



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Guidelines for Foster Home Closure

Supplemental to DCS Policies: 16.16,16.27

This document is to provide guidance to Foster Parent Support/Contract Agency staff regarding home closure when existing foster homes fail to accept placement of children. All aspects of a home's situation and the regional and agency needs must be considered before closing a foster home. Regions and agencies will determine the best course of tracking placement denials by foster parents.

On Hold Sub-Type Status:

This is a time frame for which foster parents can take a break from being contacted or accepting new placements.

- ☐ Foster homes can choose to be placed in the sub-type status of On-Hold for up to six (6) months during a twelve (12) month period.
- ☐ Foster homes can choose to exercise the On-Hold status for less than six (6) months, but the time frame must be in no less than thirty (30) day increments.
- ☐ Establishing an official On-Hold status is not necessary for every temporary situation such as confirmed family emergencies, funerals, vacations and moving. These situations may be excluded from the six (6) month period of underutilization if they are valid, and the family does not demonstrate a pattern of using these reasons in excess.
- ☐ Foster homes must maintain the approval of their foster home as outlined in DCS [Policy 16.8 Responsibilities of Approved Foster Homes](#) during the On-Hold status.
- ☐ If the foster home has custodial children placed in their home during an On-Hold status, they must continue to meet visitation expectations.

Refusal of Placement:

This section refers to scenarios where foster parents have been called for placement but have not accepted any placements offered.

- ☐ Foster homes who have not accepted placement of a child for six (6) consecutive months, must accept a placement within the following three (3) consecutive months or be closed.
- ☐ During this timeframe the Foster Parent Support Worker should be discussing and documenting barriers related to accepting placement.
- ☐ Foster homes considered Respite and/or Emergency placement may be provided more flexibility regarding the six (6) month time frame.

Other Considerations:

- ☐ Foster homes placed under the sub-type status of On-Hold or Suspended Admissions are days not to be considered during the time frame when placements have been denied.
- ☐ Foster Families cannot be considered for closure if they have not been contacted for placement of a child within their identified preferences for which they were approved.
- ☐ Exceptions can be considered to extend the time frame related to closure based on the needs of the region and agency and the circumstances of the foster family.
- ☐ Foster Families are permitted via the Foster Parent Bill of Rights to refuse placement within their home. The denial of numerous calls in one day is to be considered one (1) denial.
- ☐ Foster Families also under the Foster Parent Bill of Rights can request the removal of a child with reasonable notice to the department, with good reason without threat or reprisal. Unless an immediate safety concern, foster parents are to provide a fourteen (14) day notice for removal (Refer to DCS policy [16.27, Notice of Removal from a Foster Home.](#) Failure to work cooperatively with the department regarding disruptions can lead to home closure.

Documentation:

- ☐ When the foster parent advises they would like to be placed in an On-Hold status, the Foster Parent Support Worker will document the status change in the electronic record. Temporary and unofficial periods of On-Hold status as outlined above, may be documented in case recordings or externally from the electronic record.
- ☐ Regional Foster Parent Support staff will document in case recordings all efforts to address the underutilization of the home with the foster parent including but not limited to steps outlined above.
- ☐ The region must track and document refusal of placements to support closure for this purpose.
- ☐ Any exceptions approved to extend the time frame should be documented in the electronic record.

Current Effective Date: 3/23
Supersedes: 08/19
Supplemental to: Policies 16.16, 16.27
CS-0001
RDA SW22