

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
**CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

**POLICY & PROCEDURE**

<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b> CWS 23-04	<b>POLICY TITLE:</b> Youth Without Placement (YWP)	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> 08/09/2024
<b>PROGRAM(S):</b> All Programs	<b>REVISION DATES:</b> 08/09/2024	<b>REFERENCES:</b>

**OVERVIEW**

Child Welfare Services (CWS) works diligently to place all youth who have been removed from the care of their legal caregivers in a safe and secure environment. When CWS is unable to find a placement that meets the need of a youth, the youth then becomes a Youth Without Placement (YWP). When a youth is without placement it is the responsibility of CWS to provide care and coordination of resources to the youth until an appropriate placement is identified. Youth Support Specialists (YSS) are part of the CWS team and are responsible for partnering with the social worker team to provide care for the youth. This policy outlines the procedures used by Youth Support Specialist to address the needs of Youth Without Placement.

**POLICY**

YSS work in partnership with the primary social worker team to address the need for YWP.

**PROCEDURE**

1. The Social Worker (SW) or SW Supervisor (SWS) identifies a potential Youth Without Placement (YWP).
  - 1.1. These youths may be identified through a placement preservation meeting, emergency, health or safety issue, a safety threat, stepping down from higher level of care (STRTP, hospital, rest pad, etc.).
  - 1.2. YWP can be identified as any youth age 0 to 18 in any program within Child Welfare Services (CWS).
    - 1.2.1. If a young person is 18 years of age or older and a non-minor dependent (NMD) YSS may be identified to support the youth on a case-by-case basis. Any young person over 18 years of age must be in agreement to work with YSS.
2. Once a YWP has been identified, an email will be sent by the primary social worker and/or primary social worker supervisor to the CWS YSS inbox, CWS-PMs, CWS Placement inbox, Deputies, and Director.
  - 2.1. The email, with the subject line “Youth Without Placement,” will include:
    - 2.1.1. Completed YSS referral form (located in CMS, green tab).
    - 2.1.2. Date youth is expected to be without placement.

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- 2.1.3. Client Information Sheet (Located in CMS under the green button)
- 2.1.4. Youth’s current schedule (school, visits, court, substance use disorder (SUD) treatments, mental health appointments, etc.) including locations and transportation needs.
- 2.1.5. What level of supervision is required
  - 2.1.5.1. All YWP will have a staffing ratio of 2 staff to 1 youth
  - 2.1.5.2. Unsupervised time recommendations (i.e. can they be alone, how often they are allowed to be alone, who they can be with, what can they do, where can they go?)
  - 2.1.5.3. Identified individuals who can spend time with the youth without staff present.
- 2.1.6. Authorized visitors
  - 2.1.6.1. Identified individuals (caregivers, natural supports, peers) who can spend time with the youth with or without staff present.
  - 2.1.6.2. Provide parameters regarding time, location, and level of supervision for visitation
    - 2.1.6.2.1. Court ordered visitation will remain in full force and effect as arranged by the assigned SW. YSS is not responsible for supervising court ordered visitation
  - 2.1.6.3. SW shall provide days and times of when YSS/volunteer team can expect the visitors
  - 2.1.6.4. The SW shall provide the authorized visitor’s contact information for YSS and youth to reach out to.
- 2.2. Once email is received by YSS, it will be reviewed. YSS will respond via email to confirm the referral has been received and which YSS has been assigned.
- 2.3. Youth Without Placement Care Coordination Meeting
  - 2.3.1. The YWP email will initiate the daily care coordination meeting, via zoom, organized by the YSS team.
  - 2.3.2. The YSS team facilitates the care coordination meeting.

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2.3.2.1. If the YSS team cannot facilitate the care coordination meeting the YSS supervisor will inform the assigned SW team that they are responsible for coordinating and facilitating the meeting.

2.3.3. YSS will invite all parties listed on the referral and in the email including after-hours staff, CWS placement, Deputy Directors, Program Managers, and on-call supervisor.

2.3.3.1. It is best practice to have the assigned SW team (SW and SW supervisor), tribal SW, placement team, on-call staff, and staff who have worked with or have knowledge of the youth's needs in attendance.

2.3.4. The agenda will include all relevant information regarding the child's needs including:

- Review written expectations of after-hours staff
- Fill any vacancies left on the shift schedule
- Review status of cash equivalence and temporary housing location
- Review youth Information Sheet provided by assigned SW
- Discuss specific/urgent needs (i.e. illnesses, injuries, behavioral concerns, successful behavioral interventions)
- Review youth's activity schedule during the shift and expected activity log documentation

2.3.5. After the meeting, the YSS team, or assigned SW in the event YSS staff is unavailable, will send the final schedule and all relevant information to the attendees via email.

2.3.5.1. Attendance at the daily care coordination meeting is expected for all after-hours staff.

2.4. Scheduling

2.4.1. The YSS team, or assigned SW in the event YSS staff is unavailable, will create the youth schedule.

2.4.2. When it is determined there is a YWP, the schedule will be sent out to recruit daytime and after-hours staff coverage.

2.4.2.1. PM, Deputies or Directors will reach out to DHHS branches as appropriate for after-hours staff support for qualified staff outside of CWS when needed.

2.4.2.2. The schedule will be distributed via email a minimum of 3 times throughout the business day or until all shifts are filled. If shifts remain vacant at the time of the care coordination meeting, coverage will be sought in the meeting.

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- 2.4.3. All YWP will have a staffing ratio of 2 staff to 1 youth
- 2.4.4. A schedule will be created in 7 day increments.
- 2.4.5. When available, YSS will provide supervision of the youth during regular business hours, 8am-5pm, Monday through Friday.
- 2.4.6. After-hours shift time frames will include:
  - 5:00pm – 8:00pm (All Week)
  - 8:00pm – 8:00am (Overnight shift, all week)
  - 8:00am – 1:00pm (Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays)
  - 1:00pm – 5:00pm (Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays)

**3. Intake**

- 3.1. Prior to YSS supervising the youth, YSS and the assigned SW will discuss any specific needs of the youth that has not already been identified through the YSS referral.
- 3.2. Prior to YSS supervising the youth, an intake with YSS, SW, and the youth will take place. During the intake process YSS and SW will discuss with the youth the following:
  - Provide and review foster youth rights
  - Rights and responsibilities regarding contraband
  - Rights and responsibilities about substance use
  - When there are safety concerns, staff will inspect the youth’s belongings
  - The youth’s schedule including schooling, appointments, visitation, pro-social activities, and chores
  - Identify any potential placement opportunities for the youth
    - Ensure the youth understands that supervision by staff is temporary and will not continue once an approved placement has been identified.

**4. Housing**

- 4.1. YSS will communicate with SWS and reserve appropriate housing.
  - 4.1.1. Housing options may include temporary apartments, hotels, visitations, and as a last resort, the children’s room located in the CWS office.
- 4.2. If a hotel is identified as the youth’s temporary housing, follow the appropriate protocols below:
  - 4.2.1. Text current staff with the YWP 15-30 minutes prior to coming on shift to coordinate your meeting place.

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- 4.2.2. Belongings such as hotel key card, gift cards, and keys to the county car and work phone shall be kept on the after-hours staff's person at all times.
- 4.2.3. The care coordination materials (i.e. binder, medication) shall be secured in the after-hours staff bag provided by CWS.
- 4.2.4. Directly hand the hotel key card, gift cards, and car keys to the next staff person at the end of your shift.
- 4.2.5. Do not issue a hotel key card to the youth.
- 4.2.6. Do not leave a youth unattended in the hotel room at any time during your shift.
- 4.2.7. Do not allow any visitors (even family) into the hotel room without prior approval by the assigned social worker team.
- 4.2.8. All after-hours staff are responsible to bring their own food and toiletry items.

5. Funds for Direct Care

- 5.1. YSS team will request funds for the youth's basic needs (i.e. food, laundry, hygiene, pro-social activities, clothing, and bedding needs).
- 5.2. Funds are specific to youth only.
- 5.3. YSS team will provide a daily budget amount that should be allocated to food, meaningful pro-social activities, and essentials.
- 5.4. Funds are to be held by YSS staff or volunteers. They are not to be provided to the youth without prior approval from the assigned social worker team.
- 5.5. Staff should not use personal funds for youth needs. Any use of personal funds and reimbursement requires prior approval from the SWS.

6. Care Coordination documents

- 6.1. YSS checks the documents and replenishes as needed.
- 6.2. YSS maintains an inventory of items in the bag and cards in the locked medication box and replenishes as needed.

7. Vehicle

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- 7.1. YSS will reserve a vehicle for the duration of the youth’s temporary stay.
  - 7.1.1. DHHS 12 Overnight Vehicle Request form will be completed by YSS.
- 7.2. The vehicle will remain accessible to all volunteers and should remain at the youth’s temporary residence when not in use.
- 7.3. YSS is responsible for ensuring the fuel tank is at least half-full at the end of business day.
- 7.4. All employees approved to drive county vehicles will follow the general procedures (P&P CWS General Procedures- Use of County Cars 09-76) including tracking the mileage.
- 7.5. The keys for the vehicle are kept in the lock box or in possession of the staff person at all times.

8. Safety

8.1. General safety

- 8.1.1. Call 911 to request support from law enforcement when there is an imminent threat to life or safety of the child or another person, or as a last resort after other diversion and de-escalation techniques have been utilized.

8.2. Staff safety (09-72 Safety Transporting Clients, 09-69 Safety Home Visiting, & 09-73 Safety Critical Incidents)

- 8.2.1. All YWP will have a staffing ratio of 2 staff to 1 youth.
- 8.2.2. Client and staff safety are to be prioritized. The following is a guide:
  - 8.2.2.1. Staff safety is a priority. If at any point you feel unsure, immediately remove yourself from the situation. There is no time that you are asked to remain or intervene in an unsafe situation. Temporarily remove yourself from the situation.
  - 8.2.2.2. Once in a safe location, please contact the appropriate authority (Law enforcement intervention should be requested only when there is an imminent threat to life or safety of the child or another person, or as a last resort after other diversion and de-escalation techniques have been utilized.). If you identify that you need support in de-escalating and addressing the current situation, contact the point person identified in the care coordination meeting to create an action plan (prior to shift you will be told who that is

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and have appropriate contact numbers in your possession). You will be provided the point person(s) for support while on your shift, this could be the primary SW/SWS/ the on duty supervisor, your primary supervisor or the on-call supervisor.

8.2.2.3. An action plans could include being provided language to use with youth, having social worker or YSS meet you at location, contacting Behavioral Health or community based services, or contacting law enforcement.

8.2.2.4. Prior to your shift you will be provided with relevant information regarding youth without placement (name, age, gender identities/pronouns, specific needs, activities that would happen during shift, illnesses/injuries, behavioral concerns—any tips and tricks on addressing these.

8.2.2.5. Prior to starting your shift, if you are feeling uncertain and unprepared, it is imperative that you inform your supervisor of your concerns. Your supervisor will partner with you to address the concerns, which may include the following strategies:

- meeting between you and the youth
- pairing you up with another staff, mini trainings/coaching around ideas to de-escalate the situation
- moving location where childcare happens
- providing additional resources that you can bring with you including activities for the youth with tips and tricks

8.2.2.6. If the suggestions above, do not address your concerns, you and your supervisor should make a plan to consult during your shift.

8.3. Staff providing care must attend the Youth Without Placement Care Coordination Meeting

8.3.1. If unable to attend YWP Care Coordination meeting, you are responsible to communicate any updates/relevant information to the team or ask for any relevant information for your upcoming shift.

8.4. Staff providing care are expected to attend the Youth Without Placement Orientation prior to committing to any shifts.

8.5. Youth safety

8.5.1. Call 911 to request support in case of medical emergency (i.e., significant allergic reaction, seizures, broken bones, etc.).

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- 8.5.2. Call 911 to request support from medical personnel any time it is believed the youth has ingested any substance in excess and any time the youth is displaying behaviors that indicate severe intoxication or medical emergency. Staff should assess youth's consciousness/responsiveness, physical appearance (i.e., change in pupil dilation, movement, breathing, speech patterns).
- 8.5.3. When it is believed the youth has ingested any substance, the youth will be brought to the closest emergency department for clearance (or their medical provider, if available).
- 8.5.4. It is expectation of staff to assess the wellbeing of the youth and schedule medical appointment as necessary.
- 8.5.5. If a medical emergency occurs or medical clearance is required, staff will alert the on call supervisor once situation is stabilized and complete an incident report.
- 8.5.6. When a youth leaves a placement without permission or does not come back at the scheduled curfew, law enforcement will be called to report the youth as a missing person as soon as practically possible, never to exceed 24 hours.
  - 8.5.6.1. When staff contacts law enforcement they will provide a physical description of the youth, the date of birth of the youth, what the youth was last seen wearing, and where they were last seen.
  - 8.5.6.2. When the youth return, staff will contact law enforcement immediately to clear the missing person's report. Law enforcement will come to the location of the youth to complete clearing the missing person's report.

**8.6. Medication**

- 8.6.1. Staff will review the youth's prescribed medications, request a current medication list from the primary medical provider, sort the medications keeping only the currently prescribed medication, and will bring the expired/discontinued medications to a prescription drop off for disposal.
- 8.6.2. Any medication prescribed to the youth will be kept in a lock box where the youth is housed.
  - 8.6.2.1. The key to the lock box will be kept in staff's possession at all times.
- 8.6.3. YSS staff will complete a Medication Administration Record (MARs) for each prescribed medication belonging to the YWP and it will be kept with the medication where the youth is housed.

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8.6.3.1. MARs will include:

8.6.3.1.1. Date

8.6.3.1.2. Initials of staff members observing medication being taken

8.6.3.1.3. Name of medication

8.6.3.1.4. Quantity taken

8.6.4. At the designated time for the youth to take their medication, medication is removed from the lockbox by staff and the medication is handed to the youth.

8.6.5. Staff will observe the youth self-administering the medication to ensure the correct dosage/application was taken according to the instructions on the prescriptions.

8.6.6. The medication will then be immediately returned to the lock box and secured.

8.6.7. Every time the youth takes medication, document on the MARs the date, name of medication, quantity taken, who observed the medication being taken.

8.6.7.1. If youth refuses to take medication document that on the MARs in addition to the reason for the refusal.

8.6.7.1.1. Staff shall alert the assigned SW and foster care nurse via email of any refusal to take prescribed medication.

8.6.8. Whenever possible request the youth's prescription(s) be filled in a blister pack or other container that is appropriate for the youth to self-administer medications.

8.6.8.1. Blister packs can be requested from some local pharmacies. To have all of a youth's medication packaged in a blister pack, staff will need to ensure the youth's prescriptions are being filled by that pharmacy.

8.6.9. Staff will monitor and fill/refill any prescribed medications throughout the duration of the YWP temporary housing

8.7. Incident Response

8.7.1. Following an incident contact the identified supervisor to report the incident's conclusion and get any additional instructions.

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8.7.2. At the conclusion of an incident, staff are responsible for documenting the incident on the Incident Report. The Incident Report will be provided to the identified supervisor by 10am the following business day.

8.7.2.1. Incident reports will be submitted to the YSS supervisor and YSS program manager via email.

8.7.2.2. The YSS supervisor will review the Incident Report, confer with the on-call supervisor if applicable, and gather any additional information as needed.

8.7.2.3. The YSS supervisor will provide the Incident Report to the primary social worker team (SW/SWS/Program Manager) to determine next steps.

8.7.2.4. The YSS supervisor will send the Incident Report through the appropriate channels for review.

8.7.2.5. Use clear, understandable language. Use logical and sequential order.

8.7.2.6. Avoid jargon, abbreviations and acronyms that others may not understand. Acronyms are to be spelled out the first time used.

8.7.2.7. Use short sentences with appropriate grammar and language. Avoid words that are ambiguous or non-committal such as “should” or “ought”.

8.7.2.8. Use Spell Check.

**8.8. Staff Expectations**

8.8.1. Staff working with YWP will be in good standing with their employer and have received permission from their direct supervisor.

8.8.2. Staff working with YWP will have received the necessary background clearances that allows them to work with children (This can be verified through Employee Services).

8.8.3. Staff working with YWP will review and sign the Conduct and Practice Expectations for Staff Providing Care for Youth Pending Placement form.

8.8.3.1. This form will be provided to the YSS Supervisor prior to staff’s first scheduled shift with a YWP.

8.8.3.2. This form will be counter signed by Staff’s direct supervisor.

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- 8.8.4. Staff working with YWP will attend the YWP Orientation Training prior to staff's first scheduled shift with YWP.
  - 8.8.4.1. YWP Orientation Training will be held monthly.
- 8.8.5. Staff are responsible for communicating as soon as possible when they recognize that they are unable to complete their shifts.
  - 8.8.5.1. During regular business hours, staff will notify the YSS supervisor of their inability to complete a shift.
  - 8.8.5.2. Outside regular business hours, staff will notify the On-Call supervisor of their inability to complete a shift.
- 8.8.6. While staff are working with YWP, they are doing so as employees of DHHS and should exercise professional conduct. This includes but is not limited to the following:
  - 8.8.6.1. Staying awake
    - 8.8.6.1.1. During overnight shift, it is acceptable to go to sleep in your designated sleeping area after the needs of the youth have been met and the youth have settled for the night.
      - 8.8.6.1.1.1. It must be determined that it is appropriate for the staff to be asleep, there will be situation where a staff will be awake at all times, this will be determined at the assessment period and all staff will be made aware prior to signing up for shifts.
  - 8.8.6.2. While working with YWP you are acting as the youth's temporary care provider. It is the expectation that staff will model healthy child-adult relationships and boundaries.
    - 8.8.6.2.1. Staff are responsible for ensuring that all needs of youth are met and engaging with the youth through developmentally appropriate activities.
      - 8.8.6.2.1.1. Activities with the youth should be centered on pro-social interactions and meeting the youth's goals.
        - 8.8.6.2.1.1.1. Staff **will not:**
          - 8.8.6.2.1.1.1.1. Use personal vehicle
          - 8.8.6.2.1.1.1.2. Bring youth to their homes or any other personal residence not connected to the youth

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- 8.8.6.2.1.1.1.3. Allow interaction between personal pets and youth, nor shall pets be present at youth’s temporary housing
- 8.8.6.2.1.1.1.4. Provide drugs or alcohols to the youth
- 8.8.6.2.1.1.1.5. Engage in drug or alcohol use including marijuana use, prior to the beginning of your shift and during your shift
  - 8.8.6.2.1.1.1.5.1. Cigarette smoking can occur during a break in the staff’s schedule in accordance with facilities regulations.
  - 8.8.6.2.1.1.1.5.2. Youth will not be present while staff are smoking cigarettes
- 8.8.6.2.1.1.1.6. Involve the youth in the staff’s personal life
- 8.8.6.2.1.1.1.7. Allow or facilitate interaction between youth and staff’s family, friends, or associates

9. Documentation

- 9.1. Staff member with access to CWS/CMS will document the observation in summary of in person contact with youth as a contact in the case. Non-CWS staff will submit an email within one business day regarding the shift to the primary social worker, primary assigned social worker supervisor, and YSS team. The email will include the general disposition of the youth, specific needs that arose, specific activities that were engaged in, and specific behaviors that the youth displayed.
- 9.2. While on shift, staff is expected to document any activities on the activity log.
- 9.3. Use clear, understandable language. Use logical and sequential order.
- 9.4. Avoid jargon, abbreviations and acronyms that others may not understand. Acronyms are to be spelled out the first time used.
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