

**County of Orange Social Services Agency
Family Self-Sufficiency/Foster Care Program**

Program/Area: Foster Care Program
Title: Voluntary Placement Program
Number: 717
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide eligibility requirements and timelines for voluntary placements.

OVERVIEW

Voluntary placement is an out-of-home placement of a non-dependent child when the parent(s) or related guardian(s) have requested assistance to place the child. The parent or guardian must sign a Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) [SOC 155](#).

The intent of a voluntary placement is to temporarily assist a parent or guardian who is otherwise unable to provide for a child's needs, while the parent or guardian works to establish conditions which facilitate reunification with the child. The duration for a voluntary placement is either up to 180 days for a federally eligible child (can be extended for additional 180 days) or a maximum of six months for a non-federal child.

GENERAL PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Voluntary Placement Agreement, [SOC 155](#) is signed by the parent/guardian and Senior Social Worker (SSW) for a period not to exceed 180 days or six months.

Aid to Families and Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) payment begins either on the date the [SOC 155](#) is signed or the date of placement, whichever is later.

Foster Care Eligibility Technician (FCET) will establish AFDC-FC linkage for the month the Voluntary Placement Agreement, [SOC 155](#) is signed. (See [Determination of Federal AFDC-FC P & P 706](#))

FEDERAL FUNDED

A child voluntary placed can be eligible to receive Federal AFDC-FC for up to 180 days provided VPA [SOC 155](#) is signed and all other eligibility requirements are met. If the child is returned home on a non-temporary basis and the voluntary placement agreement has been terminated, the child is eligible for an additional 180 days of voluntary placement, not to exceed a total period of 12 months. If the child is not going to be returned home within the first 180 days, a petition must be filed and the minor must be declared as dependent, or a referral must be made to an adoption agency for consideration of minor for adoption with permanent care and custody rights relinquished by the parents. In addition, a court finding that continued voluntary placement is in the best interest of the child must be made within

the initial 180 days for Federal funding to continue. The petition must be filed in time to allow the court to make the best interest finding prior to the expiration of the 180 day period.

NOTE: FCET will need to re-establish Federal AFDC-FC linkage on subsequent voluntary placements.

STATE FUNDED

A child can be eligible to receive State AFDC-FC for a maximum of six months provided the VPA [SOC 155](#) is signed and all other eligibility requirements are met. The six-month period does not need to be continuous. If more than one voluntary placement occurs within the same episode, the total State AFDC-FC payments for all the voluntary placements of the same child shall not exceed six months. However, if the authority for placement changes from voluntary placement to another authority for placement such as court order, legal guardianship, or adoption, the six-month time limitation does not apply. If the child is not returned home within six months of voluntary placement, then the child must be a dependent of the court in order to continue State funding.

NOTE: Relatives not eligible to federal AFDC-FC will need to be referred to CalWORKs.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

The following documents are required for voluntary placement cases:

- Voluntary Placement Agreement, [SOC 155](#) must be completed for initial and subsequent voluntary placements.
- The Determination of Federal AFDC-FC Eligibility, [FC 3](#) form must be completed specifying the reason for removal from the home is the result of a voluntary placement.
- Foster Child's Data Record and AFDC-FC Certification, [SOC 158 A](#).
- The Statement of Facts Supporting Eligibility for AFDC-Foster Care, [FC 2](#) requires the parent/guardian to complete and SSW and FCET to sign.
- The Child Support-Good Cause Claim for Non-cooperation, [CW 51](#) form is submitted by the SSW.

REQUIRED FORMS

Child Support-Good Cause Claim for Non-cooperation, [CW 51](#)

Determination of Federal AFDC-FC Eligibility, [FC 3](#)

Foster Child's Data Record and AFDC-FC Certification, [SOC 158 A](#)

Statement of Facts Supporting Eligibility for AFDC-Foster Care, [FC 2](#)

Voluntary Placement Agreement, [SOC 155](#)

REFERENCES

[Determination of Federal AFDC-FC P & P 706](#)

[ACL 01-33](#)

[Eligibility and Assistance Standards \(EAS\) 45-202](#)

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