

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>121</h1>
Chapter:	Planning with Children and Families	
Subject:	Notification of Changes for Children and Youth in DCF Custody	Page 1 of 2
Approved:	Karen Shea, Interim Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 10/24/2016
Supersedes:	Family Services Policy 121	Dated: 10/27/1999

Purpose

To describe the requirements for formally notifying parents and others of changes important to the plan for the child or youth.

Related Policies

Family Services [Policy 94](#): Resource Family Care

Family Services [Policy 123](#): Reviewing Case Plan Decisions

Family Services [Policy 124](#): Family Time

Family Services [Policy 250](#): Staff Safety

Policy

To ensure prompt and accurate communication with parents, resource families, and members of the child's safety network, social workers should inform them as soon as possible of important changes in the child's living situation or the plan for the child.

Social workers will always determine the appropriateness of sending notices and decide the best method of sharing information. Notice requirements may be waived for casework or safety reasons. Change of placement notice is not required when the child is on a planned, temporary stay elsewhere, for example visiting with parents.

Notifying Parents of Changes in Placement or Family Time

Parents of children in DCF custody should know where their children are living unless casework or safety issues prohibit this. Social workers should discuss proposed changes of placement with parents in advance whenever possible. Notification regarding changes in placement will occur through a conversation, either in-person or by phone. If social workers are unable to reach parents by phone, written notice may be a back-up measure to assure that notice has occurred. Social workers should always be mindful of the safety concerns associated with putting an address in writing.

Parents will also be notified of significant alterations in the pattern or plan for family time which will result in reduced contact with their child. This notice should be verbal whenever possible, with written notice serving as a backup. When necessary to ensure

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the child's well-being, changes in the plan for contact may be made without advance notice.

Notifying Substitute Care Providers of Changes in Placement

Substitute care providers will receive written notice of a pending change of placement unless:

- They have requested the child's immediate removal;
- Their license has been suspended or revoked; or
- The provider is under investigation by the department based on alleged misconduct. In this last instance, the child will be moved when the local district office believes that the investigation will have a significant adverse impact on the child.

Notice to substitute care providers is not required in emergency circumstances. An emergency includes any situation which, in the opinion of the district office, places that child's health, safety, or well-being in immediate jeopardy.