be responsible for informing STAR Health of the child/youth’s hospitalization.
- [Developmental Disability Specialist \(DDS\)](#)- If the child/youth appears to have a developmental disability, the caseworker must also notify the DDS. The DDS will assist the caseworker with making referrals to community resources.
- Local Permanency Specialist (LPS) - If the child/youth was previously assigned to a LPS, the caseworker must notify the assigned worker and LPS supervisor so the assignment can be placed on hold pending hospitalization.

Medical Consent Required Actions

Immediately, but no later than 24 hours after notification that a child/youth on your caseload has been admitted to a psychiatric hospital, the primary Belong Permanency Specialist (Investigation caseworker if Belong not assigned) must provide the mental health facility with the name and contact information for the child/youth’s medical consenter as described in 11611.4 Consent for Health Care and Medications After Admission.

Unless the youth has been authorized to consent to his or her own medical care under Texas Family Code §266.010, the designated medical consenter must provide or deny consent for health care or the use of psychotropic medications once the youth is admitted.

When the Child/Youth is Not Returning to Placement

CHANGE MEDICAL CONSENTER: As described in CPS Handbook policy [11611.5 Change of Medical Consenters While a Child or Youth Is Hospitalized](#) the caseworker reconsiders the designation of medical consenter if a child or youth is admitted to an inpatient psychiatric facility.

The Belong Permanency Specialist must follow the guidelines in the table below.

If:	Then:
the child or youth may return to the placement he or she was in before admission,	the specialist determines whether there needs to be a change in medical consenter while the child or youth is hospitalized.
The child or youth will not return to the previous placement, and someone who is not a Belong employee is the primary or backup medical consenter,	Belong makes the specialist the primary and backup medical consenter while the child or youth is hospitalized.
Belong finds a new placement for the child or youth to go to after discharge from the inpatient facility,	the specialist determines the most appropriate medical consenter, backup medical consenter, or both, based on the new placement.

PLACEMENT: If the child/youth is not expected to return to his/her placement, the Primary Belong Permanency Specialist must send the assigned placement staff all items required for a placement search **within 24 hours of receiving notification**.

Those items include:

- Updated application for placement;
- Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluation;
- Level of Care;
- CANS, if completed;
- Current therapy notes; and
- Letter from psychiatric hospital stating child/youth is no longer a danger to self or others.
- See the [Placement Process Resource Guide](#)

Note: If the child/youth is being served by the SSCC as part of Community-Based Care, the SSCC assigned staff person will obtain the above items as outlined in the catchment area's Operations Manual.

If there is a clinical recommendation for direct transfer to a State Hospital, the caseworker contacts the [CPS Mental Health Program Specialist](#) for next steps.

Notifying the Hospital of the Child's Sexual Victimization and Aggression History

Immediately, but no later than three (3) business days after notification that a child/youth on your caseload has been admitted to a psychiatric hospital, the primary Belong Permanency Specialist (INV caseworker if CVS not assigned) must provide a copy of the Child's Sexual History Report Attachment A to the admissions staff or person responsible for the oversight of the child or youth. The caseworker must make every attempt to obtain a signature on the Attachment A. If the facility refuses to sign the document, the caseworker notes the refusal on the form and uploads the form into OneCase.

[See CPS Handbook policy 4231.1 Notifying a Facility Regulated by Another State Agency of a Child's Sexual Victimization and Sexual Aggression History](#)

Required Actions during Hospitalization

While the child/youth is in the psychiatric hospital, the Psychiatric Hospital Worker, LPS or Other Designated Caseworker must:

- **Immediately, but no later than 24 hours after notification that a child/youth has been admitted for psychiatric treatment, *confirm*** the mental health facility has been provided with the name and contact information for the child's medical consentor;
- Make face to face contact with the child/youth at the facility within one to three (3) business days of becoming aware of the admission, and weekly thereafter;
- Confirm that the hospital staff treating the child/youth have been provided with the Child's Sexual History Report Attachment A and are aware of the child's sexual victimization and sexual aggression history. Provide Attachment A to the hospital staff and request signatures. If hospital staff refuse to sign, indicate who the form was provided to, date, and specify their refusal to sign. Upload into OneCase;
- Document weekly face to face contact in IMPACT in accordance with CPS policy;
- Request and send the child/youth's clinical record collected from the hospital to the primary caseworker and assigned placement staff or SSCC staff; ** the clinical record refers to any documentation of treatment services released by the hospital including the child/youth's Admission Summary, psychiatric/psychological evaluation, therapy notes, psychiatric progress or nursing notes, and medication status;
- Communicate critical updates regarding the child/youth's treatment (i.e., discharge plan, basic care needs, safety issues) to primary worker within 24 hours of being made aware of the new information; and
- Coordinate and facilitate internal multidisciplinary staffing's to assist with placement following discharge and securing services.

While the child/youth is in the psychiatric hospital, **the Primary Permanency Specialist must:**

- Notify the child/youth's parent(s) within 24 hours of notification (unless an exception listed under 6151.1 exists). As soon as possible, but no later

than ten (10) days after admission, notify the GAL, AAL, parents' attorney, and CASA;

- Update the application for placement with the weekly progress/participation/therapy notes/medication compliance, etc. If this child/youth is being served by the SSCC as part of Community Based Care, the assigned SSCC staff person will update the application for placement as described;
- Conduct Required Monthly FTF contact if child/youth is hospitalized in legal region. IF out of region, phone contact required; and
- Contact the Regional Education Specialist to develop a plan to ensure the child/youth's educational needs are met for the duration of the child/youth's hospital stay.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS: Within three days of being made aware of the child/youth's admission to the psychiatric hospital, the **Regional Education Specialist** will:

- Coordinate with the psychiatric hospital worker and primary caseworker to determine the education needs of the child or youth; and
- Collect any needed education-related information from the primary caseworker to arrange educational services.

To arrange education services, the Regional Education Specialist will:

- Consult with child/youth's caseworker and caregiver for school withdrawal/enrollment process; and
- Maintain weekly contact with the caseworker/psychiatric worker to address any changes in hospitalization of the child/youth and to assist with any school transitions upon discharge.

If the child/youth is not receiving special education services, the Regional Education Specialist will:

- Consult with the hospital to explore how best to meet the education needs of the child/youth; and
- Consult with the local school district on its policy for providing education services to children and youth who do not receive special education services or are not eligible for special education service when the student is confined at home or at a psychiatric or medical facility.

The Education Specialist should confer with their supervisor and the Education Program Specialist at State Office as soon as possible if efforts to obtain educational services for a child/youth are unsuccessful.

When Placement is Identified

As soon as a placement is identified, the Primary Belong Permanency Specialist will send an e-mail with the new placement's name, address, date of discharge from hospital/date of placement, transportation plan, and the name of the worker who will facilitate the placement to all of the following:

- Psychiatric Hospital Worker or LPS responsible for weekly contact

- Well-Being Specialist
- Primary Belong supervisor
- Education Specialist
- Psychiatric Hospital to prepare child/youth for discharge and so that hospital can share information about child/youth with the identified placement

Note: If the child/youth is being served by the SSCC as part of Community Based Care, the SSCC assigned staff person will follow the placement process as outlined in the catchment area's Operations Manual.

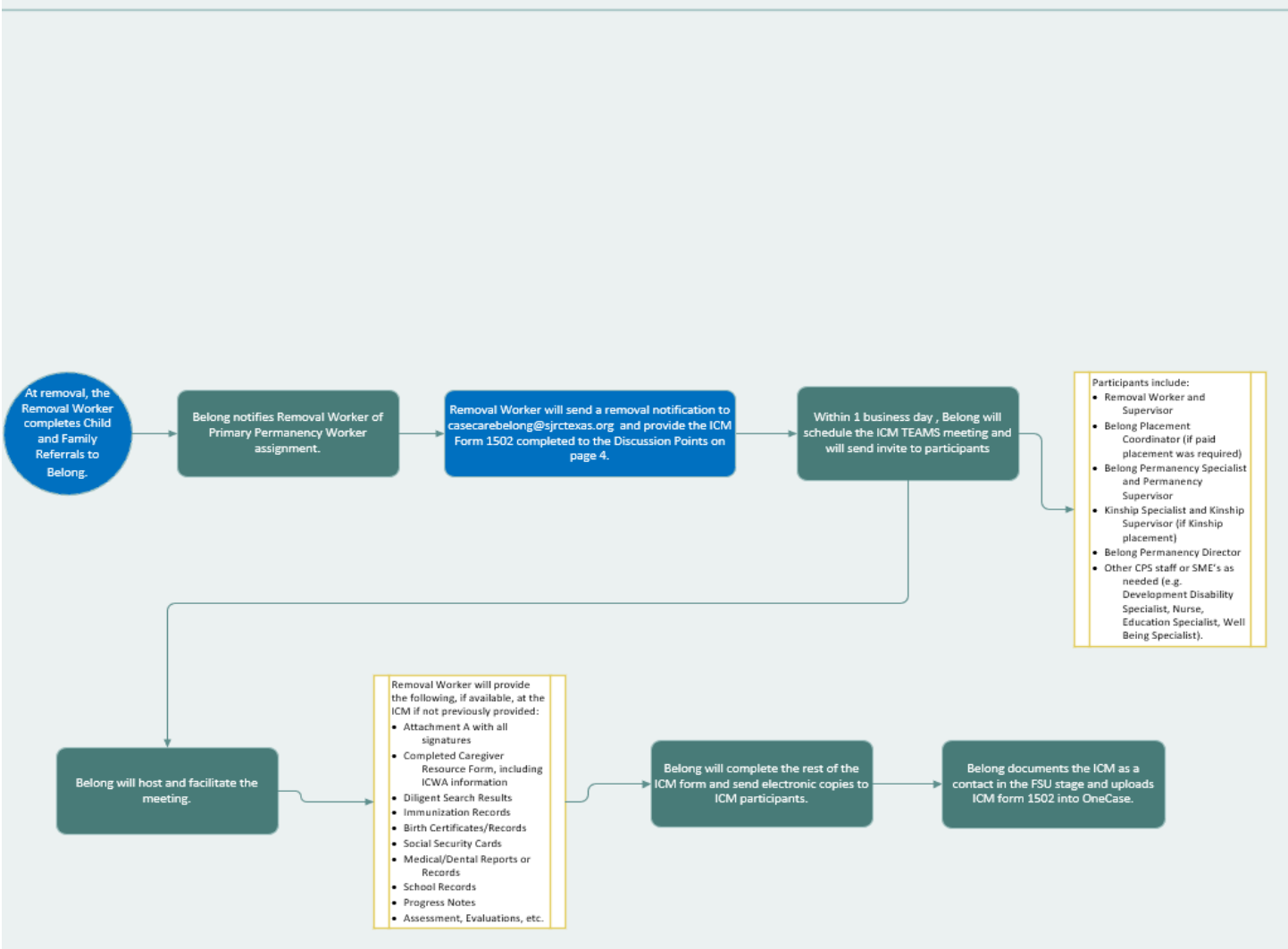
Appendix F: Medical Consenter Chart

Child's Placement	Recommended Designee First and Second Primary	Recommended Back Up First and Second Back Up
GRO Providing Emergency Care Services	Two Professional employee(s) of the GRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd professional employee of the GRO; or • Belong Specialist; or • Supervisor of primary/assigned caseworker.
CPA Foster family home CPA Foster group home with foster parents (without shift staff) CPA Pre-consummated adoptive home	Foster parents, or Pre-consummated adoptive parents	Professional employee(s) of the CPA, such as a case manager
GRO offering child care services only (children's home with cottage model)	Cottage parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate cottage parents; • Professional employee of the GRO, such as a case manager; or • Belong Specialist.
Home and community-based (HCS) family home	Belong Specialist or Specialist's Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belong Specialist, or • Specialist's Supervisor
GRO Residential Treatment Center GRO Therapeutic Camp GRO Child Care Facility (Group Setting with Shift Staff)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1st Primary: the Belong Permanency Specialist or Local Permanency caseworker 2. 2nd Primary: Belong Case Care Specialist or Local Permanency caseworker 	<p>Any combination of the following individuals may be selected as the 1st and 2nd backup:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belong Permanency Specialist; • Local Permanency caseworker; • Belong Supervisor; or • Belong Director of Case Management. <p>* In rare situations and with approval from the Local Permanency Supervisor or designee, a Human Services Technician (HST) specially trained to consent to psychotropic medication.</p>
HCS-based group home (with shift staff) Nursing home Intermediate care facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF-IID)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Belong Specialist 2. 2nd Belong Specialist or Belong Supervisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd Belong Specialist or Belong Supervisor • Belong Supervisor
GRO offering treatment services for individuals with intellectual disabilities State Supported Living Centers (SSLC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developmental Disability Specialist (DDS) assigned as secondary worker 2. Primary Belong Specialist or 3. Specialist's Supervisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd Developmental Disability Specialist (DDS)

Child's Placement	Recommended Designee First and Second Primary	Recommended Back Up First and Second Back Up
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd Developmental Disability Specialist (DDS) or Primary Belong Specialist
Placement with Relative or Kinship Caregiver	Primary live-in caregiver(s) for the child	Another person, relative or kinship individual that knows the child and has knowledge of his/her medical condition and needs

Appendix G: ICM Flow Chart

Initial Coordination Meeting Flow Chart

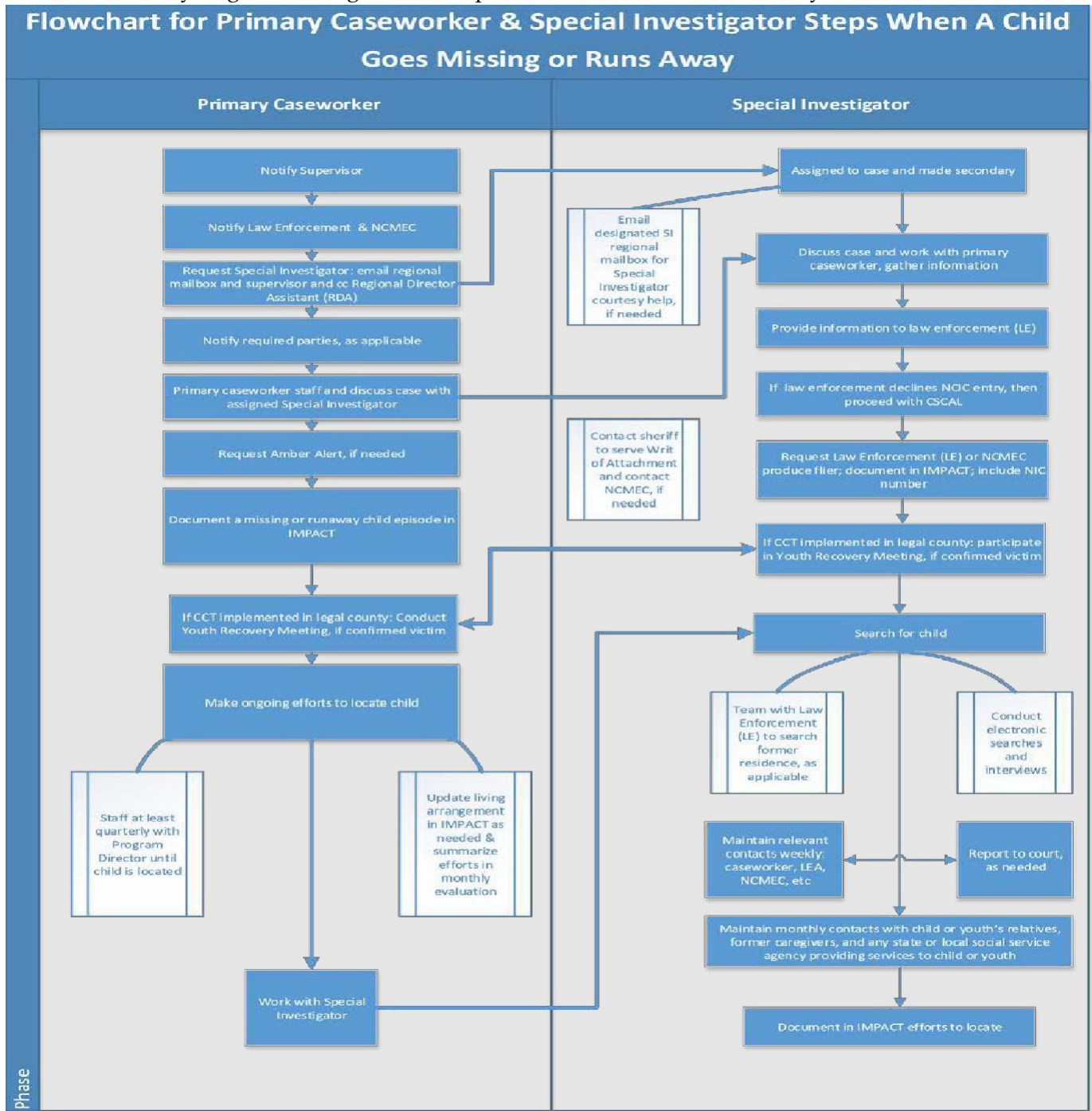


Appendix H: RCCI Email Notification Process

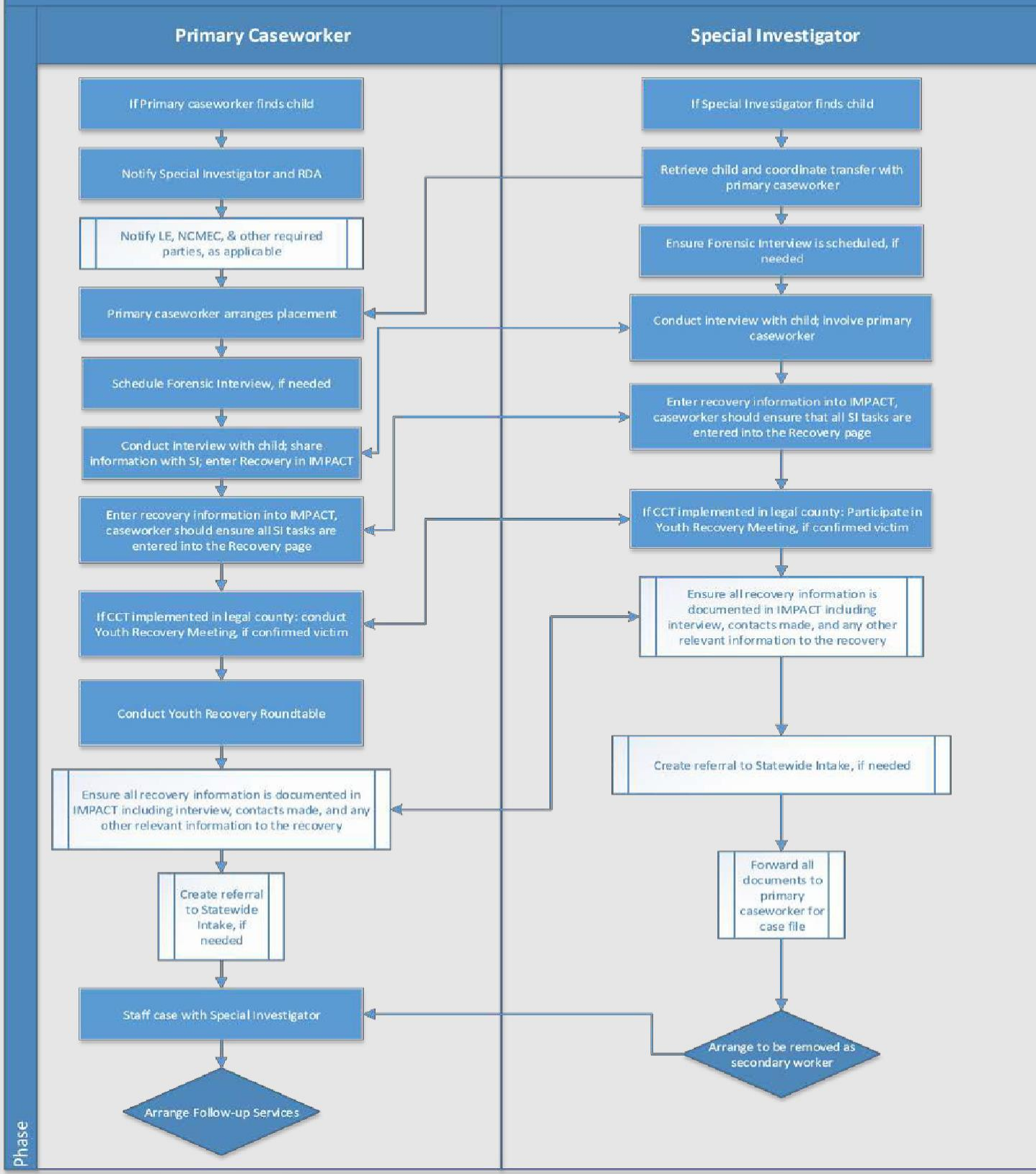
[CPS Handbook §4221 Abuse and Neglect Investigations of Placements](#)

Appendix I: Utilizing Special Investigators (SIs)

This flowchart for Belong Specialist and Special Investigator steps when a child runs away or goes missing is an example of what the collaboration may look like.



Flowchart for Caseworker & Special Investigator Steps When the Child is Recovered



Phase

Appendix J: Region 8B Jurisdictional Information

Drake Mikeska ~ R8 West, Managing Attorney, 210-241-1788

Melissa Cuadrado ~ R8 East, Managing Attorney, 210-585-7555

County	Attorney	Judges
Atascosa County (Child Protection Court of South-Central Texas)	Regional Attorney, Vacant Legal Assistant - Elijah Muniz 512-460-8966	Associate Judge Melissa DeGerolami Judge Lynn Ellison, 81 st Judicial District Court Judge Russell Wilson, 218 th Judicial District Court
Bandera County (Child Protection Court of South Texas)	Regional Attorney, Emily Keiler-Green 512-657-4170 Legal Assistant: Lorraine Ortiz 512-460-8955	Associate Judge Robert J. Falkenberg Judge Melvin Emerson, 198 th Judicial District Court
Calhoun County	Regional Attorney, Jeredith Jones 210-262-3148 Legal Assistant: Elijah Martinez *Currently being covered by Regional Attorneys from Region 6	Judge Alex R. Hernandez, County Court at Law #1 Judge Jack W. Marr, 24 th Judicial District Court Judge Julie Bauknight, 267 th Judicial District Court Judge Kemper Stephen Williams, 135 th Judicial District Court
Comal County* (Child Protection Court of Central Texas) *conflict cases only; all other cases handled by the Comal County District Attorney's Office	Regional Attorney, Drake Mikeska 210-241-1788 Legal Assistant: Vickie Wallace	Associate Judge Melissa McClenahan Judge R. Bruce Boyer, 22 nd Judicial District Court Judge Jack Hollis Robison, 207 th Judicial District Court Judge Gary L. Steel, 274 th Judicial District Court Judge Dibrell W. Waldrip, 433 rd Judicial District Court
DeWitt County	Regional Attorney, Melissa Cuadrado 210-585-7555 Legal Assistant: Vickie Wallace	Judge Jack W. Marr, 24 th Judicial District Court Judge Julie Bauknight, 267 th Judicial District Court

County	Attorney	Judges
		Judge Kemper Stephen Williams, 135 th Judicial District Court
Dimmit County	Regional Attorney, Vacant Legal Assistant: Elijah Muniz	Judge Amado Jose Abascal III, 365 th Judicial District Court Judge Maribel Flores, 293 rd Judicial District Court
Edwards County	Regional Attorney, Drake Mikeska 210-241-1788	Judge Robert Rey Hofmann, 452 nd Judicial District Court
Frio County (Child Protection Court of South-Central Texas)	Regional Attorney, Marilyn Bradley 210-241-5264 Legal Assistant – Yvonne Salazar-Hernandez	Associate Judge Melissa DeGerolami Judge Lynn Ellison, 81 st Judicial District Court Judge Russell Wilson, 218 th Judicial District Court
Gillespie County (Child Protection Court of South Texas)	Regional Attorney, Drake Mikeska 210-241-1788 Legal Assistant – Jamie Martinez	Associate Judge Robert J. Falkenberg Judge N. Keith Williams, 216 th Judicial District Court
Goliad County	Regional Attorney, Melissa Cuadrado 210-585-7555 Legal Assistant – Vickie Wallace	Judge Jack W. Marr, 24 th Judicial District Court Judge Robert E. Bell, 267 th Judicial District Court Judge Kemper Stephen Williams, 135 th Judicial District Court
Gonzales County (Centex Child Protection Court South)	Regional Attorney, Melissa Cuadrado 210-585-7555 Legal Assistant – Eliza Luna	Associate Judge Thomas Stuckey Judge William D. Old III, 25 th Judicial District Court Judge Jessica R. Crawford, 2 nd 25 th Judicial District Court

County	Attorney	Judges
Guadalupe County (Centex Child Protection Court South)	Regional Attorney, Melissa Cuadrado 210-585-7555 Legal Assistant – Eliza Luna	Associate Judge Thomas Stuckey Judge William D. Old III, 25 th Judicial District Court Judge Jessica R. Crawford, 2 nd 25 th Judicial District Court Judge Gary L. Steel, 274 th Judicial District Court
Jackson County	Regional Attorney, Jeredith Jones 210-262-3148 Legal Assistant – Elijah Muniz *Currently being covered by Regional Attorneys from Region 6	Judge Jack W. Marr, 24 th Judicial District Court Judge Robert E. Bell, 267 th Judicial District Court Judge Kemper Stephen Williams, 135 th Judicial District Court
Karnes County (Child Protection Court of South-Central Texas)	Regional Attorney: Vacant Legal Assistant – Vickie Wallace	Associate Judge Melissa DeGerolami Judge Lynn Ellison, 81 st Judicial District Court Judge Russell Wilson, 218 th Judicial District Court
Kendall County (Child Protection Court of South Texas)	Regional Attorney, Drake Mikeska 210-241-1788 Legal Assistant – Jamie Martinez	Associate Judge Robert J. Falkenberg Judge Kirsten B. Cohoon, 451 st Judicial District Court
Kerr County (Child Protection Court of South Texas)	Regional Attorney, Drake Mikeska 210-241-1788 Legal Assistant – Jamie Martinez	Associate Judge Robert J. Falkenberg Judge Melvin Emerson, 198 th Judicial District Court Judge N. Keith Williams, 216 th Judicial District Court
Kinney County	Regional Attorney, Vacant Legal Assistant – Lydia Rico	Judge Roland C. Andrade, 63 rd Judicial District Court

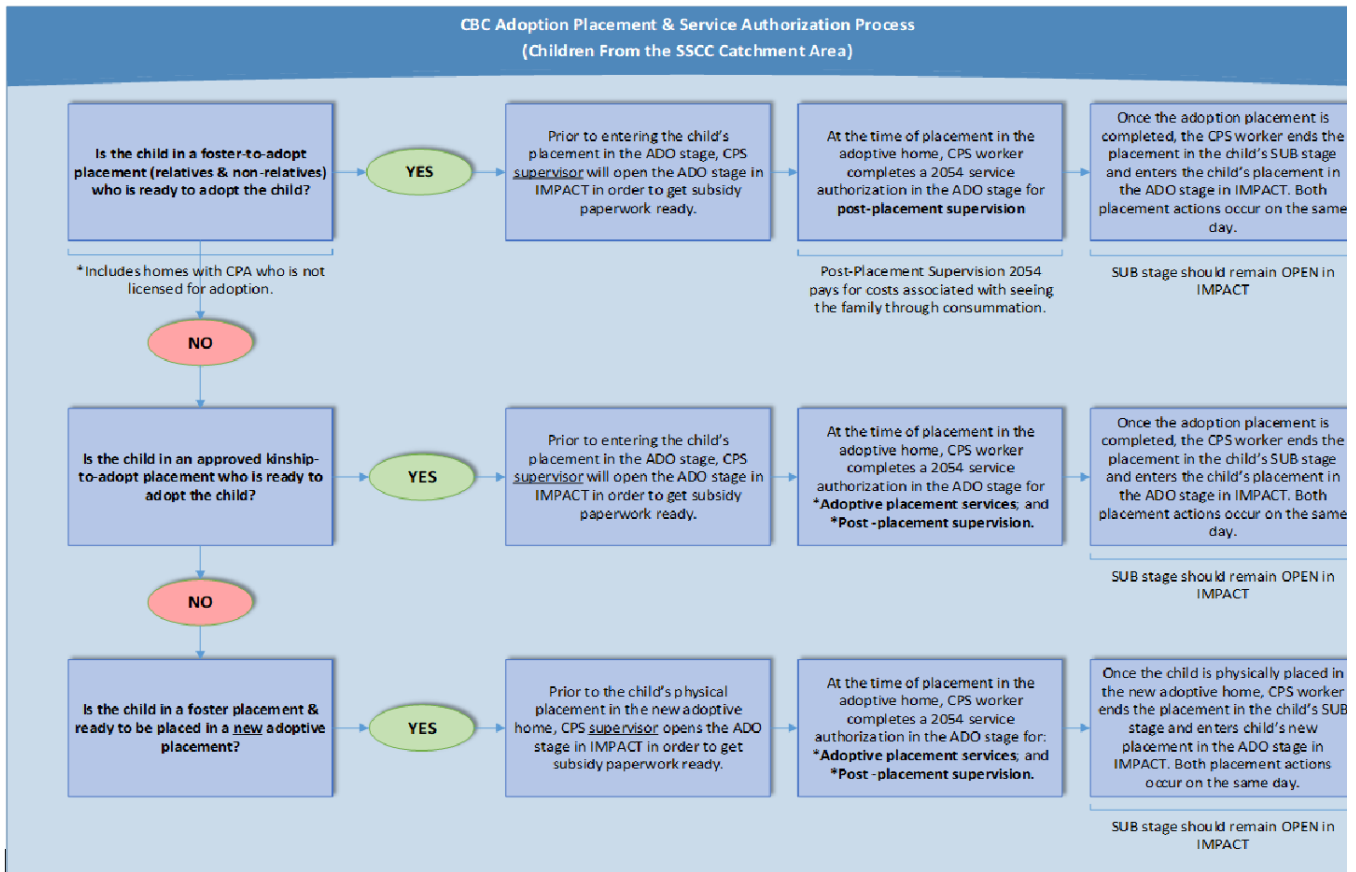
County	Attorney	Judges
La Salle County (Child Protection Court of South-Central Texas)	Regional Attorney, Marilyn Bradley 210-241-5264 Legal Assistant – Yvonne Salazar-Hernandez	Associate Judge Melissa DeGerolami Judge Lynn Ellison, 81 st Judicial District Court Judge Russell Wilson, 218 th Judicial District Court
Lavaca County (Centex Child Protection Court South)	Regional Attorney, Melissa Cuadrado 210-585-7555 Legal Assistant – Eliza Luna	Associate Judge Thomas Stuckey Judge William D. Old III, 25 th Judicial District Court Judge Jessica R. Crawford, 2 nd 25 th Judicial District Court
Maverick County	Regional Attorney, Vacant Legal Assistant – Jamie Martinez	Judge Amado Jose Abascal III, 365 th Judicial District Court Judge Maribel Flores, 293 rd Judicial District Court
Medina County (Child Protection Court of South Texas)	Regional Attorney, Emily Keiler-Green; 512-657-4170 Legal Assistant – Lorraine Ortiz	Associate Judge Robert J. Falkenberg Judge Daniel Kindred, 454 th Judicial District Court
Real County (Child Protection Court of South Texas)	Regional Attorney, Emily Keiler-Green 512-657-4170 Legal Assistant – Lydia Rico	Associate Judge Robert J. Falkenberg Judge Camille DuBose, 38 th Judicial District Court
Uvalde County (Child Protection Court of South Texas)	Regional Attorney, Emily Keiler-Green 512-657-4170 Legal Assistant – Lydia Rico	Associate Judge Robert J. Falkenberg Judge Camille DuBose, 38 th Judicial District Court
Val Verde County	Regional Attorney, vacant Legal Assistant – Lydia Rico	Judge Sergio J. Gonzalez, County Court at Law Judge Roland C. Andrade, 63 rd Judicial District Court
Victoria County	Regional Attorney, Jeredith Jones 210-262-3148 Legal Assistant – Nichole Parish	Judge Jack W. Marr, 24 th Judicial District Court Judge Robert E. Bell, 267 th Judicial District Court Judge Kemper Stephen Williams, 135 th Judicial District Court

County	Attorney	Judges
		Judge Eli Elmo Garza, 377 th Judicial District Court
Wilson County (Child Protection Court of South-Central Texas)	Regional Attorney, Vacant Legal Assistant – Vickie Wallace	Associate Judge Melissa DeGerolami Judge Lynn Ellison, 81 st Judicial District Court Judge Russell Wilson, 218 th Judicial District Court
Zavala County	Regional Attorney, Vacant Legal Assistant – Elijah Muniz	Judge Amado Jose Abascal III, 365 th Judicial District Court Judge Maribel Flores, 293 rd Judicial District Court

Region 8, East: Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Jackson, Karnes, Lavaca, Victoria, and Wilson

Region 8, West: Atascosa, Bandera, Bexar, Comal, Dimmit, Edwards, Frio, Gillespie, Kendall, Kerr, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Medina, Real, Uvalde, Val Verde, and Zavala

Appendix K: CBC Adoption Placement & Service Authorization Process



Appendix L: CBC Adoption Placement/Service Authorization Process

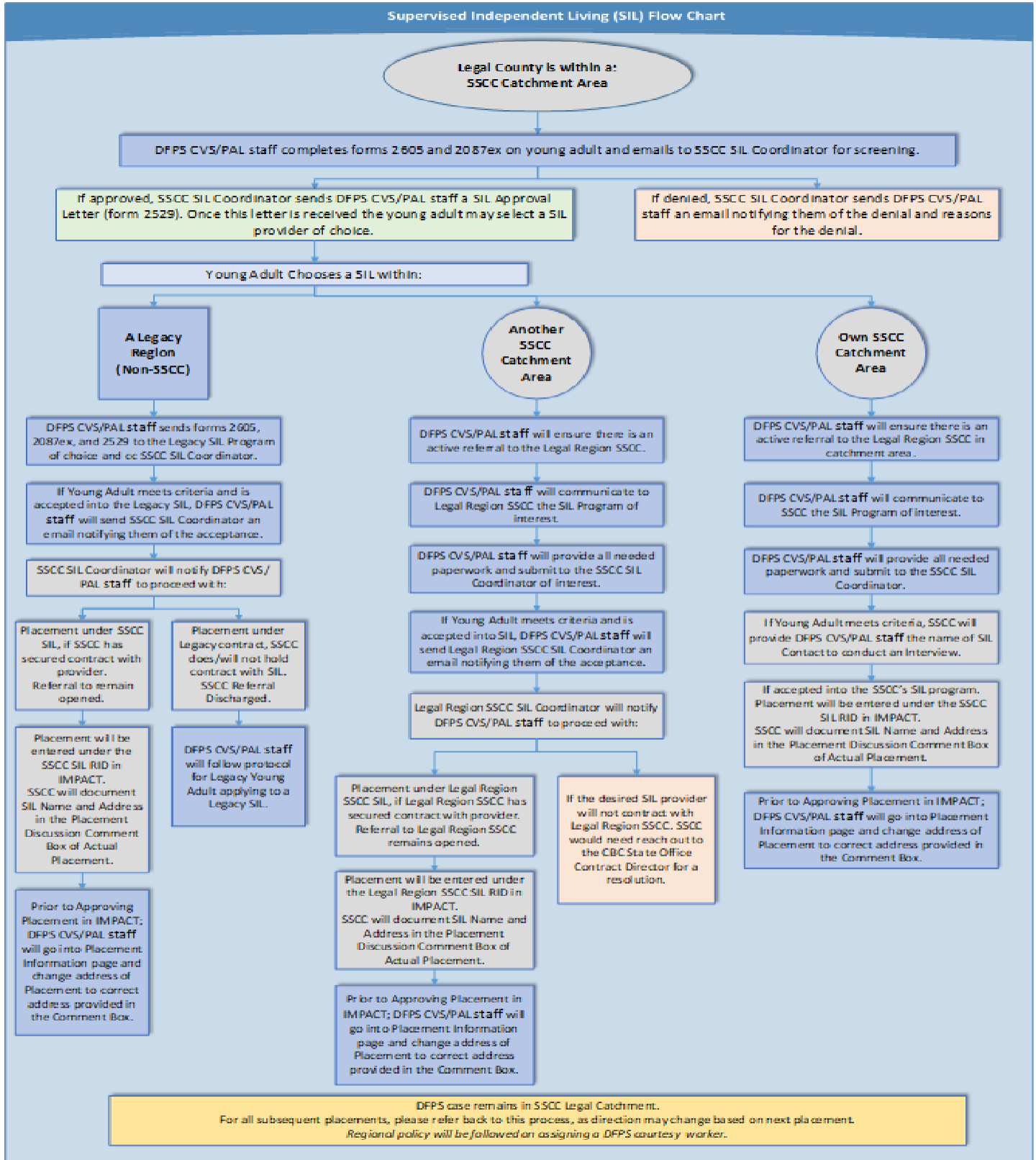
CBC Adoptions Placement Services Authorization Process

Pre-Consummation Services (2054 = Placement services)	Pre-Consummation Services (2054 = Placement services) Cont.	Post-Consummation Services (2054 = Post-placement supervision)
Foster-to-New Adopt Home	Kinship-to-Adopt	All Adoptions
Case Review	Home Screening	Supervision of the Adoptive Placement
Pre-Placement Visits (between the child & prospective adoptive family)	Household Members Background Checks	Facilitate Sibling Contact
Adoption Placement Documentation	Supervision of the Adoptive Placement	Progression to Consummation (supervision of placement, written reports, legal & policy requirements)
Home Screening	Progression to Consummation (supervision of placement, written reports, legal & policy requirements)	Delays in Consummation (review of placement with CPS & contractor and develop a revised Plan of Service)
Household Members Background Checks	Delays in Consummation (review of placement with CPS & contractor and develop a revised Plan of Service)	Disrupted Placement
Training for Adoptive Homes	Court Related Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimony (judicial hearings, court depositions & admin reviews) • Court Related Assistance (assist adoptive family & their attorney to complete consummation process) 	Court Related Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimony (judicial hearings, court depositions & admin reviews) • Court Related Assistance (assist adoptive family & their attorney to complete consummation process)
Adoption Preparation of the Child	Adoption Service Plan	Adoption Service Plan
	Adoption Preparation of the Child	Adoption Preparation of the Child

Appendix M: PAL Aftercare and Other PAL Services for Eligible Youth Served by SSCCs

PAL Aftercare Services					
CBC Stage	Who sends request to service provider	Who is the service provider on 2054	Who completes 2054	Where is 2054 sent	Who documents services in IMPACT
SSCC in Stage II	SSCC PAL Staff	DFPS contracted Aftercare provider for placement area	SSCC PAL Staff	DFPS contracted Aftercare provider for placement area	SSCC PAL Staff
Other PAL Services Sent to 3rd Party Claims Processor					
CBC Stage	Who sends request to service provider	Who is the service provider on 2054	Who completes 2054	Where is 2054 sent	Who documents services in IMPACT
SSCC in Stage II	SSCC PAL Staff	3 rd Party Claims Processor contract following existing procedures in PAL manual	SSCC PAL Staff	3 rd Party Claims Processor contract following existing procedures in PAL manual	SSCC PAL Staff

Appendix N: Supervised Independent Living (SIL) Flow Chart



Appendix O: ICPC Incoming Request Flowchart

For additional information regarding processes for referrals for services related to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) please see the [ICPC Resource Guide](#) on listed with [CBC Resources](#) on the DFPS Safety Net. All ICPC related information is now in the new ICPC Resource guide.

Appendix P: OCA Child Fatality Review

OCA Child Fatality Review

The Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) conducts reviews on cases when a child fatality has occurred and the case involves the following criteria:

1. The cause of death is suspected to be caused by abuse and/or neglect
2. There is an open or closed (CPI, CVS, FBSS, Kinship) within the last year.

OCA will conduct a review of the open Investigation regarding the child fatality with the most up-to-date information as the Investigation may still be ongoing and review any open and closed family cases within the last two (2) years. This review will identify staff involved, child safety concerns, policies associated with the concerns, trends, and patterns.

Critical Case Report is sent to DFPS Executive Leadership Team, Governors Office and external parties.

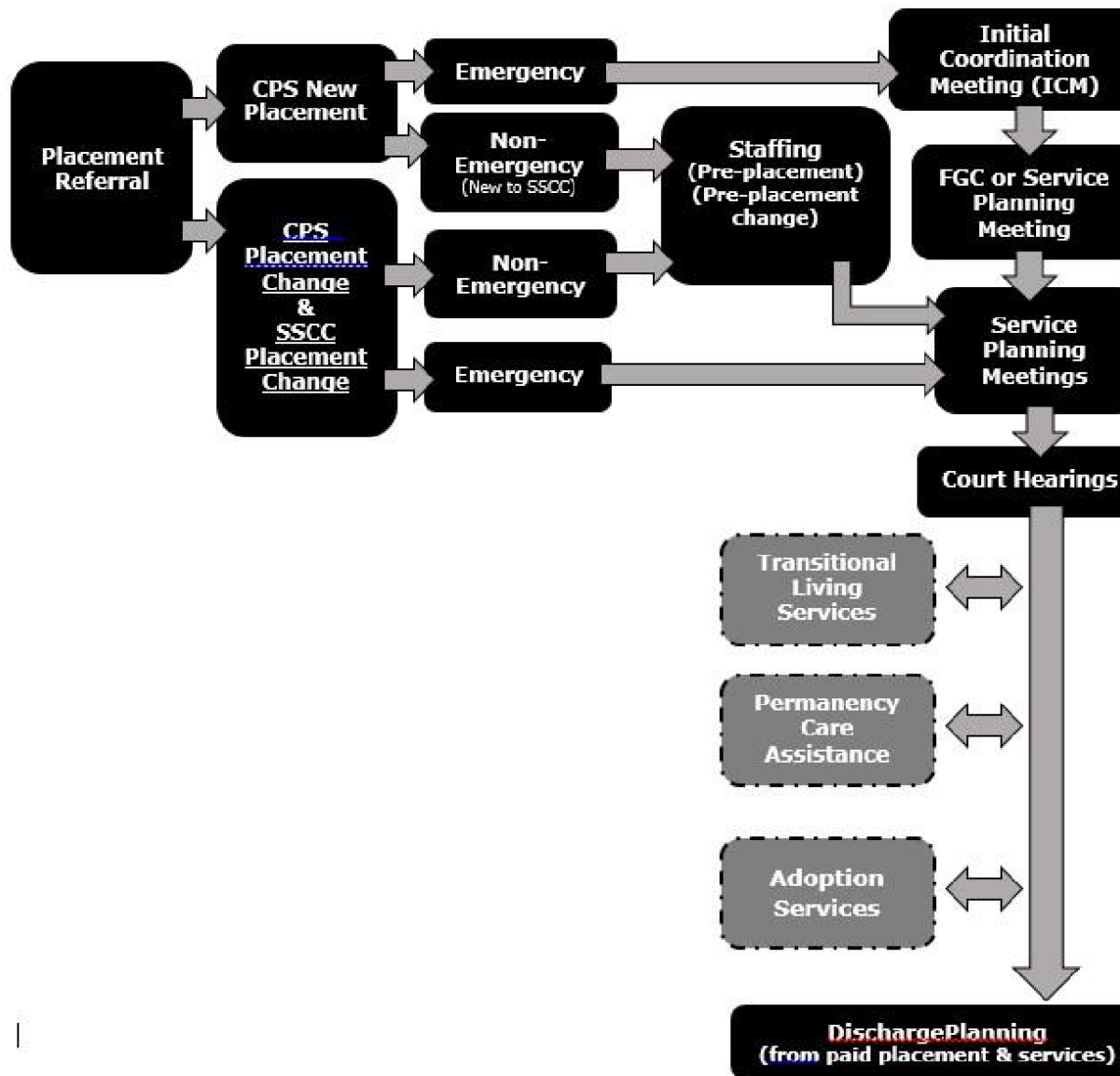
OCA Child Fatality Review is sent to the CPI Director of Investigations, CPS Director of Field, CPS Regional Director, and SSCC

The SSCC will review the cases OCA reviewed and other cases from the program area where the child fatality occurred. The SSCC will identify and list the steps and efforts to address issues noted in the OCA Child Fatality Review and their review of other cases on the Region Response to OCA Case Review Form.

The SSCC will review their findings with the CPS Regional Director and submit the Region Response to OCA Case Review Form to the CPS Director of Field and OCA within 30 days of the child fatality.

There will be times when OCA may identify cases for a Critical Case Meeting (CCM). The SSCC will receive a notification for when the CCM will occur. In lieu of providing the Regional Response for Cases Reviewed, the SSCC shall prepare to discuss any similar issues and policies affecting child safety as those listed in the OCA Child Fatality Review. SSCCs should be ready to provide updates on surviving children, who may be in care, or information relevant to SSCC oversight.

Appendix Q: Flow of Conservatorship



Appendix R: DFPS Forms

Note: The following forms are linked to the DFPS website. In the chance that the link changes, forms can be found on the following webpages:

[DFPS "Find a Form" Webpage](#)

[DFPS Residential Child Care Contracts and Forms Webpage](#)

FORM 1809 - FOSTER/RELATIVE & OTHER DESIGNATED CAREGIVER DAYCARE VERIFICATION

This Form is required for foster parents, relatives, and other designated caregivers requesting day care.

[Foster/Relative & Other Designated Caregiver Daycare Verification: Form 1809](#)

FORM 2085FC - PLACEMENT AUTHORIZATION-FOSTER CARE / RESIDENTIAL CARE

The purpose of this form is to authorize placement in a foster care setting. This form is available in IMPACT.

[Placement Authorization Foster Care/Residential Care: Form 2085FC](#)

FORM 2403 DFPS Medical/Dental/Vision Examination

The caregiver (usually the medical consentor) and doctor complete this form at a child/youth's medical, dental, or vision appointments. The form is filled out jointly by the person taking the child/youth to the appointment (usually the caregiver) and doctor/dentist. This form is available in IMPACT.

[DFPS Medical/Dental/Vision Examination: Form 2403](#)

FORM 2077 – INTER-REGIONAL CHILD PLACEMENT AGREEMENT – CHILD

[Request for Kinship, Conservatorship, and Adoption Service AKA Universal Referral Form: Form 2077](#)

FORM 2085 - DESIGNATION OF MEDICAL CONSENTER

The purpose of this form is to designate primary and back-up medical consentors. This form is available in IMPACT.

[Designation of Medical Consenter: Form 2085B](#)

FORM 2087EX – ALTERNATIVE APPLICATION FOR PLACEMENT

This form may be completed at admission to obtain emergency placements only. The two-page form expires within 30 days of the child/youth's admission to the placement. This form is available in IMPACT under the Placement tab.

FORM 2450 - PROCEDURES FOR IMPACT DATA ENTRY ASSOCIATED WITH YOUTH PARENTS
IN DFPS CONSERVATORSHIP

The purpose of this form is to describe various situations related to youth parents and the appropriate procedures for IMPACT data entry.

[Procedures for IMPACT Data Entry Associated with Youth Parents in DFPS Conservatorship – 2450](#)

FORM 4526 - PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION TREATMENT CONSENT-

The purpose of this form is to keep a record of informed consent for a psychotropic medication that is prescribed for a child or youth in DFPS care. This form does not replace or substitute for any form that a medical provider requires or uses for his or her purposes.

[Psychotropic Medication Treatment Consent Form 4526](#)

[Placement Summary Form 2279](#) or [Certification of Receipt of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Aggression Information Form 2279b](#)

Appendix S: Community-Based Care Forms

FORM 1517 – REGION 8B INITIAL COORDINATION MEETING

The purpose of this form is to document communication between the SSCC and CPS during the Initial Coordination Meeting (ICM).

[Initial Coordination Meeting: Form 1517](#)

FORM 1503 - PRE-PLACEMENT STAFFING

The purpose of this form is to record the discussion during a pre-placement staffing.

[Pre-Placement Staffing: Form 1503](#)

FORM 1508 - REQUEST FOR PLACEMENT INTO CBC CATCHMENT AREAS -

The purpose of this form is to request placement for a child/youth, who is legally from another part of the state, into a Community-Based Care (CBC) catchment area.

[Request for Placement into CBC Catchment Areas: Form 1508](#)

FORM K-910-1518 - REGION 8B REMOVAL CHECKLIST

The purpose of this form is to list the required steps and important timeframes from the time immediately prior to removal until the case has been transferred to a Conservatorship worker.

[Removal Checklist: Form 1514](#)

FORM 1516 - REGION 8B ADOPTION CHECKLIST

Purpose: This checklist contains the rules, policies, and best practice steps that must be completed when a child/youth's goal becomes adoption. Regions may have additional requirements that must be completed due to local court requirements.

[Adoption Checklist: Form 1515](#)

Appendix T: How a Case Moves From Removal to Permanency

[TexProtects Flowchart of How A Case Moves From Removal To Permanency](#)

Appendix U: Glossary

Adoptive Placement: Begins when a child/youth is placed with an adoptive family and includes post-placement supervision and assistance in completing the adoption consummation process. Ends when the adoption is consummated, and the case is closed.

Alternative caregiver: A person who is not the foster parent of the child/youth and who provides temporary care for the child/youth for more than 12 hours but less than 60 days.

Authorized Service Level (ASL): A Basic, Moderate, Specialized, or Intense service level determined by the third-party contractor or a Basic service level determined by the DFPS caseworker and supervisor. The authorized service level is based on information regarding the child or youth's service needs.

Awaiting Adoption: A child who is legally free for adoption; the child's Permanency Goal is Adoption; and the child is not in an Adoptive Placement or own home placement.

Blended Foster Care Rate: Foster care rate paid to the SSCC for each day of service provided to a child or youth in paid foster care, equal to the weighted average rate paid across all placement types.

Caregiver: A caregiver is a person, including an employee, foster parent, contract service provider, or volunteer, whose day to day responsibilities include direct care, supervision, guidance, and protection of a child/youth in care. This includes employees and contract staff who provide 24-hour awake night supervision in accordance with Remedial Orders A7 and A8. See CPS Handbook

[CPS Handbook §7911 Notice of Any Associated Child Sexual Aggression, Behaviors, or Victimization to an Alternate Caregiver or Temporary Placement.](#)

Generally, and in furtherance of a child/youth having as normal of a life experience as possible while in substitute care, "caregiver" does not include individuals who are not routinely responsible for direct care, supervision, guidance, and protection of a child/youth in care, such as school personnel, mentors, tutors and chaperones. Instead, determining what information to provide an adult involved with a child/youth's normalcy activity (e.g., extra-curricular activity, part-time job, church activities, school field trip, and visit to friend's house) must be considered on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind the confidential nature of the information and the need to balance the child/youth's privacy concerns. Depending on the history, age of the child/youth, and situation in which the child/youth may be when engaging in a normalcy activity, the involved adult may not need to know of the child/youth's history, for example a tutor periodically at the child/youth's placement or an adult chaperone on a school field trip.

Casey Life Skills Assessment: An assessment of a youth's independent living skills designed to be completed by both the youth and the caregiver. The youth and caregiver results are combined into a report which provides an indication of the skill level and readiness of the youth to live independently and creates the opportunity for the caregiver and youth to talk about the youth's strengths and challenges.

Catchment area: A geographic service area for providing child protective services

that is identified as part of community-based care.

Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment (CANS): A comprehensive and developmentally appropriate child welfare assessment required by Texas Family Code §

266.12. This definition does not refer to the CANS assessment used to determine eligibility for mental health rehabilitative services and mental health targeted case management services. It is a multi-purpose tool that links the assessment and service planning process. It was developed with the goal of improving permanency, safety, and improved quality of life. This structured assessment of the youth and their caregiver assists in the identification of appropriate actions to address a need or to support a strength. In this way, the CANS provides decision support for the service planning process. Available subsequent reassessments using the CANS tool also provide information about the appropriateness of the service plan and whether individual goals and outcomes are being achieved.

Child's Placement Information: CPS shares information about a child with Belong in order for Belong to assess and make recommendations for the child's placement in a paid foster care setting. Placement information may vary between CPS and SSCC initiated placement referrals, but, in general, the following placement information is shared with Belong based on timeframes set within the Operations Manual:

- [Alternative Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care](#) (Form K- 908-2087 excluding level of care information);
- [Application for Placement of Child in Residential Care Form 2087](#) excluding level of care information);
- Court orders/affidavit;
- Visitation plans with siblings, parents, or other family member and fictive kin(if established);
- Birth verification/certificate;
- Social Security card or number (if available);
- Education portfolio;
- Medicaid and STAR Health cards or qualifying information (if available);
- Any relevant external documentation (i.e. assessments, evaluations, or therapy notes) related to the care of the child;

- Signed Placement Authorization (2085FC);
- Signed Medical Consenter (2085B);
- Signed Education Decision-Maker (2085E); and
- Region 8a (Bexar County) Placement Documentation Authorization to Furnish Information (Form 1505).

Caregiver: A person whose duties include the supervision, guidance, and protection of children and youth.

Case Information: Case information is all abuse and neglect records, including records relating to reports, investigations, legal actions, and the provision of services to adults, children and families.

Case Management: In accordance with Texas Family Code §264.151, the provision of case management services to a child for whom the department has been appointed Temporary Managing Conservator or Permanent Managing Conservator or to the child's family, a young adult in extended foster care, a relative or kinship caregiver, or a child who has been placed in the catchment area through Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, and includes, but is not limited to:

1. Caseworker visits with the child, family and caregivers;
2. Convening and conducting permanency planning meetings;
3. Development and revision of child and family plans of service, including a permanency plan and goals for a child or young adult in care;
4. Coordination and monitoring of services required by the child & the child's family;
5. Assumption of court-related duties regarding the child; and
6. Any other function or service that DFPS determines necessary to allow a SingleSource Continuum Contractor to assume responsibility for case management.

Caseworker: A CPS or SSCC employee who provides casework services to children and youth in Substitute Care under the conservatorship of the State.

Child(ren)/Youth: A person(s) eligible and referred by DFPS to the SSCC for services under this contract from birth through the end of the month in which the individual turns 22 years of age.

Children/Youth in DFPS Legal Responsibility: All children for whom a court has appointed DFPS legal responsibility through temporary or permanent managing conservatorship or other court ordered legal basis. DFPS legal responsibility terminates upon court order or when a youth turns 18, whichever comes first.

Child-Care Services: Services that meet a child or youth's basic need for shelter, nutrition, clothing, nurture, socialization and interpersonal skills, care for personal health and hygiene, supervision, education, and service planning.

Child Placing Agency: A person, including an organization, other than the natural parents or guardian of a child who plans for the placement of or places a child in a childcare facility, agency foster home, agency group home, or adoptive home.

Community-Based Care: As required by the 85th Legislative Session, Senate Bill 11, a community-based model where DFPS purchases case management and substitute care services from a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) to meet the individual and unique needs of children, youth and families in Texas. Substitute care includes both foster care and relative / kinship placements. Purchasing substitute care and case management services from the provider community allows CPS to focus on child safety by investigating reports of abuse and neglect, providing in-home family-based safety services, and ensuring quality oversight of the foster care system. Ensuring individual children achieve timely permanency will be the responsibility of the SSCC.

Confidential Information: Personally Identifiable Information (PII), Protected Health Information (PHI), Case Information, Criminal History Record Information (CHRI), or Sensitive Personal Information.

Consortium: A group of providers who propose to jointly develop and implement a Single Source Continuum Contract proposal with different providers responsible for different parts of the proposal and resulting network. DFPS will only contract with one of the providers of a Consortium who will be directly responsible to DFPS for all services and performance outcomes under the SSCC Contract. DFPS will also contract with a separate business entity Formed by Consortiums that all members have an ownership interest in.

Contract: A promise or a set of promises, for breach of which the law gives a remedy, or the performance of which the law in some way recognizes as a duty. It is an agreement between two or more parties creating obligations that are enforceable or otherwise recognizable at law. The term also encompasses the written document that describes the terms of the agreement. For state contracting purposes, it generally describes the terms of a purchase of goods or services from a vendor or service provider.

Criminal History Record Information (CHRI): CHRI is arrest-based data and any derivative information from that record, such as descriptive data, FBI number, conviction status, sentencing data, incarceration, and probation and parole information.

Designated Victim: A child determined as such by an investigation resulting in a disposition of Reason to Believe (RTB) and entered in the data system.

Disproportionality: The over representation of a particular race or cultural group in a program or system.

Disparity: The inequitable or different treatment or services provided to one group as compared to another group. It is how one is treated or the types, quality, and quantity of services made available.

eCANS: The eCANS portal is an online system that will be able to house CANS assessment results, deliver a suite of reports containing aggregate data, and provide system functionality that ties HHSC and DFPS efforts together.

Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program: A federally-funded (Chafee) and state-administered program. Under this program, Youth and young adults ages 16 to 23 years old may be eligible for up to \$5,000.00 financial assistance per year to help them reach their post-secondary educational goals.

Education Portfolio: The updated and maintained separate education binder that contains important school documents and is designed to follow school-age children and youth to each placement. This allows for the review of the most current educational records and documentation by school officials, residential child-care contractors, foster parents, family caregivers, children and youth.

Emergency Behavior Intervention: An intervention used in an emergency situation, including personal restraint, mechanical restraint, emergency medication, or seclusion.

Exceptional Foster Care Rate: Based on a pro Forma approach which involves using historical costs of delivering similar services, where appropriate data are available, and estimating the basic types and costs of products and services necessary to deliver services meeting federal and state requirements.

Experiential Life Skills Activities: Activities which engage children and youth in learning new skills, attitudes, and ways of thinking through hands-on learning opportunities. Experiential life-skills training is tailored to the child or youth's skills and abilities and may include training in practical activities that include grocery shopping, meal preparation and cooking, using public transportation, performing basic household tasks, balancing a checkbook, and managing personal finances.

Extended Foster Care: A program for youth and young adults, ages 18 to 22 years old that are eligible, and have signed an agreement to participate in this program. A youth who turns 18 years of age while in the conservatorship of DFPS who is continuing to receive Extended Foster Care services under the Extended Foster Care is eligible for Extended Foster Care services through the end of the month in which the Youth or young

Adult reaches the age limit referenced in 1 through 7, so long as sufficient documentation is provided on a periodic basis as required by the terms of the youth or young adult's Extended Foster Care Agreement to demonstrate that the youth or young adult is:

1. Regularly attending high school or enrolled in a program leading toward a high school diploma or GED up to the youth or young adult's 22nd birthday;
2. Regularly attending an institution of higher education or a post-secondary vocational or technical program up to the youth or young adult's 21st birthday. These can remain in care to complete vocational-technical training classes regardless of whether or not the youth or young adult has received a high school diploma or GED certificate (40 TAC §700.316);

3. Actively participating in a program or activity that promotes, or removes barriers to employment up to the youth or young adult's 21st birthday;
4. Employed for at least 80 hours per month up to the youth or young adult's 21st birthday;
5. Incapable of doing any of the above due to a documented medical condition up to the youth or young adult's 21st birthday (40 TAC §700.316); or
6. Accepted for admission to a college, or vocational program that does not begin immediately. In this case, the youth or young adult's eligibility is extended three and a half months after the end of the month in which the youth or young adult receives his/her high school diploma or Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) certificate.

Face-to-Face (FTF) Contact: An in-person meeting or visit that does not require video conferencing or similar technology.

Family: For purposes of this contract, family is defined as the parents or other relatives (including fictive kin) of children in paid foster care who are referred by DFPS to the SSCC for services. Families may remain eligible for the SSCC service coordination and delivery after children have exited paid foster care so long as DFPS remains the legal conservator.

Fictive Kin: For purposes of this contract, fictive kin is an individual who has a longstanding and significant relationship with a child in DFPS conservatorship, or with the child's family and provides, or is anticipated to provide, care to the child.

Financial Literacy Education Program: Education, training, and experiential support that includes:

1. Obtaining and interpreting a credit score;
2. Protecting, repairing, and improving a credit score;
3. Avoiding predatory lending practices;
4. Saving money and accomplishing financial goals through prudent financial management practices;
5. Using basic banking and accounting skills, including balancing a checkbook;
6. Using debit and credit cards responsibly;
7. Understanding a paycheck and items withheld from a paycheck; and
8. Protecting financial, credit, and identifying information in personal and professional relationships.

Form 2054: DFPS Form which initiates invoicing process and contains, at a minimum the following information:

1. Name of the contractor and contract number;
2. Service Code;
3. Names of client or Family members who are to receive services;

4. Types services requested;
5. Number of units for each service requested; and
6. Time limit for the service.

Foster Care: A placement paid by DFPS or other public facility. Placements include foster homes, foster group homes, basic child care facilities, residential treatment centers, and shelters. This is a subset of children in Substitute Care.

Foster Family Home: An independent licensed operation or a home under the regulation of a child-placing agency that is the primary residence of the foster parents and provides residential child care for six or fewer children up to the age of 18 years.

Full Continuum of Care: An array of least restrictive, most-family like placement services that meet the residential and treatment service needs of all children and youth in the care of a contractor.

General Residential Operation: A child-care facility that provides care for more than 12 children for 24 hours a day, including facilities known as children's homes, residential treatment centers, and emergency shelters.

IMPACT: Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas, a computer application used by DFPS staff for case management.

Initial Coordination Meeting (ICM): Convened by DFPS and held within seven (7) days of referral to the SSCC for placement and/or services to a child or youth (Stages I-III) and/or family (Stages II-III). Purpose of ICM is to review child or youth/family's history and identify service needs to be included in the child or youth and/or family plan(s) of service.

Intermittent Alternate Care: A planned alternative 24-hour care provided for a child or youth by a licensed Child-Placing Agency or Independent Foster Home as part of the agency or home's regulated child care and that lasts more than 72 consecutive hours.

Least Restrictive Placement: Most family-like setting (e.g., parent or legal family of origin, non- custodial parent, kinship care, foster family home, adoptive home or cottage style general residential operation (GRO)) based on the child's or youth's individual needs.

Legacy System: Foster care system where DFPS delivers placement and case management services and utilizes the service level system as the method in which to pay for residential services for children and youth in DFPS conservatorship or who voluntarily agree to remain in care. In addition, current purchased client services funding mechanisms to access family services that are coordinated and authorized through DFPS.

Level(s) of Need: Array of services (including both licensed child care and treatment services) required by an individual Child who resides in substitute care, and are designed to support the achievement of safety, permanency and well-being.

Legal Conservator: Also known as the managing conservator, is an entity responsible (either temporarily or permanently) for a child or youth as the result of a district court order pursuant to the Texas Family Code Chapter 153. [TAC §700.501(9)]

Minimum Standards: DFPS rules which are the minimum requirements for permit holders

and which are enforced by DFPS to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children and youth. DFPS provides publications that contain the Minimum Standards and guidelines for compliance for each type of operation.

National Youth in Transition Database: The data collection system developed by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to track the independent living services provided to children and youth and to develop outcomes that measure the States' performance in preparing children and youth for their transition from foster care to independent living.

More information is available at: National Youth in Transition Database

No eject/no reject: Contract requirement that a contractor may not refuse to accept a properly referred client for services under this contract nor may a contractor cease to serve, or request DFPS remove a child, youth, or family from its referred client list.

Outcome: A measure that reflects or reveals change or impact.

Performance-Based Contract: A contract that ties payment, financial incentives and remedies to performance. Additional performance measures may be included and used to make decisions to renew or terminate the contract.

Permanency Care Assistance: The Permanency Care Assistance program gives financial support to kinship caregivers who want to provide a permanent home to children who can't be reunited with their parents.

Permanency Goal: The Department's permanency goals are subcategories of the four goals identified by the Texas Family Code §263.3026. The categories are as follows:

1. Family Reunification;
2. Adoption by a relative or suitable individual (Relative Adoption or Unrelated Adoption);
3. Permanent Managing Conservatorship to a relative or suitable individual (Relative Conservatorship or Unrelated Conservatorship); and
4. Another planned permanent living arrangement (Foster Family -DFPS Conservatorship, Other Family DFPS Conservatorship, Independent Living or Community Care).

Permanency Planning: The identification of services for a child or youth (and usually to the child or youth's family), the specification of the steps to be taken and the time frames for taking those steps so as to achieve the following goals:

1. A safe and permanent living situation for the child or youth;
 2. A committed Family for the child or youth;
 3. An enduring and nurturing family relationship that can meet the child or youth's needs;
 4. A sense of security for the child or youth; and
 5. A legal status for the child or youth that protects the rights of the child or youth.
6. (40 TAC §700.1201 and DFPS policy §6200)

Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC): When a court orders DFPS as PMC, it can be either with a child's parental rights terminated or parental rights intact. The rights and duties of DFPS are generally the same as with TMC.

Personal Contact: A meeting, either face-to-face or by telecommunication, during which the parties' discussion and actions are not directed.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII): Any information that can be used alone or in conjunction with any other personal information to identify a specific individual. PII includes any information that can be used to search for or identify individuals, or can be used to access their records. Examples include name, SSN, DOB, Social Security benefit data, and state or government issued driver's license number.

Placement Change: Any change in placement location except for temporary breaks in service as further defined in the contract.

Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Activities: Benefits and services provided to children and youth in DFPS-paid Substitute Care who are age 14 or older and likely to remain in foster care until at least age 18, who can qualify for services up to their 21st birthday. Services and benefits may include:

1. Casey Life Skills Assessment to assess strengths and needs in life skills;
2. Life Skills training in core areas including financial management;
3. Job readiness and life decisions/responsibility;
4. Educational/vocational services;
5. Coordination of the Transitional Living Allowance (TLA) up to \$1000 (distributed in increments up to \$500 per month for children and youth who participate in PAL Life Skills training, to help children and youth with initial start-up costs in adult living);
6. Coordination of After Care Room and Board (ACRB) assistance, based on need, up to \$500 per month for rent, utility deposits, food, etc. (not to exceed \$3000 of accumulated payments per child or youth);
7. Case management to help children and youth with self-sufficiency planning and resource coordination;
8. Teen conferences;
9. Leadership development activities; and
10. Additional supportive services, based on need and availability of funds, such as mentoring services and driver's education.

Protected Health Information (PHI): Individually identifiable health information that is transmitted or maintained in any Form or medium. Individually identifiable health information is data, including demographics, that relates to:

1. The individual's past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition;
2. The provision of health care to the individual, or the past, present, or future

payment for the provision of health care to the individual; and

3. Information that identifies the individual or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe it can be used to identify the individual.

As a general rule, health information linked with any one of the following direct or indirect identifiers of the individual, relatives, employers, or household members is considered protected health information:

1. Name
2. Street address, city, county, precinct, zip code, and equivalent geocodes
3. All elements of dates (except year) for dates directly related to an individual and all ages over 89
4. Telephone number
5. Fax number
6. Electronic mail address
7. Social Security number
8. Medical record numbers
9. Health plan ID numbers
10. Account numbers
11. Certificate and license numbers
12. Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers, including license plate numbers
13. Device identifiers and serial numbers
14. Web addresses (URLs)
15. Internet IP addresses
16. Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints
17. Full face photographic images and any comparable images
18. Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code

Purchased Client Services: Services designed to remedy abuse, neglect and exploitation of DFPS clients. For purposes of this contract, these services are purchased by the SSCC (through an allocation of funds) and offered to children and youth in the Department's conservatorship and their families to support the achievement safety, permanency and well-being.

Reason to Believe: Abuse or neglect occurred based on a preponderance of the evidence. This means when all evidence is weighed, it is more likely than not that abuse or neglect occurred.

Referral: Process by which DFPS notifies the SSCC of need to initiate placement and/or others services to eligible children, youth and/or families.

Residential Child Care: The care, custody, supervision, assessment, training, education, or treatment of an unrelated child or youth for 24 hours a day that occurs in a place other than the child or youth's own home.

Return to Care: A program designed for youth and young adults 18 to 22 years old that are eligible and sign an agreement to participate in this program. Eligible participants must have been in DFPS conservatorship at the time they turned 18 years old (or were on run away status at the time they turned 18 years old and their conservatorship case had not been dismissed), and want to Return to Extended Foster Care, and:

1. Attend high-school or a program leading toward a high school diploma and have not reached their 22nd birthday;
2. Are enrolled at or within 30 days of placement in a course of instruction to prepare for the GED and have not reached their 21st birthday;
3. Attend and, within two years, complete a certified vocational or technical program and have not reached their 21st birthday; or
4. Return on a break from college or a technical or vocational program for at least one month, but no more than 4 months and have not reached their 21st birthday ([40 TAC 700.316](#)).

The return to care program does not include youth and young adults over 18 years old who are overnight visitors or living in the homes of foster parents, and the foster parents are not receiving a foster care payment for the care of these youth and young adults (40 TAC §745.601, §745.615, and §749.2653).

Reunification: Identification of a child's own home as the safe and permanent living situation towards which services are directed. Reunification means that (1) DFPS has removed the child from the home and (2) DFPS has determined that the child's parents are willing and, after completing services, able to provide the child with a safe living environment. Reunification occurs when the child has returned to the home.

Sensitive Personal Information: Sensitive personal information means an individual's first name or first initial and last name in combination with any one or more of the following items, if the name and the items are not encrypted:

1. Social Security number;
2. Driver's license number or government-issued identification number; or
3. Account number or credit or debit card number in combination with any required security code, access code, or password that would permit access to an individual's financial account.

Sensitive Personal Information also includes data revealed directly or indirectly relating to:

1. Natural persons concerning their racial or ethnic origin;
2. Political opinion;
3. Trade union membership;

4. Religious or philosophical beliefs;
5. Physical and mental health including state of health, illness, handicaps, pathological defects or medical treatments;
6. Criminal records, including convictions, decisions of penalties and fines, or other information collected in judicial or administrative proceeding to ascertain an offense or regarding an alleged or suspected commission of an offense;
7. Biometric or genetic data; or
8. Social welfare needs or benefits or other social welfare assistance received.

Sensitive information does not include publicly available information that is lawfully made available to the public from the federal, state, or local government.

Serious Incident: Any non-routine occurrence that has an impact on the care, supervision, or treatment of a child or youth. This includes, but is not limited to, suicide attempts, injuries requiring medical treatment, runaways, commission of a crime, and allegations of abuse or neglect or abusive treatment.

Service Plan: The contractor's developed plan that addresses the services that will be provided to a child or youth to meet the child, youth and/or family member's specific needs while served by the contractor.

Service Area: The designated area in which the SSCC will provide all services described in this contract. The SSCC will provide all services described in this contract in Region 8b.

Siblings: Children, youth, and young adults who have one or more parents in common either biologically, through adoption, or through the marriage of their parents, and with whom the child, youth or young adult lived before his or her substitute care placement, or with whom the child, youth or young adult would be expected to live if he or she were not in substitute care.

Counted as any child in the same CPS case with another child.

Sibling Group: Any CPS case with two or more children in paid foster care.

Single Source Continuum Contract/Contractor (SSCC): Entity with whom DFPS enters into a contract for the provision of the full continuum of care in a catchment area, as required in this contract.

STAR Health: Statewide managed care program that provides comprehensive health care to children and youth in foster care and relative care, including medical, behavioral health, dental and vision care.

Start Up Period: A one-time, initial period of six months that will begin on the date the contract is signed during which the Contractor will perform necessary readiness activities and build its system of service prior to the first Client referral from DFPS.

Substitute Care: All children who are living in a DFPS out of home placement (kinship or paid foster care). It does not include children living in a return and monitor placement. Unless noted otherwise, it does include youth over 18 who are in Extended Foster Care but are not in DFPS custody.

Supervised Independent Living (SIL): A type of voluntary Extended Foster Care placement where young adults can live on their own, while still getting caseworker and support services to help them become independent and self-sufficient. The SIL program allows young adults to live independently under a supervised living arrangement provided by a contracted provider. A young adult in SIL is not supervised 24-hours a day by an adult and has increased responsibilities. Through SIL a young adult has increased responsibilities, such as:

- Managing their own finances,
- Buying groceries or personal items, and
- Working with a landlord.
- SIL also helps transition young adults to independent living by teaching them to:
- Achieve identified education and employment goals,
- Access community resources,
- Engage in needed life skills training, and
- Establish important relationships.

Temporary Managing Conservatorship (TMC): When a court orders DFPS as TMC, DFPS can exercise specific rights including but not limited to the right to have physical possession of the child along with specific responsibilities, including but not limited to the duty of care, control and protection of a child, the right to designate the primary residence of the child and the right to make decisions concerning the child's health-care and education.

Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE): TARE website is the leading recruitment tool for prospective adoption homes for DFPS. The purpose of TARE is to expedite permanency for available waiting children by increasing the number of prospective adoptive home resources.

Therapeutic Services: In addition to child care services, a specialized type of childcare services designed to treat and/or support children:

- With Emotional Disorders, such as mood disorders, psychotic disorders, or dissociative disorders;
- With Intellectual Disabilities, who have an intellectual functioning of 70 or below and are characterized by prominent, significant deficits and pervasive impairment;
- With Pervasive Developmental Disorder, which is a category of disorders (e.g. Autistic Disorder or Rett's Disorder) characterized by prominent, severe deficits and pervasive impairment;
- With Primary Medical Needs, who cannot live without mechanical supports or the services of others because of life-threatening conditions; and/or
- Determined to be a trafficking victim.

Trauma Informed Care: An approach to understanding the biological, developmental, relational and social effects of trauma and violence on children, youth and families which integrates the understanding based perspective to care.

Treatment Services: A specialized type of child-care services designed to treat and/or support children or youth with Emotional Disorders, Mental Retardation, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, and Primary Medical Needs as described in [40 TAC §748.61](#).

Verified Kinship Care: A kinship caregiver who has become verified as a foster parent to provide residential care in accordance with child care licensing regulations.

Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement [Form 2540](#): The Department's Form which documents the youth or young adult's agreement to voluntarily remain in foster care and outlines the categories of activity which qualify a child or youth to remain in foster care.

Voluntary Return to Extended Foster Care Agreement [Form 2540](#): The Department's Form which documents the youth or young adult's agreement to voluntarily return to foster.

Appendix V: Operation Manual Version Tracking

Version (Published Date)	Section Topics Affected	Change Details
October 2022		Version 1.0
November 2022	Building Access RMG CMO Contact Information	Version 2.0
February 2023		Version 3.0
May 2023		Version 4.0
June 2023		Version 5.0
September 2023	Hospital Sitting ICPC section	Version 6.0
January 2024	What is Community Based Care CMO Contact Information Emergency Paid Placement and Case Management Referral Abuse and Neglect Investigations on Child(ren) in Conservatorship Daycare Program Kinship Home Assessment Requests Belong Permanency Specialists On-Call	Version 7.0
May 2024	Updated CMO Contact List Remove RCCI Process Map from Appendix H Changed OIA to OCA, Office of Internal Affairs to Office of Consumer Affairs and added in that the Regional Director should be copied on e-mails. Delete information about Sub-Acute placements and replace it with information about placements in IPSPs. Added Kinship Referral Form to documents needed when the initial placement after removal is in a kinship home. (pg. 43)	Version 8.0
May 2024	Made updates to section: Situations Requiring Immediate Notification Between Belong and DFPS Added: Abuse or neglect investigations involving SSCC staff and youth in conservatorship Notice of the incident should be sent immediately upon knowledge. The SSCC regional director equivalent will send notification via e-mail or text	

	message the CPS Director of Field, CPS Regional Director, and the CBC Operations Director	
August 2024	<p>Serious Incidents Requiring Immediate Notification: Notification D List Updated</p> <p>Texas Foster Care Handbook: Requirements added to New Placement and Case Management Referrals-Placement of Child/Youth (Emergency and Kinship)</p> <p>Placements on Probation: Language updated to reflect GRO, RTC, and Emergency Shelters needed Associate Commissioner Approval, not CPAs.</p> <p>Children/Youth in SSCC Supervision: Updated to include requirement to provide Individual Shift notes to FCL Compliance Division when a child/youth is in SSCC Supervision.</p> <p>Emergency Paid Placement/Case Management Referral: Link to Appendix C and new process map when a removal is likely to occur and the youth will be difficult to place.</p> <p>Appendix C: Added a picture of process for DFPS, Notifying Belong Intake Team when a removal is likely to occur and the youth(s) will be difficult to place.</p>	Version 9.0
December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Updated CBCA contact information. •Updated Director of Placement. •Updates required to reflect the launch of T3C throughout the JOM. •Updated verbiage in the ADO and PCA sections. Specifying protocols and determining who is responsible, the changes do not alter the current processes in place, but document steps already being taken. <p>On-Call, updated CPS PA admin.</p>	Version 10.0
March 2025	<p>Medical Consenter Chart to remove HCS providers being medical consenters due to recent policy updates.</p> <p>Updated definition of Sensitive Personal</p>	11.0

	<p>Information on pg. 180 – removed #6 Sexual orientation or activity.</p> <p>Pg. 95 – Updated Pregnancy Handbook policy Pg. 57 – Updated policy 6300 reflecting mothers who are pregnant with an open CVS case.</p>	