
OVERVIEW

The fundamental principle underlying the provision of shelter home services is to provide a safe, temporary home which promotes and prepares children to move to their planned placement.

A family shelter home is a foster family home available for the short term emergency care of children. It is used for any child who is temporarily without a home due to court or police intervention. This includes delinquent, non-delinquent and neglected/abused children.

A child may be placed in the home any hour of the day or night and remain there just long enough to allow the supervising agency time to adequately plan for him/her. It is expected that the foster home will accept a child anytime night or day, with little or no information other than a court order. This may be completed in a matter of days, or even hours. Children then move to their planned placement.

**Appropriate
Shelter Home
Placements**

Shelter homes are used primarily for children who cannot remain in their own home. Appropriate shelter home placements include:

- Children who come to the court or DHS attention in an emergency or crisis situation and whose needs are unknown. The home serves as not only a place for care but also as an evaluative setting.
- Children who have run away from home and refuse to return.
- Children who have committed delinquent acts and need more supervision than can be expected from their parents.
- Children who have been placed in secure detention or jail and need a brief trial period before return to the fully open setting of family foster care or parental homes.
- Children who, despite having a record of truancy, have been assessed as running from an unhealthy situation. An example of this situation would be the child who is running to escape being beaten or physically abused at home.
- Children who are not an extreme truancy threat.

- Children who are not explosive and physically violent.

**LEGAL
REQUIREMENTS**

Children can be placed in shelter homes under only two sets of circumstances:

**Emergency Foster
Care**

Emergency foster care is to be used for immediate placement of neglected and dependent children and for delinquent children who are not being detained but are temporarily without lodging. This placement can be used only until an appropriate placement is located and in no case longer than the time limits stated below.

**Alternative to
Detention**

Use of a shelter home as an alternative to detention is only for delinquent children. A detention order is needed which can initially be verbal, with confirmation in writing within 48 hours. Detention orders can be issued only by a family court. A detention order is needed if the child is being detained, is being held against his/her wishes, or to any degree is not fully cooperative. The local office must obtain agreement in writing from the family court to utilize a shelter home in place of a secure detention facility.

**PLACEMENT
LIMITATIONS**

Refer to FOM 722-03, Placement Selection and Standards, for time limits and number of allowable placements in a family shelter home.