
INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of a shelter home is to provide a safe environment for children pending assessment and location of an appropriate ongoing placement. A second purpose is the support and stabilization of children who have been removed from their families with little or no preparation. A third purpose of the home is to prepare the child for a subsequent placement. A fourth purpose is that the shelter home parents can assist in evaluating the appropriate ongoing placement for the child.

**LOCAL OFFICE
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each shelter home is to have a DHS assigned worker. This shelter home worker is responsible for working with the foster parents to assure that the needs of each child in placement are adequately and appropriately addressed.

The assigned worker is responsible for the overall shelter home program. The worker and the shelter home parents work together in determining the care needed by the child(ren) in placement. The shelter home worker and parents assist the child's worker in planning for the subsequent placement.

The shelter home worker:

1. Acts as a liaison between the shelter home parents and the child's worker.
2. Participates in interviews with the child, the child's worker, the shelter home parent, and/or members of the child's family.
3. Makes recommendations to the child's worker regarding subsequent planning.
4. Reviews and approves the budget of the shelter home program.
5. Makes periodic shelter home parent evaluations.
6. Assists the shelter home parents in implementing the shelter home program.
7. Maintains shelter home records.
8. Submits required reports.

**SHELTER HOME
PARENT
RESPONSIBILITIES**

The shelter home is to be available on a 24-hour per day, seven day per week basis. The shelter home parents are responsible for the care and safety of the child in placement. Their role is to provide care for the child, help the child adjust to removal from his home and assist in preparing the child for appropriate ongoing placement.

The shelter home parents are responsible for 24 hour per day care and supervision of the child in placement. They are responsible for maintenance of a friendly, acceptable, wholesome atmosphere in the home. They act as healthy adult models to strengthen existing positive values and behavior patterns.

In addition to providing care and supervision, shelter home parents:

- (a) Assign age appropriate responsibilities (chores) to each child such as keeping his room tidy.
- (b) Assure that the child attends school.
- (c) With child's worker's approval, facilitate communications between the child and the child's parents.
- (d) Involve the child in recreational activities.
- (e) Make arrangements and transport for emergency and non-emergency medical and dental care.
- (f) Notify the worker immediately of any emergency.
- (g) Assure the child has adequate clothing.

**BEHAVIORAL
EXPECTATIONS**

The shelter home parents and worker are to establish a set of behavioral expectations for a child placed in the home and are to share these expectations with the child upon placement. The following are to be included:

1. The child must remain in the home or on the grounds at all times unless the shelter home parents give him permission to leave.

2. The children cannot use the telephone unless special permission is given and then calls are to be restricted in number and in duration of time.
3. Specific mealtimes, bed-time and rising times are to be established.
4. School attendance is required.
5. The child must come directly home from school or any other community based program and may not accept rides from anyone except the shelter home parents.
6. A delinquent child may earn the right to visit at home (with the child's worker's permission) on weekends or with special permission during the week.
7. Each child is to have certain chores to do including keeping their own living area and belongings neat and clean.
8. Good standards of personal grooming and hygiene are required of each child. There should be no restrictions as to the hair length as long as the hair is kept clean and in a reasonable condition.
9. At admission, all the child's personal property is to be noted and stored, if necessary, until his release. This can usually be accomplished immediately after admission by having the child empty all pockets, placing the contents on the table. The child should be allowed to keep routine articles such as watches, rings, etc., provided those items are not sources of conflict within the home. The child should not keep money with them. The use, borrowing or trading of clothing or other personal articles is prohibited.

DISCIPLINE

A plan is to be in place for discipline. When discipline is necessary it is to be consistent and commensurate with the severity of the infraction and in compliance with the licensing rules and regulations, Act 116 of 1973, MCL722.112 (R400.9404, Behavior Management). Discipline is to be centered on a withdrawal or withholding of certain privileges. Inflicting corporal punishment, creating mental anguish, or any other forms of physical force or mental deprivation are not permitted. When discipline is required, it should be within the following constraints:

1. The shelter home parent and/or shelter home worker should attempt to resolve the problem before discipline is administered.
2. The shelter home worker should be notified of the behavior for which the child is being disciplined.
3. The shelter home parents should document in writing how the problem was handled and the disciplinary measures that were taken.
4. The shelter home worker, in conference with the shelter home parents, should discuss the disciplinary measures to assure that they are within the constraints of this philosophy.
5. In those cases where physical restraint is necessary to protect the child from others, or himself, or to protect others or property from the child, it is permissible to restrain the child temporarily until the shelter home worker can be consulted. Such restrictive action is an emergency procedure only and should not be considered as a disciplinary measure.
6. When physical restraint has been used, a detailed report of the incident is to be completed in duplicate immediately. One copy is for the shelter home records and one for the assigned shelter home worker.

Use of Detention Facilities

Only a child who is under court jurisdiction for committing a criminal offense may be placed in a detention facility. Transfer of a child to a detention facility should not be used as a punishment tool, but should be permitted if serious emergencies arise. Secure detention facilities should only be utilized when there is an obvious threat of danger to the child himself, to other residents, to the shelter home parents, to their children, or to their property. If such emergencies arise, the following procedures are to be followed:

1. Contact shelter home worker.
2. Seek court approval for the temporary transfer of the child from the shelter home to a detention facility.
3. Once a decision has been made to transfer the child, contact the detention facility to ascertain whether or not it can take the child and, if so, make final arrangements for the transfer.

4. Prepare a detailed report in duplicate stating the purpose of the transfer and all other pertinent information of the transfer. The original goes to the shelter home worker and one is to be kept in the shelter home records.

ACTIVITIES AWAY FROM THE SHELTER HOME

Ordinarily a child placed in a shelter home will not become very involved in activities outside the home as his stay will be brief. The shelter home parents and shelter home worker may find approved DHS or Family Court volunteers useful. Because activities away from the shelter home must be properly supervised the following procedures are to be followed:

1. Anyone other than the shelter home parent, worker or the child's worker taking a child from the home on any activity (visit, school, religious, recreational, work, etc.) must first be interviewed and approved by the shelter home worker or the child's worker. The purpose of the interview and approval is to assure that the person and activity the child will be involved in does not in any way conflict with the child's safety and treatment plan.
2. All activities away from the shelter home are to be approved by the shelter home worker or the child's worker.
3. Activities away from the shelter home require written approval prior to the date and time of departure.
4. Anyone taking a child from the home other than the shelter home worker, is to leave his/her name, address, telephone number, destination, and expected time of return.

AWOLP PROCEDURES

Shelter home parents can often prevent AWOLPs (absent without legal permission) by teens or older children from occurring by being aware of the situation and knowing what is going on in the home at all times. This type of knowledge of the situation necessitates total involvement with the children. By knowing the moods of all the children in the shelter home, a child's problem can often be addressed before s/he takes flight as a means of resolution.

When an AWOLP occurs, the following procedures are to be followed:

1. Notify shelter home worker immediately.
2. Check the child's room and discuss the situation with the other children. This process might give some clue as to the truant's whereabouts. All of the truant's personal belongings are to be locked up immediately.
3. Contact the local and state police immediately and provide necessary descriptive information.
4. Notify the child's worker and his parents immediately.

If a truant child is apprehended or returns to the home voluntarily, all parties concerned should be notified immediately, i.e., parents, police, worker, etc.

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

First-aid is defined as the immediate and temporary treatment given in an emergency before full medical care can be obtained. All shelter home parents should familiarize themselves with first aid, accident and illness procedures. Whenever in doubt about the seriousness of an accident or illness, a physician should be called.

Shelter home parents are to familiarize themselves with fire, tornado, and other emergency procedures, as well as maintaining proper safety precautions within the home.

VISITING PROCEDURES

Home Visits

Since a child is only in the shelter home for a brief period of time, home visits will not be very common. However, a procedure for approving home visits is to be in place. No child should be allowed a home visit unless it has been approved by his worker. Likewise, no child should be denied parenting time that has been approved.

Home visits should never be considered on a reward-punishment basis. A home visit is considered a vital part of a child's treatment plan.

**Visits in the
Shelter Home**

Every shelter home is to have a clearly defined written visiting procedure specifying the times that parents can visit. Visits should be limited to parents or members of the immediate family. All visits are to be approved by the child's worker at least two days in advance.

**EDUCATION,
RECREATION, AND
OTHER ACTIVITIES**

The shelter home provides short-term care and is not expected to have an extensive community based program. Most children in shelter homes will not be involved in community educational, recreational or employment activities.

Since a child may not be attending community based programs, there should be resources within the home to meet these various needs. A child is allowed to attend church services. If possible, arrangements should be made to attend a church of his choice under supervision. If this is not possible, he may attend a church of the legal parent's choice. However, in no case is a child expected to accept the religious values of the shelter home parents or required to attend the shelter home parents' church services.

**BUSINESS AND
MANAGEMENT
PROCEDURES**

The primary responsibility for establishing and maintaining the shelter home belongs to the department. Shelter home parents are an integral part of the daily operation, and should be aware of the management procedures. Some of these procedures necessitate the direct involvement of shelter home parents.

**Establishing the
Shelter Home**

Prospective shelter home parents are to be given a thorough briefing on the nature of shelter care, the roles and expectations of parents and the worker before proceeding with a shelter home contract.

Once the orientation and selection of shelter home parents have occurred, the following procedures must be completed:

1. The home must be licensed in accordance with the Child Care Organization Act, P.A. 116 of 1973 (MCL 722.111 et seq).
2. The family shelter home responsibilities within this section of the manual (FOM 942) are to be reviewed with the parents.
3. Payment rates and procedures are to be defined.
4. Contractual requirements are to be completed.

A child coming to the home might have a substantial amount of money or he might earn money while in the home. A child in a shelter home should never be allowed to carry a significant amount of money. The shelter home parents must establish specific procedures to assure accurate records are maintained regarding all aspects of the child's personal financial transactions. The shelter home parents should issue receipts for all moneys received from a child.

Other Reporting Requirements

The shelter home worker is responsible for writing a quarterly narrative report regarding the shelter home's occupancy. This report is to cover the ability of the shelter home parents to meet the needs of children in crisis, the community acceptance of and involvement in the program and the ability of the staff and shelter home parents to function as a team.

The shelter home worker is also responsible for meeting all the requirements of the Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies from the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing (BCAL) with respect to this program.

Case information on children are to include admission and discharge record, personal property list and any special reports.

TERMINATION FROM SHELTER CARE

It is the responsibility of the child's caseworker to assure the child knows that his stay in the home is temporary. This fact should be discussed with the child at the time of placement. For a child who develops positive emotional relationships with the shelter family, leaving the home is apt to be more difficult if he has not been reminded that their stay in the home is temporary. Refer to FOM

722-03, Placement Selection and Standards, for time limits for placement in a family shelter home.