NWF Health Network
Policy & Procedure

Series: 500: Special Populations

Policy Name: Prevention, Reporting and Services to Missing Children

Policy Number: 500

Origination Date: 03/09/2009 **Revised:** Board Meeting of 10/22/2026

Regulation: 39.604, F.S.
39.0141 F.S.
937.021, F.S.
937.022, F.S.
937.028, F.S.
65C-30.019, F.A.C.
CFOP 170-3
CFOP 215-6

Referenced Document: *NWFHN OP 800-805, Incident Reporting and Client Risk Prevention*

Policy
It is the policy of NWF Health Network (NWFHN), to mandate that all Case Management Organizations (CMOs) ensure prompt and comprehensive actions are taken when children are missing for any reason pursuant CFOP 170-3, 65C-30.019 F.A.C and *NWFHN OP 800-805 Incident Reporting and Client Risk Prevention*.

For detailed instructions please see CFOP and F.A.C. found here:

CFOP 170-3 Procedures Related to Missing Children

65C-30.019 - Missing Children F.A.C.

A. Missing Children.

1. A child should be considered missing when the child's whereabouts are unknown, and:
   a. The child has been adjudicated dependent and placed in out-of-home or in-home care; and/or
   b. The child is the subject of an active protective supervision case; and/or
   c. The child is the subject of an active or emergency shelter order; and/or
   d. The child is the subject of an active abuse investigation, there is a preponderance of evidence to support the abuse, neglect or abandonment allegations, a Take into Custody Order will be sought for the child, and:
      i. The parent or legal custodian has been notified of the requirement to report a change in residence or location of the child to the protective investigator and the parent causes the child to move;
      ii. Or allows the child to be moved, to a different residence or location;

iii. Or the child leaves the residence on his or her own accord and the parent or legal custodian does not notify the protective investigator of the move within two (2) business days.

2. A child should not be considered missing when:

   a. The child is receiving in-home non-judicial; or

   b. The child is the subject of an active abuse investigation in which no contact has been made with the family and there is insufficient probable cause to petition the court for a Take Into Custody Order (65-29.013, F.A.C.); or

   c. The child's whereabouts are known and a social service provider or law enforcement agency has physically confirmed the child's whereabouts; or

   d. The child returns to their placement within four (4) hours and a Law Enforcement report number has not yet been initiated. **Important: Once a Law Enforcement report number has been issued, regardless of time frame and/or recovery, a Missing Child Report (MCR) must be completed.**

B. Prevention and Placement.

1. NWFHN and CMO will ensure that all caregivers are aware of how to detect behaviors that may precipitate a child running away, as well as the procedure to follow if a child runs away or is determined to be missing.

2. NWFHN Intake Placement Specialists will work with Dependency Case Managers (DCM) to identify appropriate placements for children with a history of running away, taking the client's preferences into consideration.

3. NWFHN recognizes that the following factors reduce or eliminate runaway episodes:

   a. Placement stability.

   b. Providing more activities/less downtime.

   c. Mental health and substance abuse assessment and treatment.

   d. Normalcy.

   e. Independent living/transition planning and activities.

   f. Placement or visitation with sibling(s).

   g. Positive relationship/bond with at least one adult.

   h. Increased flexibility (a more flexible set of rules tied to each individual child's ability to handle more responsibility).

   i. Granting family visits or phone calls during holidays, weekends or during a family crisis.

j. More openness regarding the child's case information.

Attentive case management.

4. Additional training or consultation to caregivers will be identified and provided, if necessary, to assist them to provide appropriate care to the child who has returned.

C. CMO Response

1. The Case Management Organization will complete the NWFHN Electronic Incident Report Form and Missing Child Report in CCWIS in accordance with *NWFHN OP 800-805, Incident Reporting and Client Risk Prevention*.

2. If at any time the child returns to the caregivers home, all agencies notified that the child was missing will be contacted immediately by the CMO.

   a. If at any time new information is obtained on the child's location, all agencies notified that the child was missing will be contacted immediately and appropriate efforts taken to return the child to the caregivers home.

   b. An updated Incident Report will be sent in accordance with *NWFHN OP 800-805, Incident Reporting and Client Risk Prevention*.