

DSS Policy and Procedure Guide	
Division 03: Child Welfare	Chapter 16: Transitional Shelter
Item 005: Intake Process	
Suggested changes send to: DSS PSOA Mailbox	Issued: March 20, 2025
References: Title 22, Div 6, Chapter 1 , Chapter 5 , Chapter 12 , Fresno County Plan of Operation , WIC 16001.9	New

[Preamble/ Policy/ Purpose/ Procedure/ Admission into TrSCF/ Intake into TrSCF/ Admission Form/ Admission Agreement/ Welcoming Youth to TrSCF/ Safety Considerations/ Important Milestone Events/ Runaway Plan/ Approved Leave/ Individualized Safety Plan/ Individualized Case Plan/ Medical and Mental Health Screening/ Activating Services/ Education/ Facility Intake Log/ Youth's Removal and/or Discharge/ Staff Training Plan](#)

Preamble

Child Welfare Policy and Procedure Guides (PPG) are meant to be used as tools to relay best practice and staff expectations. As a Quality Parenting Initiative Agency, our policies are designed around our shared principles: every child deserves excellent parenting and meaningful relationships; policy and practice informed by research; and putting those with lived experience at the center of policy change. It is understood that specific case scenarios may not always align themselves with the stated practices and that at all times what is of paramount importance is the Safety and Well-being of the children we are charged to protect.

Policy

The Department of Social Services (DSS) will ensure all necessary steps are taken during the intake process for admission of any youth awaiting placement at the Fresno County Transitional Shelter Care Facility (TrSCF).

Purpose

Fresno County DSS operates a TrSCF in order to provide a safe place for youth ages 12-17 who are awaiting placement. This PPG provides a standardized process for all staff involved in the intake process of youth into the TrSCF. The purpose of the intake process is to establish a structured, consistent, and compassionate approach to welcoming and integrating youth into a supportive environment. To ensure the appropriate care and supervision of youth at the TrSCF, it is essential that the TrSCF intake process is followed.

Procedure

Admission into TrSCF

Youth awaiting placement will initially be brought to the Child Welfare Services (CWS) office. Youth will not be taken directly to the TrSCF unless there is a safety issue preventing them from going to the CWS office first. Youth ages 12-17 who remain at the CWS office without placement by 8 PM can be taken to the TrSCF with Division Chief (DC) approval and proper email notification.

Prior to transporting the youth to the TrSCF, SW will update the 6252, and ensure items required prior to acceptance is completed on the [TrSCF Checklist](#). SW will send an email confirming DC approval and expected time of arrival to:

- [CWS Mod C Inbox](#)
- Assigned Social Worker (SW), Social Work Supervisor (SWS), and DC
- TrSCF SWS and DC
- [CWS FPR inbox](#)
- Swing Shift SWS
- Standby SWS and DC

Intake into TrSCF

Admission Form

Upon arrival, TrSCF staff will review the 6252 with the youth and SW/Social Worker Aide (SWA) who transported the youth to ensure information is complete, confirm accuracy, receive any needed clarification, and make any necessary modifications. The TrSCF staff will use the information provided on the 6252 to complete the [Admission Form](#).

The SW will also provide contextual information to TrSCF staff above and beyond the 6252 as appropriate and relevant regarding the following:

- Current case status
- Self-harming concerns
- Threatening behaviors
- Prior placement and/or residence
- Reason for disruption from prior placement
- Reason for entry into the TrSCF
- A copy of any existing safety, crisis, or discharge plan
- A list of approved and unapproved contacts

Information contained on the Admission Form will be updated as necessary to ensure accuracy of the youth's record.

Admission Agreement

TrSCF staff will complete an individual written admission agreement with each youth and SW. TrSCF Staff will provide the youth and SW with a copy of the Admission Agreement, and documents listed on the Admission Agreement, ensure they understand it, make necessary modifications, and obtain the signature of both the youth and SW. The agreement, signed by the youth, SW, and the Administrator, must be completed within 24 hours of admission. Any changes to the agreement will be updated and signed by the same parties. Additionally, DSS staff will complete

a Telecommunications Device Notification form ([LIC 9158](#)) for youth who are deaf, hearing-impaired, or otherwise disabled, as indicated by their pre-admission or medical assessment.

The admission agreement specifies the following:

- Rules and expectations of TrSCF.
- Complaint and Grievance Procedures.
- Foster Youth Children's Rights.
- Medication Storage and Dispensing Policies.
- Discipline Policies.
- Runaway Policies.
- Conditions under which the agreement will be terminated.

Welcoming Youth to the TrSCF

TrSCF staff will welcome the youth and orient them to the TrSCF including what will happen in the next few hours. Intake staff will complete the following:

- Review Behavioral Guidelines (House Rules) in an age-appropriate manner.
- Provide information regarding the basic services that will be provided to the youth.
- Inform the youth of available optional services.
- Give an age-appropriate orientation explaining the youth's rights and addressing questions and concerns.
- Give a written copy of the youth's rights.
- Supply contact information for agencies the youth can reach out to regarding rights violations and other complaints, including details for the California Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division and Foster Care Ombudsperson.
- Review the right of Community Care Licensing (CCL) to interview youth and staff without prior consent in a private setting.
- Review the TrSCF's policy concerning family visits and other communication with youth.
- Offer information about the legal provisions related to complaints, including confidentiality.
- Complete a personal inventory of the youth's personal items and complete the Clothing Inventory Form.
- Conduct an assessment of their basic needs and provide food, water, clothing, hygiene, activity, and space to rest as needed.
- Orient the youth to the DSS TrSCF space and by providing a tour of the TrSCF as well as their bedroom.

Safety Considerations

Upon arrival at the TrSCF, youth will be allowed to enter free from unreasonable searches of personal belongings pursuant to WIC 16001.9. Youth will be informed that there cannot be any weapons or drugs at the shelter. Youth will have the opportunity to disclose to staff if they have any of these items and will be asked to turn these items over to facility staff. If there is reasonable belief based on the history of the youth that the youth may be in possession of drugs or weapons, personal belongings will be searched if the youth does not disclose them.

Confiscated items, including drugs and weapons, will not be returned. Fresno County Sheriff's (FSO) Department will be contacted to turn over any illegal drugs that are confiscated. Vape pens, cigarettes, cigars and alcohol that are confiscated will be destroyed and witnessed by Fresno County Security. This procedure will be explained to the youth, and the youth will have the option to observe the destruction.

Confiscated weapons will be handed over to Fresno County Security Officer and/or the Sheriff's Department without identifying the youth. FSO will be contacted regarding confiscated guns. Knives, mace, and pepper spray will be turned over to Fresno County Security. All confiscations/disposals of the youth's personal property and valuables will be documented in the youth's file.

During intake, facility staff will assess if the youth pose a threat to themselves or others or is a risk of harm from another youth in the TrSCF. Should a youth be identified as a threat to self or others, the SW will be notified and/or a request for a 5150 assessment will be initiated by contacting Mobile Crisis at 559-600-6000 or 911.

If a youth refuses placement at the facility, efforts will be made to determine why, and facility staff and/or SW will attempt to address any concerns or issues raised by the youth.

Important Milestone Events

DSS TrSCF will ensure youth can attend important milestone events. During intake, TrSCF staff will inquire with the youth and SW about important upcoming events. The assigned social worker will ensure that the youth will be able to attend identified events, if desired by the youth, and determined that attendance is in the youth's best interest. The SW and shelter staff will coordinate to ensure appropriate transportation to the event.

Runaway Plan

The Runaway Plan will be provided to and discussed with each youth and SW at the time of admission into the TrSCF. If during the discussion, it is determined that the youth has a history of running away from placement, facility staff and the youth's assigned SW will develop an individualized plan for that youth, if needed, to ensure the youth's safety and minimize the risk through harm reduction planning. The individualized runaway prevention plan will be maintained in the youth's record and will consider the age, size, emotional, behavioral, and developmental level of the youth. The plan shall also incorporate the individual youth's trauma history, trauma sources and triggers. Refer to [PPG 03-16-02](#), Runaway Plan for additional information.

Approved Leave

With the permission of the primary SW, youth can visit family, friends, and other approved people for a designated amount of time. Youth are also able to visit places like the gym, library, movies, etc. with the permission of the SW or TrSCF staff.

For youth who are approved to be absent from the facility for a designated amount of time and do not return timely, a grace period of up to 30 minutes will be given before enacting the

runaway notification as outlined in PPG 03-16-02, Runaway Plan. Dependent on the vulnerability of the youth and other risk factors, staff may contact the FSO immediately and not wait the entire 30 minutes.

Individualized Safety Plan

Upon intake into the program, SW will provide the TrSCF with any existing safety, crisis, or discharge plan to assist in identifying and planning for any safety concerns while the youth is at the TrSCF. The TrSCF staff will work with the SW to gather information regarding the youth's history of harm to self or others, including any psychiatric hospitalizations or evaluations from the youth and SW. The TrSCF staff in collaboration with the SW will develop an [individualized safety plan](#), if one does not already exist or needs modification, which includes information from the youth about what they need and what works best for them when they begin to feel like they may exhibit behaviors that result in harming themselves or someone else. The plan includes specific interventions that staff may use to intervene with the youth. The developed plan will be provided to all TrSCF staff so that everyone working with the youth is informed about the planned interventions.

Additionally, during the intake screening process, TrSCF staff will obtain the following information to minimize the use of Crisis Interventions:

- Methods or tools the youth needs to manage aggressive behavior.
- Pre-existing medical conditions or physical disabilities and limitations that increase risk during Crisis Interventions.
- History of sexual or physical abuse that increases psychological risk during Crisis Interventions.
- Other factors that place the youth at greater risk during Crisis Interventions.

Individual Case Plan

Upon intake into the program, TrSCF staff will complete an [individualized case plan](#) with the youth. The case plan is specific to the youth's experience during their stay in the TrSCF. The case plan covers the following areas:

- The youth's plans for placement.
- The youth's plan to maintain services and connection to their social worker.
- The youth's plans to complete high school, college or vocational schooling.
- The youth's plan to maintain medication and medical compliance.
- What skills the youth will use to be successful in following the TrSCF rules.
- What positive change would the youth like to work on for themselves.

Screening/Assessment

Once youth is settled and feeling comfortable in the facility, and appropriate to do so, TrSCF staff will meet with the youth to complete the [Pediatric Symptom Checklist-Youth Report](#). These tools will be utilized to identify trauma history and trauma-related symptoms or problems, which will be included in the youth's record, as applicable, upon admission.

Additionally, DSS TrSCF staff will screen for experiences, symptoms, and impacts of trauma. Staff will utilize direct observation of behaviors and knowledge of past experiences gained from youth, caregivers, CFT members and previous providers.

The TrSCF staff in partnership with the youth's case carrying Social Worker and CFT, will utilize the initial screening information to coordinate services required to address immediate and ongoing needs.

Medical and Mental Health Screening

DSS TrSCF staff are to provide or coordinate the provision of medical and mental health screenings, which shall occur no later than 24 hours after admission. This medical and mental health screening (or evaluation) is to be completed by a licensed physician or designee who is also a licensed practitioner and documented in CWS/CMS. DSS TrSCF staff is to facilitate a medical and mental health screening for the youth according to the conditions stated above.

No later than 24 hours after admission, DSS Shelter staff will access the youth's current medical and mental health screening and/or comprehensive evaluation(s) available within CWS/CMS. The staff member completing the intake process will review the current screenings and evaluations to identify immediate medical or mental health needs and services. The facility staff may also obtain supplemental information from the assigned social worker, the youth, family members, and/or the previous placement provider. DSS TrSCF staff will utilize this information to:

- Identify current medical and behavioral health services.
- Identify immediate unmet medical, dental, and/or mental health needs requiring follow up during or after the placement period.
- Identification of physical restrictions, including any medically necessary diet restrictions, to determine the youth's capacity to participate in the licensee's program, if available.
- Note upcoming medical, dental, or behavioral health appointments to ensure no disruption in care while the youth is enrolled at DSS TrSCF and subsequent placements.
- Confirm current medications including dosing, instructions, and documentation of informed consent (JV220).
- Develop or modify the existing safety plan.

Activating Services

At the time of entry or within 24 hours, TrSCF staff will consult with the assigned SW regarding the youth's history and/or risk for the following:

- Mental health
- Commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC)
- Medical needs
- Developmental needs
- Emotional support
- Wraparound

- Therapeutic Behavioral Support (TBS)
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

If after consultation it is determined that services are needed, TrSCF staff is to contact the appropriate services provider to initiate support within 24 hours. Providers include the following:

- Child Welfare Mental Health (CWMH) Team for collaboration and coordination of services
- CWMH vendors for Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS)
- CASA
- Wraparound
- TBS
- Child Welfare Public Health Nurse
- Regional Center
- CSEC Services
- Managed care plans for non-SMHS such as occupational therapy

TrSCF staff will email the assigned SW information regarding the date and time that the service provider will visit the youth at the TrSCF. After the service takes place, TrSCF staff will send a summary email to the assigned SW, SWS, and DC.

Education

Upon intake into the TrSCF, the intake staff will gather information regarding the youth's schooling, including school location and start and end time. TrSCF staff are responsible for arranging and providing transportation to and from school for the youth. If a youth is not enrolled in school at the time of entry, TrSCF staff will collaborate with the SW and Educational Rights Holder to enroll the youth in the most suitable school setting within two business days of intake.

Youth's Participation

If a youth is unwilling or unable to engage in any part of the admission process, screenings, or medical clearance, TrSCF staff will make daily efforts to encourage and support the youth's participation. All attempts will be documented in the youth's record.

Facility Intake Log

The facility will maintain a written intake log for each youth, recording their name, date of birth, primary SW/SWS contact information, and entry date and time. Additionally, TrSCF staff will update the TrSCF Tracker to include any new entry into the TrSCF.

Youth's Removal and/or Discharge

In the unlikely event that TrSCF staff, in consultation with the Administrator and TrSCF DC determine that the facility cannot meet the needs of a youth based on medical and mental health screenings, the Administrator will notify the youth's assigned SW/SWS/DC and request

relocation to a facility that can provide the needed services. The facility will adhere to all approved removal and discharge policies and procedures.

Staff Training Plan

Staff will be trained on the Intake process once they are hired and annually thereafter.