



**Tennessee Department of Children's Services  
Protocol for Monthly Foster Home Visits**

**Supplemental to DCS Policy: [16.4, Foster Home Approval and Requirements](#)**

**Purpose:**

To ensure that all foster homes receive consistent, supportive engagement from Foster Care Support Specialists (FCSS) through regular home visits. These visits aim to strengthen the quality of care, maintain regulatory compliance, offer support to foster families, and address concerns proactively.

**A. Types and Frequency of Visits**

1. Announced Home Visits:

Visitation requirements are outlined below.

- a) For foster homes with a child/youth placed in the home for more than 15 (fifteen) days during the month, a face-to-face visit in the home is required
- b) For foster homes without child/youth placements, the Foster Care Support (FCS) worker will visit the home quarterly.
- c) For foster homes on hold, with no child/youth placements, no visits are required. Once the hold has been lifted, a home visit must occur within 30 (thirty) days.
- d) Additional home visits required for new foster parents are outlined in the [Support to DCS Foster Parents Protocol](#).

2. Unannounced Home Visits

- a) Each foster home should have one (1) unannounced visit annually, unless they are on hold.
  - ◆ If the foster home is on hold and prevents the FCS worker from completing the annual visit, an unannounced visit must take place within 30 (thirty) days of the foster home coming off on hold status.
- b) Additional unannounced visits may be required in the following instances:
  - ◆ There are concerns regarding safety, supervision, or compliance.
  - ◆ The home is under a Corrective Action Plan (formally known as a Performance Improvement Plan).
  - ◆ As directed by a supervisor due to a critical incident or ongoing investigation.

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**NOTE:** All unannounced visits must be documented and include the reason for the visit.

### **B. Visit Preparation**

To prepare for the home visit, the FCS will complete the below tasks.

1. Review the foster home file in the Electronic Record System.
2. Check for upcoming reassessments, training requirements, and/or concerns noted by other team members.
3. Review any recent child/youth incidents, complaints, and/or concerns.
4. Gather needed documents (checklists, home visit form, any follow-up paperwork, etc.).
5. Notify the foster parent of the upcoming visit with at least 48 (forty-eight) hours' notice, unless an unannounced visit is planned or required.

### **C. Required Activities During Each Visit**

1. Home Safety Check:
  - a) The FCS worker will walk through the entire home to ensure safety by checking all spaces, checking buildings outside, etc.

### **D. Documentation**

The FCS worker will complete the following tasks:

1. Complete the Home Visit Form in full and obtain foster parent signature.
2. Take a photo of the outside of the home.
3. Note any concerns, follow-ups, or actions taken, as well as taking additional pictures when applicable.
4. Enter/upload documentation into the Electronic Record System as per DCS policy [31.14, Case Documentation Requirements](#).

### **E. Follow-Up Responsibilities**

The FCS will ensure the following is completed:

1. Provide a summary of any recommendations, deadlines, or required corrections to the foster parent in writing.
2. Schedule any necessary follow-up visits or check-ins.
3. Notify the Foster Care Support Program Coordinator of any issues are identified during the visit.
4. If safety issues are identified during the visit, the Foster Care Support Program Coordinator will return to the home with the Foster Care Support worker within five (5) business days to assess. If

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**Supersedes: None**

**Supplemental to: 16.4**

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the safety issue is urgent, the visit should occur in a timeframe that will ensure safety in the foster home.