



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Protocol for DCS Foster Home Quality Team (FHQT) Suspended Admissions during a Special Investigations Unit (SIU) Investigation

Supplemental to DCS Policy: 14.10, Special Investigations Unit Child Protective Services Investigation

The purpose of this protocol is to identify when a foster home may be placed on suspended admissions and/or when a suspended admission may be lifted during a SIU investigation. Once a referral is made to the child abuse hotline and an investigation is assigned to SIU on a foster home, the foster home may be placed on suspended admissions. During suspended admissions no new placements can be made into the foster home, the home cannot accept respite placements, and adoptions cannot be finalized.

Suspended Admissions Criteria:

Upon initiation of a SIU investigation, a foster home will be put on suspended admission, prior to the initial assessment, for the following allegations:

1. Severe Abuse Allegations (by statute, these are cases that are worked as CPIT cases, ensuring collaboration with the District Attorney, CAC and Law Enforcement Partners):
 - ◆ Death/Preliminary Near Death
 - ◆ Sexual Abuse
 - ◆ Severe Physical Abuse
 - ◆ Any other allegations labeled severe
2. Drug Exposed Child allegations

Suspended Admissions Lift following initial investigative assessment:

If information obtained in the initial investigative tasks do not show evidence of said allegation the following will occur: (Refer to Policy [14.10, Special Investigations Unit Child Protective Services Investigations](#)).

- a) The TL and CM will staff the investigation at the time the SIU FAST is completed.

- b) The SIU TL will send an email to FHQT (Foster Home Quality Team) to lift the foster home suspended admissions within twenty-four (24) hours.
- c) FHQT will follow their established review protocol.

Note: If at any point a foster home should go back on suspended admissions during the course of the investigation, the SIU TL will notify FHQT.

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Requesting Suspended Admissions following initial investigative assessment:

During the initial case staffing/administrative review of homes not on suspended admissions, which will be completed at the time of the SIU FAST, the SIU CM and TL discuss the initial safety assessment and will determine if there are significant safety concerns that would warrant a suspended admission review.

If there are significant safety concerns, the following will occur:

1. The SIU TL and SIU CM will meet by phone with representatives from Foster Parent Support and/or Child Programs to discuss the significant concerns immediately. If resolution is not agreed upon between the parties, the case situation will be escalated to the SIU Director and Child Programs Director.
2. The SIU TL will send email to FHQT to place the foster home on suspended admissions within twenty-four (24) hours.
3. FHQT will place the foster home on suspended admissions.
4. FHQT will follow their established review protocol (refer to the [Protocol for Foster Home Quality Team](#)).

Note: Homes that were not placed on initial suspended admissions will remain open to receive placements.

Child Programs request for temporary lift of a foster home on suspended admissions:

1. Regional DCS staff or contract agency staff reach out to FHQT and SIU with the request to lift the suspended admissions for the purpose of placement or adoption. The request must include the reason the placement is needed.
2. The SIU Director or designee will confirm with the assigned SIU investigator and SIU team leader that there are no safety concerns in the foster home. All required interviews must have been completed to assess the safety of children.
3. SIU Director or designee and Child Program Director or designee will approve the lift of the suspended admissions. Both program areas must agree.
4. If any safety plans are requested, the completed and signed safety plan must be shared with the team prior to final approval being given for the suspended admissions lift. SIU, Child Programs, or FHQT may request additional verification of training or signed discipline policies prior to lift approval being granted.
5. The form [CS-4266, Request for Lift of Suspended Admissions](#) will be completed and signed by all required parties and sent to FHQT.

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6. Once all parties are in agreement, any needed safety plans or required documents are completed, and the Request for Suspended Admission Lift form is signed, the FHQT will lift the suspended admissions so that the placement or adoption can occur. If needed, the suspended admissions will be reinstated afterwards.
7. FHQT will review the foster home per standard protocol after the SIU investigation is closed and the SIU closing notification is sent.

Note: A suspended admission lift will not be granted for any SIU investigation involving a child death that occurred in the foster home that the lift is being requested, until the final autopsy is received. (Upon request the internal leadership team can review).

Note: Any team member can request a staffing if critical information needs to be discussed.

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