



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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Volume:	IV	Out-of-Home Placement	
Chapter:	A	General Placement Considerations	10-15-2012
Subchapter:	9	Placement Episodes	
Issuance:	100	Placement Episodes	

Purpose:

This issuance establishes the policy and procedures to establish a "Placement Episode" in accordance with Federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) guidelines.

Policy:

Placement Review

A "Placement Episode" shall encompass the duration of time in which a child is in resource family care or out-of-home placement, beginning when CP&P obtains legal authority via court order or voluntary consent to remove the child and place the child out-of-home, and ending when the child is no longer in out-of-home placement (i.e., is discharged)..

When a Placement Episode May Continue Despite a Temporary Interruption 10-15-2012

In accordance with Federal guidelines, Social Security Act, Part E, Sec 475 (5) [42 U.S.C. 670], a placement episode may be considered continuous in some situations, despite a temporary interruption in placement. Examples include:

- Visitation with a parent, sibling, relative, or other potential caregiver. Note: CP&P does not use "trial home visits" to reunify a child with the person(s) from whom the child was removed. (Trial Home Visit is a technical term used by the federal Administration for Children and Families, which allows states to return a child home for up to six months before the placement episode is considered to have ended.) CP&P policy is to end the placement episode on the day the child returns to the parent(s) or caregiver(s), when the plan is for the child to remain home.

- Hospitalization.
- Summer camp (i.e., residential camp, "sleep-away" camp).
- Resource family respite.
- A child in runaway status, who remains in the custody of CP&P.

Children in the Hospital and Boarder Child Situations 10-15-2012

As soon as a decision is made that the hospitalized child cannot be released to a parent's care upon discharge from the hospital, CP&P must seek authority for placement (i.e., petition the court for custody). In a "hospital hold" situation, CP&P must seek custody through court action, or allow the child to return home. The court action provides the "placement authority."

The court ordered custody status and date is recorded in the Legal Action and Legal Status Screens in NJ SPIRIT. See NJS Cheat Sheet, "Documenting Litigation Milestones."

The hospital setting is recorded in the Support Service Screen in NJS.

See Medicaid Implications, below, for enrolling a child in Medicaid when the child is in the hospital.

When the child is medically discharged and is placed in an out-of-home setting, record the placement setting in the Placement Window. The episode start date and the placement start date are recorded as the date the child enters the placement setting.

Close the Support Service (which recorded the hospital setting) with an end date.

For children in, or entering into, a shelter, CP&P placement may be authorized through a signed voluntary residential placement agreement or an independent living agreement in the absence of a court order specifically authorizing CP&P to make this placement. Other considerations may also apply in determining when CP&P assumes responsibility for shelter placements. See [CP&P-IV-E-5-200](#), section entitled Youth Placed by Other Agencies, and [CP&P-VIII-F-1-500](#), sections entitled Financial Responsibility - Juvenile-Family Crisis.

Medicaid Implications 10-15-2012

For Medicaid purposes (Program Code 60 or 65, depending on eligibility; see [CP&P-V-A-2-100](#), Medicaid), Medicaid should always be provided by CP&P from the day CP&P obtains court ordered custody of a child or obtains a signed voluntary placement agreement for a child not in his or her own home, even if the child is hospitalized for acute care and not yet ready for discharge.

If the mother has insurance at the time she gives birth (Family Care, Medicaid, or private insurance), the newborn is typically covered on her insurance for at least the first 30 days of life.

Although a Medicaid ID cannot be generated until a placement line – or a hospital Support Service line – has been entered in NJ SPIRIT, once it has been generated, it can be backdated to the infant's date of birth, or, for an older child, the date the child was hospitalized, if no other insurance exists, or to whatever date coverage for the newborn/child on the other insurance plan terminated. (If backdating cannot be done in NJS at the Local Office, it can be changed in the Medicaid Eligibility System by a DCF IT Medicaid Specialist, when appropriate.)

Procedures:

1) Determining the Beginning and End of a Placement Episode 10-15-2012

A placement episode begins when CP&P obtains legal authority to remove the child from the home by a court order or voluntary consent (for Residential Placement or Independent Living), and places the child in an out-of-home setting.

A child may live in more than one placement setting during one placement episode.

Beginning with the first placement in the episode, and including all subsequent placements (i.e., moves, replacements) during the episode, record each placement in the Placement Screen in NJ SPIRIT. Enter placements regardless of whether the placement is paid by CP&P, unpaid, or paid by Medicaid.

If, after returning home, the child is again removed from home and placed by CP&P, the new removal is counted as the start of a new placement episode, regardless of the amount of time between the return home and re-placement.

A placement episode ends when the child is discharged from the out-of-home placement. According to Federal guidelines, discharge reasons include:

- Reunification with the parent(s) or primary caregiver(s) - The child is returned to his or her principal caregiver(s)'s home.
- Living with other relatives - The child left placement to live with a relative other than the one from whom he or she was removed.
- Adoption - The child was legally adopted.
- Emancipated - The child reached the age of majority in accordance with State law, based on age, marriage, or other factors.

- Kinship Legal Guardianship - KLG was awarded by the court to a relative or family friend.
- Custody and care transferred to another agency - Responsibility for the care of the child was awarded to another agency, either in or out of state.
- Runaway - The child ran away from the placement setting. Note: Only indicate "runaway" as the reason for discharge if the agency has been dismissed of responsibility for care and placement.
- Child died - The child died while in out-of-home placement.

2) Relevant NJS Windows and Forms 10-15-2012

To document the start date of a placement episode in NJS, go to Placement Window > Placement Tab.

To document the end date of a placement episode in NJS, go to Placement and Service Ending Pop-up Window > Options drop-down.

To document the start date of a Support Service in NJS, go to the Support Service Window > Service Tab.

To document the end date of a Support Service in NJS, go to Placement and Service Ending Pop-up Window.

From your NJS desktop you can also access the Placement Episode cheat sheet by clicking on "NJS Cheat Sheets," then click on "Documenting Placements, Episodes, and Discharge Reasons."

Key Terms (Definitions):

"Placement Episode" means the duration of time in which the child is in resource family care or out-of-home placement, beginning when CP&P obtains legal authority via court order or voluntary consent to remove the child and place the child out-of-home, and ending when the child is no longer in out-of-home placement (i.e., is discharged)..

"Discharge" represents that point in time when the child is no longer in out-of-home placement under the placement, care, and responsibility of Child Protection and Permanency. The discharge date is the end of the placement episode.

"Acute Care" or **"Acute Medical Care"** means short-term medical treatment, usually in a hospital, for patients having a brief but severe episode of illness or injury, or recovering from surgery (rather than long-term residential care for chronic illness). The term, "acute care," is generally associated with care

rendered in an emergency department, ambulatory care clinic, or other short-term stay facility.

Document an acute medical hospitalization in New Jersey SPIRIT as a Support Service (not a CP&P-authorized placement).