

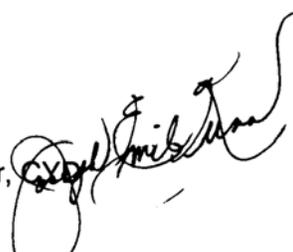
The Philadelphia Department of Human Services  
Children and Youth Division  
Policy and Procedural Guide

Issue Date: April 18, 2008

TO: All Social Work Staff

FROM: Joseph Kuna, Ph.D., Acting Deputy Commissioner, CYD  
Pamela Mayo, Operations Director

RE: Procedures For Locating A CYD-Committed Child Who Runs Away From Placement



EFFECTIVE DATE: April 21, 2008

The purpose of this Guide is to transmit the clarified procedures for searching for a child who runs away from placement.

## POLICY

### Social Worker's Responsibilities

When a CYD-committed child runs away from placement, or the placement intake process, the CYD social worker must ensure that:

- a Missing Persons report is filed,
- the child's parents are notified,
- reasonable efforts are made to locate the child, and
- law enforcement with whom the Missing Persons report is filed are notified when the runaway child is located.

### Supervisor's Responsibilities

The CYD supervisor must review search efforts during supervisory review conferences until the child is located or the case is closed.

### Provider Responsibilities

When a CYD-committed child runs away from placement, the provider must file a Missing Persons report with local law enforcement.

### **Procedure**

*Staff will perform responsibilities detailed in the Procedures established in conjunction with Family Court (see attached).*

#### **Missing Persons Reports**

*The CYD social worker will file the Missing Persons report with local law enforcement when a child runs away from a directly monitored kinship or foster home, or **during the placement intake process, before the provider has physical custody of the child, even if on the grounds of the provider agency.***

*The provider agency social worker will file the Missing Persons report with local law enforcement*

*when a child runs away from a placement setting when the provider agency has physical custody of the child.*

*All Missing Persons Reports will be filed with the police district or local law enforcement in the location from which the child ran away.*

**Ongoing Search Efforts**

*Decisions about the full extent of ongoing search efforts is made jointly by the social worker and supervisor on a case-by-case basis, based on credible information, and must be fully documented in the case record.*

*Efforts should include:*

- *visits to any address where the child may be located based on known addresses from the case record and information from parents, or other collateral contacts*
- *contact with other service providers.*

*Court intervention may be sought when the social worker believes that someone has information concerning the whereabouts of a runaway child and is deliberately concealing or refusing to reveal the information.*

*The CYD social worker and supervisor must request an Enhanced Electronic Search from the Liaison Unit when there are no definite leads as to the child's whereabouts.*

*A referral to the Private Investigator will be discussed with the supervisor, administrator and director when all other search resources have been exhausted. The referral will be made at the discretion of the director and must be documented in the case record.*

*An active search for a child will continue until all appropriate search resources have been exhausted, and must continue if the court orders the search to continue or does not discharge the petition.*

*The CYD social worker has a responsibility to notify law enforcement with whom the Missing Persons report was filed when a child who has run away is located.*

Questions regarding this Policy and Procedural Guide may be addressed to:

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Susan Weinberg, Program Supervisor	x4116
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## PROCEDURES FOR LOCATING A CHILD WHO RUNS AWAY FROM PLACEMENT

When a child runs away from placement, the following steps must be taken:

1. The CYD social worker must notify the child's parents.
2. A Missing Persons Report must be filed by contacting the police district (or local law enforcement) in the location from which the child ran away.
  - If the child is placed with a provider agency, the provider agency social worker is responsible for filing the Missing Persons Report. The CYD social worker, or supervisor if the social worker is unavailable, must contact the provider agency social worker and/or provider agency supervisor to ensure that the Missing Persons Report has been filed.
  - **If the child runs away during the intake process at a provider agency before physical custody of the child is transferred from DHS to the provider agency, the CYD social worker must file the Missing Persons Report.**
  - If the child is placed in a direct foster home or a directly monitored kinship caregiver home, the CYD social worker must file the Missing Persons Report.
3. Ongoing Search Efforts
  - Decisions about the full extent of ongoing search efforts, the resources used, and the timing of resources used must be made on a case-by-case basis as a joint decision between the CYD social worker and the supervisor with review by the administrator and director.
    - i. Ongoing search efforts must be based on credible information.
    - ii. All decisions, and the basis for the decisions, must be fully documented in the case record, and must be able to support a decision to close the case if the child is not found.
  - The CYD social worker should visit the child's last known home address. The social worker should also visit any other addresses where the child may be located based upon information received from parents, relatives, neighbors or other collateral contacts.
  - The CYD social worker should also contact other service providers for the child including, when appropriate, school, mental health providers, physical health providers, probation department, etc.
  - The CYD social worker and supervisor must discuss seeking court intervention when the social worker believes that someone has information about the child's whereabouts and is deliberately concealing or refusing to reveal the information. The social worker should contact the Law Department for assistance in seeking court intervention.

- If there are no definite leads on the whereabouts of the child, the CYD social worker and supervisor will request an electronic search for the child from the Liaison Unit.
- The CYD social worker will make additional visits and request additional electronic searches as appropriate.
- A referral to the Private Investigator will be discussed with the supervisor, administrator and director when all other search resources have been exhausted. The referral will be made at the discretion of the director on a case-by-case basis after review of the case and the search efforts already made. The decision to approve or not approve the referral must be documented in the case record.
- Search efforts will be reviewed biweekly during supervisory review conferences until the child is located or the case is closed.
- An active search for a child will continue until all appropriate search resources have been exhausted.
- A search must continue if the court orders the search to continue or does not discharge the petition.
- The CYD social worker has a responsibility to notify law enforcement with whom the Missing Persons report was filed when a child who has run away is located.