

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE #30
YOUTH VOICE
March 20, 2019 – P.T. 2019.06

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Appendix A CFS 496-2 DCFS Advocacy Office Youth Issues and Concerns

Section 30.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to provide information and instruction to staff regarding the Department's policy and practice of enabling youth who are in the care of the Department to have their issues and concerns heard and addressed. Understanding the issues and concerns of youth enhances the Department's ability to provide an environment where our youth are safe and can thrive. This AP provides instruction so that DCFS/POS staff can:

- quickly and consistently receive, catalog and address the input and feedback provided by our youth;
- ensure that key DCFS personnel have this critical feedback so that the Department can respond and address the concerns of youth in an expedient and consistent manner; and
- provide our youth with the assurance that they are important, that their voice will be heard and that their issues and concerns will be addressed.

Agency Note: The **Youth-in-Care Bill of Rights** and **Illinois Foster Child and Youth Foster Bill of Rights** are reflective of one another and for the purposes of this administrative procedure should be considered as synonymous terms.

Section 30.2 Communication with Youth

Youth are informed of their right to voice their concerns by the **Youth-in-Care Bill of Rights**, that is distributed by the Permanency Worker to the youth within the first 30 days after the child's placement; every 6 months at the ACR; and annually thereafter. In addition, each facility is to have the **CFS 1050-99, Youth-in-Care Bill of Rights** poster in plain sight in each milieu where youth-in-care reside.

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Youth concerns are received by the:

a) Advocacy Office

1) Phone calls

When a youth makes a call to the Advocacy Office on the Youth Advocacy Hotline listed in Section 30.3, the youth shall be immediately put through to an Advocate.

2) Email and postal service

Concerns sent to the DCFS.Youth@illinois.gov email address or the office mail address shall be assigned on the day of receipt or the next business day if received over the weekend or a holiday.

b) Residential Monitors

Residential/ILO-TLP Monitors are responsible for opening the Youth Voice Suggestion Boxes and reviewing those youth issues and concerns at each facility for which they have responsibility. Residential Suggestion Boxes shall be opened and concerns retrieved every 7 days, ILO-TLP Monitors Suggestion Boxes shall be opened and concerns retrieved every 30 days. If the youth has identified himself or herself as the author of the concern, the Monitor shall speak with the youth in order to confirm his or her concern will be addressed and to gain additional information.

c) Youth Advisory Board

Concerns raised at a Youth Advisory Board (YAB) meeting should be documented on a **CFS 496-2** and must be received by the DCFS Advocacy Office by 10:00 AM the next work day following the meeting.

For all concerns received by the Advocacy Office or the Residential/ILO-TLP Monitor, a good faith attempt must be made to follow up with the youth within 24 hours of receipt. All concerns received must also be entered into the spreadsheet on the website maintained by the Advocacy Office within two (2) business days of receipt.

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Section 30.3 Toll-free Numbers and Email Address For Youth Concerns

DCFS Child Abuse Hotline (SCR): 800-252-2873

DCFS Advocacy Youth Hotline: 866-459-6884

Email: DCFS.Youth@illinois.gov

Mail address:

DCFS
Advocacy Office
406 E. Monroe Sta. 10
Springfield, IL 62701

Section 30.4 Instructions for Addressing Youth Concerns

Youth concerns shall be addressed by the Advocacy Office, the Residential Monitor and/or the Permanency Worker/Supervisor. The divisions may overlap services when appropriate and in the best interests of the youth. All youth concerns should be forwarded to the youth's attorney and guardian ad litem by the caseworker, when appropriate.

a) Advocacy

Upon assessment, the Advocacy Office shall gather background information on Department involvement, the basis for the youth's concerns and take one or more actions. Examples of actions to be taken include, but are not limited to:

- 1) follow up with the caseworker or casework supervisor;
- 2) follow up with the Monitor who has responsibility for that agency/facility, if the issue raised is a monitoring concern;
- 3) follow up with the Agency Performance Team (APT) Monitor when the youth's concern pertains to the caseworker;
- 4) follow up with the appropriate Licensing Representative, if the concern involves a Licensing issue. **When appropriate, the assigned Advocate shall make a Licensing Referral;**
- 5) if the concern raised includes information regarding an incident of child abuse/neglect or risk of harm, the Advocate shall search SACWIS to determine if a report was made to the SCR Hotline. If no report was made, the Advocate shall immediately call the SCR Hotline to make the report or assist the youth in doing so; and

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- 6) When a youth's concern does not require a call to the SCR Hotline, the Advocate will work with the youth in an attempt to resolve the issue or explain to the youth why the issue cannot or will not be resolved to the youth's satisfaction. If the youth's concern is unable to be resolved, the Advocate shall consult with the supervisor to determine if any further action can be taken on the youth's behalf. At the conclusion of these discussions, the Advocate shall ask the youth if he or she has any additional concerns that need to be addressed.

b) Residential Monitoring

- 1) The Monitor shall ensure that each facility for which they have responsibility has Youth Voice Suggestion Boxes in locations where they are easily accessible by youth. Whenever possible, Suggestion Boxes should be located in the common area of the living units.
- 2) The Monitor shall require that all residential facilities ensure:
 - A) DCFS Suggestion Boxes are clearly labeled with labels provided to them by the Department;
 - B) Paper and pens/pencils are readily available to youth;
 - C) Facility staff shall notify the Monitor within 24 hours of a Suggestion Box becoming damaged and requiring replacement;
 - D) Youth are made aware of the location and purpose of the Suggestion Boxes; and
 - E) Agency/facility staff are reminded that as mandated reporters they are required by law to call the SCR Hotline concerning incidents of alleged abuse/neglect of a youth in care.
- 3) The Monitor is responsible for opening the Suggestion Boxes and reviewing youth suggestions/concerns every 7 days. The Monitor shall document on the Suggestion Box label each date the Suggestion Box is opened, the number of concerns received, if any, and shall initial the label next to the date opened.
- 4) If documentation of an issue involving alleged abuse or neglect is found in the Suggestion Box and the youth who submitted the documentation is identified, the Monitor shall take the following steps:
 - A) Talk to the youth to gain additional information if the suggestion/issue is not clear, (i.e., "I was hurt by staff", "staff didn't give me food", etc.);

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- B) After determining that a call to the SCR Hotline is required, the Monitor shall immediately contact the SCR Hotline to report any abuse or neglect allegations or assist facility staff or the youth in doing so; and
 - C) The Monitor shall transmit the youth's concern to the SCR, the assigned caseworker and the caseworker supervisor.
- 5) For other suggestions, or concerns that are **not** pertaining to abuse or neglect, the Monitor shall complete one or more of the following actions:
- A) If the youth is identified, the Monitor shall follow up with the youth within 24 hours of receipt in order to give assurance that his or her concern has been received and will be addressed and to gather additional information, if needed. The Monitor should discuss who should be notified of the youth's concern, with due consideration to the youth's wishes for confidentiality. All action taken by the Monitor should respect the youth's confidentiality wishes;
 - B) When appropriate, talk with staff or program supervisors/managers to gather additional information and address the youth's concerns;
 - C) Review all pertinent internal staff documentation, such as shift logs, internal incident reports, etc., as well as DCFS Significant Events, in order to gain a clearer understanding of the suggestion/concern;
 - D) Scan the youth's document to the DCFS/POS caseworker, if the youth includes his/her name in their suggestion/concern. If the youth's concern is in regard to the caseworker, the document should be forwarded to the caseworker's supervisor;
 - E) When the youth's concern is in regards to the Department/POS caseworker only, the Monitor shall follow up with the caseworker and/or the caseworker's supervisor to discuss resolution of the issue. **The Monitor shall inform the APT Monitor of the concern regarding the caseworker.** The Monitor shall also request follow up from the agency/facility administration regarding the youth's concern and the agency plan for resolution. The Monitor shall follow up, as needed, to confirm that the issue was resolved as agreed upon;
 - F) Follow up with the local Licensing Representative when the concern involves Licensing. **When appropriate, the Monitor shall make a Licensing Referral;** and/or

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- G) Follow up with agency/facility staff at the administrative meetings for suggestions/concerns submitted anonymously and document how the agency will address and resolve those issues.
- 6) Once a Suggestion Box becomes damaged or unusable, the facility should notify the Monitor within 24 hours of the damage being discovered. The Monitor shall ensure that a replacement box is provided to the agency in a timely manner.
- c) **Staff Assigned to the Youth Advisory Board (YAB)**

All comments documented on a **CFS 496-2** and received by POS/DCFS staff assigned to the YAB must be submitted to the Advocacy Office by 10:00 AM the following business day after a YAB meeting.
- d) **Permanency Caseworker/Supervisor**

When appropriate, and in the best interests of the child, youth concerns received by the Advocacy office or Residential Monitor shall be forwarded to the caseworker and/or caseworker's supervisor. However, the concern shall be forwarded to **only** the caseworker's supervisor when the concern pertains to the caseworker

Section 30.5 Data Tracking

- a) Reports shall be submitted to senior leadership on a quarterly basis to ensure that Department decision-makers are aware of youth concerns, how those concerns were addressed, how they were resolved.
- b) For tracking purposes, once a youth's concern is received, addressed and resolved, either the Residential Monitor or AOCF staff shall record the concern in a spreadsheet on the website maintained by the Advocacy Office within two (2) business days of receipt of the concern. The spreadsheet is available to Office of Monitoring staff and to the Advocacy Supervisor and Deputy Director or any of their designees. The website can be reached from the following link:
<http://advocacyyouthfeedback/Content/Users/YouthFeedBackForm.aspx>
- c) When appropriate, some incidents or concerns raised by youth may be documented in the Significant Event Reporting system. Any Significant Event Report arising from a concern raised by a youth will be entered by either the caseworker or a designated person at the youth's facility.

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APPENDIX A CFS 496-2, DCFS ADVOCACY OFFICE YOUTH ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Please Print:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: ___/___/____ Phone Number
of Cottage/Home: (____) ____ - _____

Agency: _____

Address or living arrangement: _____

Please note that the Advocacy Office hours are Monday through Friday 8:30AM to 5:00PM

Best time to reach you: _____ AM PM

Please complete the issue or concern for yourself, IF filling out for someone else, please include their name and if possible their contact phone number.

When did the incident/concern take place? _____

What would you like done to correct the situation?

Was it reported: Yes No

Who was it reported to: _____

Did you call the Child Abuse/Neglect hotline number 1-800-252-2873? Yes No

CONFIDENTIALITY: Staff will protect your privacy, if possible.

Is there anyone that you don't wish this information to be shared with? _____

The information you share will be reviewed by the DCFS Advocacy Office. It is possible that the Advocacy Office and/or staff person at the meeting will be making calls to your placement, caregivers and staff to discuss the situation.

I promise that the information I have provided on this form is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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This Page to be completed by YAB/DCFS Staff after reviewing page with Youth in Care

Date of Meeting: ____ / ____ / ____

Youth's ID#: _____

Meeting Location (Circle):

Chicago

Springfield

Urbana

Peoria

Aurora

Mt. Vernon

East St. Louis

Statewide Meeting

Caseworker: _____

Supervisor: _____

Youth Advisory Board Staff and/or Transition Manager:

Any allegations of child abuse or neglect must be reported immediately in accordance with the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Safety issues and other concerns may also require immediate follow up. Please explain any actions you have taken, as well as the result of that action, before forwarding this form to the Advocacy Office for assignment for follow up. Advocacy Office staff may fulfill this responsibility if they are present at the meeting.

Date Forwarded to the Advocacy Office: ____ / ____ / ____

____ *Reminder must be in by 10:00AM next business day.*

Signature of Staff Person Completing this portion of the form (at least one signature is required):

Youth Advisory Board Staff: _____

Transition Manager: _____

and/or

Advocacy Office Staff Present (if present at Meeting) _____