

PROCEDURE FOR PARENT REFUSING TO ACCEPT CHILD (aka: LOCKOUTS)

Purpose: The following procedure applies to reports received from DJJ staff, treatment facility staff (ie; mental health or substance abuse facilities) or other reporters such as law enforcement, neighbors, relatives involving children whose parent(s) or guardian indicate an unwillingness to accept responsibility for the child.

Authority: F.S. 985.086; State Interagency Agreement between the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Children and Families; F.S. 827.04 and F.S. 827.06.

Procedure: Upon receipt of a report from the Florida Abuse Hotline involving the above circumstances:

1. The Child Protective Investigator (CPI) will investigate the report, completing all required interviews and relevant collateral contacts. The CPI should interview the child separately to determine if there are abuse or neglect issues. If the initial assessment reveals the case is a disrupted **DCF Florida** adoption, the CPI will contact the Integrated Practice Team (IPT) Family Advocate to initiate a staffing with the IPT and Children's Home Society Post Adoption program. If a youth has a closed dependency case, the CPI will ensure the youth is residing in the appropriate court ordered placement (e.g. the report states the youth is living with the mother but the youth was placed in permanent guardianship with the Aunt.)
2. The CPI will ensure that the youth does not have an open out of county dependency case or open dependency case in Duval, Clay or Nassau County. If the youth has an open dependency case, the CPI will contact the assigned Family Services Counselor (FSC) and request a placement change or respite to avoid removal.
3. The CPI will contact the parent or legal guardian to address the issues and reasons for their unwillingness to accept responsibility for the child. The CPI will explain to the parent/legal guardian community services available to facilitate the return of the child to the home, explore alternative placements for the child, including relatives, friends and/or previous placements. The CPI will offer to make appropriate referrals to community services and a family team conference with the IPT to assist with identification and coordination of services. The Family Support Services (FSS) Family Team Conference Facilitator, who is a licensed mental health counselor, will complete a joint visit with the CPI to engage the

4. If the parent **agrees** to services and is willing to participate in a family team conference, the CPI will immediately begin the process to initiate these services for the family. FSS' Family Team Conference Facilitator will facilitate the family team conference with the CPI being the Co-facilitator.
4. If the parent **refuses** to accept physical custody of the child with appropriate services, the CPI will explain the consequences associated with depriving the child of necessary food, clothing and shelter. The attached letter will be hand delivered to the parent advising the parent that the Department of Children and Families has registered a complaint against the parent for Child Desertion, third degree felony under Florida Statutes and Contributing to the Delinquency or Dependency of a Minor, a first degree misdemeanor under Florida Statutes.
5. In addition, the CPI will explain the dependency proceedings and that the Department will recommend to the Circuit Court Judge that the parent be ordered to pay child support. The CPI will provide the parent a copy of statute: F.S. 827.06 - Nonsupport of Dependents. The cost of care for residential group care averages \$100.00 per day, which the parent will be responsible for paying and should be informed of this by the CPI.
6. The letter the parent receives will be a "notice of meeting" with the FSS facilitator. This meeting will be the last attempt to engage the parent to participate in services, as well as, explain to the parent the consequences for not taking responsibility for the child.
7. If the child is sheltered as a result of the parent refusing to accept physical custody of the child, or if the parents decide to accept services at the time of the meeting, the CPI will schedule a staffing with the Integrated Practice Team (IPT), request the parent be present and participate in the development of an Action Plan for the child and family. The assigned FSC will continue to maintain close contact with the offending parent to encourage reunification with intensive services and to ensure that all relatives and non-relatives have been explored.
8. Based on the recommendations of the IPT, the case may be closed after the CPI has ensured the family is engaged in services (ie: refer the family to a prevention program such as STEPS or in-home services.)