

 Policy # S - 14	Effective date:	Page 1 of 4
REF: 45 CFR XIII 1302.47 (2)(iii) (5)(iv).52(a)(1);	BOD Approval: 8-16-17 PC Approval: 8-24-17	Revision Date: 4/29/19, 8/27/21

SUBJECT: Appropriate and Safe Release of Children

POLICY:

RWCFS will release children only to a child’s legal guardian according to a signed RWCFS FACT sheet, Supplemental FACT sheet forms and/or parent-signed Parent/Guardian Permission form.

PROCEDURE:

RWCFS FACT sheet, Supplemental FACT sheet forms and/or parent-signed Parent/Guardian Permission forms will be kept in the child’s main file in the administrative child file, classroom, and the appropriate Emergency/bus binder. Staff will check a child’s FACT sheet and ask for picture identification any time he/she is not familiar with an adult who is requesting the release of a child. Staff will follow safety policies and procedures when the release of a child is challenged by an adult.

Violations of this policy/procedure may, at the program’s discretion, be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Legal Guardian means: Biological parents who have custody rights, individuals, who have legal paperwork stating that they have guardianship and individuals designated by a legal parent on the Parent/Guardian Permission form signed by the parent.

All children:

1. During the enrollment process, a FACT sheet will be completed and signed by a child’s legal guardian. It will have the names of individuals authorized to be contacted in case of emergency and those authorized to have a child released to them. **Legal guardians can add, delete, or make changes to the FACT sheet by completing a supplemental FACT sheet form or by withdrawing or changing a Parent/Guardian Permission form at any time.**
2. Each classroom and the appropriate Emergency/bus binder will have a current signed copy of the FACT sheet and any supplemental FACT sheets signed by the legal guardian.
3. In cases where the legal guardian is incapable of communicating their wishes due to an emergency or involvement from a lawful protection agency, staff will notify their immediate supervisor by phone, walkie talkie, bus cell phone or radio who will work with other managers and/or the Executive Director to determine next steps.

In cases where the legal guardian wishes to deny access to the non-custodial parent, they will be required to provide appropriate copies of legal documentation like; custody decree, restraining order, and termination of parental rights. Staff will comply with the current and legal documentation on file, until written proof is received verifying something different.

In cases where potential kidnapping or violence is an issue, RWCFS staff will request or obtain photographs of said persons to support in identifying these individuals.

In cases where there are concerns on the part of the adult who can legally sign paperwork, but there is no legal documentation available, staff will inform their immediate supervisor or next appropriate manager who will work with the Family Service Manager to determine next steps or

make appropriate referrals to legal aid or other legal counsel or seek legal counsel on behalf of RWCFS.

If an individual appears at the site and is not listed on the Emergency Contact form:

- Staff will contact the legal guardian(s) to inform them of the incident but will NOT release the child if they are not an approved person according to current FACT sheet/supplemental FACT sheet forms.
- If the individual refuses to leave, staff will call 911 and report the incident to legal guardian(s) as soon as possible.

Once a child is signed into classroom or on to bus, they are the responsibility of RWCFS staff. If a legal guardian attends a special event, or follows child to a field trip, they must sign their child out on bus attendance sign-in/off sheet or classroom sign-in/out book.

Anything atypical will be documented in ChildPlus

When a parent calls to ask that someone not listed on the FACT sheet be allowed to pick up or receive the child off the bus.

1. If a staff person receives a request from a parent or legal guardian for someone not listed on a signed FACT sheet be allowed to pick up the child or receive the child off the bus, they will connect with the Transportation Coordinator if available or another manager to help them determine next step(s).
 - The legal guardian must share why the request is being made because the only acceptable reason for agreeing to this would be when the legal guardian is unable to be at home to receive the child or present to pick up child due to emergency. Examples might include things like:
 - Vehicle breakdown
 - Illness/hospitalization
 - Detained by law enforcement or Child Protective Services
 - Child Care Provider Emergency
2. The legal guardian must be able to provide a physical description of the person.
3. This person must have a current official picture I.D.
4. In cases where there are known custody issues or restraining orders in place for anyone significant to the child (biological parent, relative, significant other to parent), these requests will be denied.
5. The legal guardian will be asked to complete and sign a Supplemental FACT sheet form listing this person if they believe they have need to use their support for this again.
6. These incidents will be documented in ChildPlus.

When a child rides an RWCFS vehicle: (see transportation handbook)

1. **Any** adult who is at least 18 (unless special permission is given in writing by parent for someone who is at least 16) will sign the child on to the bus.
2. **An adult who is at least 18 or a minor who is at least 16 (with special permission given in writing by parent); and has been approved in writing by a legal guardian on the FACT sheet or supplemental FACT sheet, will sign the child off the bus.**
3. Staff will follow transportation handbook for boarding and getting off the bus and traveling to and from the classroom.
4. The person putting the child on a bus will sign the bus sign in/off attendance sheets that are turned in monthly and monitored by the Transportation Coordinator. **Only an approved person can receive the child off of the bus.**

Self-Transported Children:

1. Adult accompanying child(ren) will accompany the child into their classroom and sign the child into the classroom in the sign in/sign out book that will be labeled by date:
2. When staff are unfamiliar with the adult, they will consult the child's FACT sheet and ask for picture identification only at pick up.
3. Guardians and/or others on the FACT sheet may be called as needed to ask pertinent questions or to obtain clarifying information.
4. If the adult is not listed on the FACT sheet or cannot show that they are a biological parent (and there is no legal documentation on file prohibiting parent contact with the child), staff will call the guardian to notify them of the situation. If the unauthorized or unfamiliar adult is insistent on picking up the child, that person will be notified that the police will be called. Note: at any time that staff feel threatened or unsafe they may call for support from other staff, manager or the police.
5. If an adult arrives on site to pick up a child who legally cannot have access to a child, staff will inform this person that there is documentation on file prohibiting access to that child. If staff feels that their or the child's safety is at risk they will call 911 or ask a co-worker to call 911. If staff feel that their or the child's safety is not at risk, they will ask the adult to leave.
6. Site Team Leaders will check the sign-in/out books as they complete monitoring to ensure they are being used correctly.

If a parent is late picking up a child or not at home to receive a child off of the bus:

Bus:

1. Staff will call persons listed on the FACT sheet after class ends in the order listed by the parent. If there is no response from the FACT Sheet contacts, staff will radio the concern to dispatch who will call the Transportation Coordinator, or if they are unavailable, Site Team Leader or another manager if needed to determine next step(s).
2. Next steps may include things like:
 - Taking the rest of the children home and circling back to that child's address
 - Staying at the address and calling the parent and/or FACT sheet contacts using the bus cell phone
 - Taking the child back to the center for safe supervision while continuing to try to contact the legal guardian(s) and FACT sheet contacts.
3. If a child is not picked up by end-of business hours, and staff have not been successful in reaching legal guardian(s) or FACT sheet contacts, Child Protective Services will be contacted.
4. These incidents will be recorded in ChildPlus

Self-transport:

1. Staff will inform parents that if they choose to have another person sign their child into the classroom, they should give that person guidance that they must walk the child all the way to their assigned classroom and sign the child in using the sign-in/out book.
2. Staff will require people dropping off the child to sign the child in to the classroom using the Classroom sign-in/out book. Should the legal guardian ever have a child or adult drop off a child without giving them guidance to sign the child in, staff will discuss it with the person dropping the child off and follow up with legal guardian(s) as soon as it is possible.
3. Staff will call persons listed on the FACT sheet after class ends in the order listed by the legal guardian. If there is no response from the FACT Sheet contacts, staff will call the Site Team Leader or another manager if needed to determine next step(s).

4. If a child is not picked up by end-of business hours, every effort will be made to contact the legal guardian and FACT sheet contacts to avoid any trauma to the child. However, in cases where staff have not been successful in reaching legal guardian(s) or FACT sheet contacts, County Child Protective Services (CPS) may be contacted.
5. A responsible staff person will stay with child until legal guardian or CPS, or police officer picks up the child. Staff should contact a manager to stay with the child when the workday ends.

Ongoing Monitoring:

- RWCFS FACT sheet, Supplemental FACT sheet forms and/or parent-signed Parent/Guardian Permission forms will be kept in the child's main file in the administrative child file, classroom, and the appropriate Emergency/bus binder.
- RWCFS Name to Face procedure will be used during significant transitions. – Monitored by STLs during observations and noted on observation checklist.
- The Magnetic Attendance Board will be located on or near the classroom door and adjusted to reflect the current number of children in the room each time a minor transition occurs with an individual or small number (**less than half of the class**) children at a time enters or leaves the classroom.
- Monitored by STLs during observations and noted on observation checklist.
- Children who are self-transported to classrooms or arrive early or late will be signed in by an adult using the sign-in/out book located as near the classroom door as possible.
- Supervising managers will observe staff following proper procedure when out at centers, during transitions etc.
- Atypical situations/incidents will be recorded in ChildPlus by staff and/or manager involved.
- Managers monitor ChildPlus in course or record checks, reviews with staff etc.