

The work we do requires us to make difficult decisions on a daily basis — ones that affect people’s lives and that not everyone will agree with.

To make sure the decisions we make are in the best interest of the children involved, we want to hear from you if you have concerns. We will listen to what you have to say — with an open mind.

Sharing Your Concerns

To help you share your concerns, we’ve set up separate procedures for:

1. Requesting a formal review of a decision that affects the life of a child in state custody.
2. Voicing your concerns about:
 - A decision we’ve made;
 - An action we’ve taken; or
 - The way you’ve been treated.

We will not review decisions already made by a court or those scheduled to be heard in court within 30 days.

Requesting A Formal Review

If you disagree with a decision that affects the life of a child in state care, you may be able to request a formal review.

What type of decisions may be formally reviewed?

- The living arrangements for a child;
- The plan for visits between a child and family members; and
- The long-term goal for a child (e.g., returning home or being adopted).

Who may request a formal review?

- The child, the child’s parents if parental rights are still intact, and the child’s legal guardians;
- The child’s attorney and Guardian ad Litem; and
- The child’s foster parents if the child has been living with them for at least the last three months.

If they want to appeal the child’s move to another family for the purpose of adoption, the foster parents must have already expressed — in writing — their intent to adopt the child.

How do I request a formal review?

Submit your request — in writing — to the district director of the Family Services district office that is involved. We must receive your letter no later than five (5) days after you were informed of the decision you disagree with.

Be sure to include the following:

- The decision you disagree with;
- The person(s) who made the decision;
- The decision you propose instead;
- The efforts you’ve made to resolve the situation;
- Your relationship to the child; and
- Your name, address, and daytime phone number.

A child may request a review simply by asking his or her social worker.

What happens next?

1. The district director will contact you to set up a meeting.
2. Following the meeting, the district director will inform you — in writing — of the decision made, the reason for the decision, and any options you have for further review.

Voicing Your Concerns

If you have concerns that may not be formally reviewed, we still want to hear from you.

1. The first step you should always take is to talk to the Family Services employee involved.
2. If you don't feel comfortable talking to this person or are not satisfied with the response you get, please contact his or her supervisor.
3. If the issue is not resolved, please contact the district director of the Family Services district office you are working with.
4. If the issue is still not resolved, please call our central office at (802) 241-2131. A staff person will hear your concerns and inform you of any next steps you may take.

You can expect to be treated respectfully by Family Services staff. We expect you to treat our staff the same way. It is in the children's best interest that we work well together and treat each other with respect.

Family Services Offices

Weekdays from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Central Office: (802) 241-2131

Barre: (802) 479-4260

Bennington: (802) 442-8138

Brattleboro: (802) 257-2888

Burlington: (802) 863-7370

Hartford: (802) 295-8840

Middlebury: (802) 388-4660

Morrisville: (802) 888-4576

Newport: (802) 334-6723

Rutland: (802) 786-5817

Springfield: (802) 885-8900

St. Albans: (802) 527-7741

St. Johnsbury: (802) 748-8374

www.dcf.vt.gov/fsd

Please let us know if you need an accommodation because of a disability or an interpreter because of limited English.



DCF's Family Services Division

Guide to Sharing Your Concerns



Family Services Division