
CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STANDARDS FOR ONGOING PROTECTIVE SERVICES

3.4 REASONABLE EFFORTS

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S10 (Child Protective Services) and S10.5 (Family Services) link to and support Standard 3.4 *Reasonable Efforts*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-39-05 (Reasonable Efforts); 5101:2-39-06 (Preplacement Preventative Services, Reunification Services and Life Skill Services); 5101:2-39-07 (Supportive Services); and 5101:2-47-22 (Foster Care Maintenance Program Reimbursability: Reasonable Efforts Requirement) address Standard 3.4 *Reasonable Efforts*.

I. Philosophy

Reasonable efforts must be made throughout the agency's involvement with the family. Removing from the home is a traumatic and life-altering experience for both the child and the family. The purpose of reasonable efforts is to provide a safe, permanent home for the child by preventing removal, facilitating reunification, preventing or eliminating multiple placements and reentries into care, and/or achieving an alternative permanent home. Reasonable efforts are defined as including:

- an assessment of risk and safety to the child if the child remains in the home, and the risk of trauma if the child is removed from the home;
- a determination of child and family strengths and needs to reduce the level of risk and increase the child's safety;
- the identification and utilization of needed and available services;
- exploring supportive resource alternatives based on the family's suggestions.

II. Outcome

All children have safety, stability and permanence in the least restrictive, least intrusive, most family-like setting.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- the number of face-to-face contacts with the family made within 24 hours of the emergency (family and child separate);
- the number of respite placements made to prevent removal or reentry into care;
- the number of family case conferences held to discuss and update the child and family assessment at key decision-making points with the family, substitute provider (if applicable), service providers, family support persons and agency staff present;
- the number of children reunified with their family;
- the number of family team meetings held between foster parent, birth parent and social worker;
- the number of children that did not have to be removed from their homes;

- the number of reentries into care;
- the number of children with adoption finalizations;
- median length of stay in out-of-home placement.

IV. Standards for Implementation

A. Reasonable Efforts

- 1) The CFSA should be said to have made reasonable efforts when the staff, with the family, completes all of the following:
 - a. face-to-face contact with all family members and attempts to locate primary caregiver(s) if whereabouts are unknown;
 - b. assessment of strengths, needs and concerns of all family members regarding the child's safety and stability;
 - c. determination of what services are needed and can be immediately accessed to increase child's safety and stability including neighborhood based support systems, based on assessment;
 - d. evaluation of family's utilization and benefit of the services;
 - e. identification of barriers to services and efforts made to resolve these barriers;
 - f. In addition to the above (a-e), the following are examples of reasonable efforts to be considered for:
 - Preventing Removal and Reentry Into Care;
 - Facilitating Reunification;
 - Preventing/Eliminating Multiple Placement;
 - Permanent Alternative Homes.

*This list is not all inclusive and will need to be individualized.

B. Preventing Removal and Reentry Into Care

- 1) In emergency situations, the worker should evaluate the current safety plan. If there is not a current safety plan, the worker should develop the safety plan including relatives or other available caregiver(s) who will willingly shelter the child in an emergency situation (see Standard 2.9, *Safety Plans*).
- 2) When a safety plan is implemented which does not involve moving the child to an alternative setting, the assigned staff should conduct a face-to-face follow-up with the child and family independently of each other within 24 hours of the emergency situation.
- 3) Respite should be accessed to prevent removal or reentry into care.
- 4) Continuously assess family, kin and community resources.
- 5) Hold Team Decision Making Meetings at each critical change in placement (see Standard 3.10, *Team Decision Making*).
- 6) Provide crisis services.

C. Facilitating Reunification

The CFSA should be said to have made reasonable efforts when the staff completes all of the following:

- a. establish visitation between child and family (see Standard 3.13, *Visitation*);
- b. continuously assess family, kin and community resources;
- c. facilitate the Family Team Meetings and encourage and support relationship between family and substitute caregiver (see Standard 6.10, *Family Team Meeting*);
- d. hold Team Decision Making meetings at each critical change in placement decisions (see Standard 3.10, *Team Decision Making*);
- e. extended in-home visits prior to reunification.

D. Preventing/Eliminating Multiple Placements

The CFSA should be said to have made reasonable efforts when the staff completes all of the following:

- a. continuous assessment of family, kin and community resources;
- b. effective matching;
- c. take part in pre-placement visits;
- d. provide respite;
- e. provide crisis services;
- f. Family Team Meetings (see Standard 6.10, *Family Team Meeting*).
- g. Family Case Conference and Team Decision Making meetings (see Standard 3.9, *Family Case Conference* and 3.10, *Team Decision Making*).

E. Permanent Alternative Home

The CFSA should be said to have made reasonable efforts when the staff completes all of the following:

- a. adoption photo listings, websites;
- b. pursue guardianship/legal custody/adoption to relative, non-relative;
- c. foster to adopt;
- d. concurrent planning;
- e. effective matching;
- f. take part in pre-placement visits;
- g. Family Team Meetings (see Standard 6.10 *Family Team Meeting*); and
- h. Family Case Conference and Team Decision Making meetings (see Standard 3.9, *Family Case Conference* and Standard 3.10, *Team Decision Making*).

V. Financial Implication

Costs associated with Standard 3.4, *Reasonable Efforts* are included in various other standards. The additional costs would be the cost of supportive services provided to prevent the unnecessary removal and placement of the child. These latter costs would need to be computed on a case by case basis by the CFSA.