



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

DATE: February 21, 2020

TO: Regional Managing Directors
Community-Based Care Lead Agency CEOs
Sheriff's Offices Conducting Child Protective Investigations

THROUGH: Patricia Babcock, Deputy Secretary *PB*

FROM: Patricia Medlock, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare *PM*
Robert Anderson, Assistant Secretary for Operations *RA*

SUBJECT: Children Sleeping in Offices, Hotels, or Other Unlicensed/Unapproved Placements

PURPOSE: This memo serves to reinforce the Department's expectations that no child removed from his/her home shall be allowed, directed, or otherwise put in a position to sleep or spend any significant, extended period of time in a Department, Community Based Care Lead Agency (CBC) or Case Management Organization (CMO) office, hotel/motel, or other unapproved or unlicensed placements. The only exception to this is in the case of extraordinary circumstances necessary to protect the safety and security of the child as documented and otherwise provided for herein.

BACKGROUND: In 2016, the Department was made aware that on multiple occasions, dependent children and case management staff were required to sleep in offices and hotels overnight with children due to limited availability of foster homes and therapeutic placements.

Most recently, the same concern has resurfaced and immediate action is required to remedy this problem. In 2019, the Department entered into a settlement agreement that stipulates that only in extraordinary circumstances shall children in out-of-home care sleep or spend any significant, extended period in a Department, CBC or CMO office.

ACTION REQUIRED (Effective Immediately): Please be advised that it is not appropriate for children to sleep in offices, hotels, or other unlicensed or unapproved placements and such practices are not allowed. If it is foreseen that such events may occur due to extraordinary circumstances necessary to protect the safety and security of the child, the CBC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) must immediately notify the Regional Managing Director (RMD) to review the situation and work collaboratively to resolve the placement issue. Additionally, the CBC CEO will provide additional notice to the RMD when a licensed or approved placement of the child is made.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Please direct all questions, comments, or concerns to your RMD. In their absence, please contact Robert Anderson, Assistant Secretary for Operations, at 850-717-4332 or via email at Robert.Anderson@myflfamilies.com.

cc: Regional Family and Community Services Directors
Grainne O'Sullivan, Director of Child Welfare Legal Services
Center for Child Welfare

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Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency