

Placement FAQ's

Purpose

The purpose of this FAQ is to create a shared understanding of what counts as a placement move, why it matters, and to create consistency across the state in regard to placement moves.

1. What is a placement move?

A placement move occurs when a child leaves one out-of-home placement and enters another.

Examples include moving from:

- One foster home to another
- A foster home to a relative or kinship placement
- Kinship care to a non-relative foster home
- Foster family care to a group home or residential treatment program
- Residential treatment back to a foster home
- Emergency shelter to a foster home
- Foster home to a pre-adoptive home (before adoption is finalized)

Each change is generally counted as one placement move.

Table 1. Examples of Placement Moves

Scenario	Placement Move	Why	When does the First Placement End
Child moves from Foster Home A to Foster Home B	Yes	New foster care placement.	The last full day that the child is in Foster Home A
Child moves from an emergency shelter to a foster home	Yes	Change in placement setting.	The last full day that the child is in the emergency shelter
Child moves from a foster home to a relative caregiver	Yes	New placement with a different caregiver.	The last full day that the child is in the foster home
Child moves from a kinship home to a non-relative foster home	Yes	Placement provider changes.	The last full day that the child is in the kinship home
Child moves from foster care to a residential treatment program (Q RTP)	Yes	Different licensed placement type.	The last full day that the child is in the foster home
Child returns from residential treatment to a foster home	Yes	Another placement change.	The last full day that the child is in residential treatment

Placement FAQ's

Table 1. Examples of Placement Moves

Scenario	Placement Move	Why	When does the First Placement End
Child changes from one provider group home to another provider group home	Yes	Different licensed provider.	The last full day that the child is in the first group home
Child from a foster home spends five days in the hospital, moves into a PRTF placement	Yes	Different licensed placement type.	The last full day that the child spent in the foster home
Child moves to a pre-adoptive foster home	Yes	New placement prior to adoption.	The last full day that the child is in the foster home

2. What is usually NOT a placement move?

Typically, the following are not considered placement moves for federal performance reporting:

Examples include moving from:

- Hospitalizations for medical or psychiatric treatment (**only if the foster care placement remains the same**)
- Short-term respite care
- Court appearances
- Visits with parents or relatives
- School changes by themselves
- Trial home visits (these have separate reporting rules)
- Final discharge from foster care (reunification, adoption, guardianship, aging out)

Table 2. Examples That Are Not Placement Moves

Scenario	Placement Move	Why
Child spends three days in the hospital, then returns to the same foster home	No	Foster placement never changed.
Child attends summer camp	No	Temporary activity, not a foster placement.
Child visits parents over the weekend	No	Family visitation is not a placement.

Placement FAQ's

Table 2. Examples That Are Not Placement Moves

Scenario	Placement Move	Why
Child changes schools but stays with the same foster family	No	School is separate from placement.
Foster parents move to a new house and the child moves with them	No	Same caregivers remain responsible for the child.
Child changes from one cottage to another cottage with the same provider at the same address	No	The child didn't move to another provider or is receiving a different service they only moved within the campus
Child is reunified with parents and exits foster care	No	This is a discharge from foster care, not a placement move.
Child is adopted	No	Adoption ends the foster care episode.
Child exits to guardianship	No	Permanency exit rather than another foster placement.

All the above changes in the circumstances of the child should be noted in the county's placement log.

*One clarification point is when a foster care placement ends in an exit to adoption or guardianship, this is not a physical move, but it is a move towards permanency. *

3. Why the Distinction Matters

Placement moves are more than an administrative count, they are used to evaluate placement stability, a key indicator of child well-being. Clarifying what constitutes a placement move helps staff focus on preventing unnecessary disruptions and understanding how their decisions affect children and agency outcomes.