



Child Protection Act R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. C-5.1	Program	Child In Care	
	Subject	Social Worker Contact with Children	<i>Policy #</i> 2.14
Effective Date: June 1, 2017		Authorized by:	
Revised Date:		Deputy Minister, Teresa Hennebery	

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide direction for social worker contact with children in care.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 In the best interests of children, social workers must maintain regular contact with children.

2.2 Social workers are responsible to ensure the child's needs for safety, health, security, development, and overall well-being are being met.

2.3 In consideration of a child's preference, whenever possible, the social worker and the child will find an agreeable time and place to meet.

2.4 Recognizing the individual needs and circumstances of children, social workers, in consultation with supervisors, will apply clinical judgment to determine if variations to the requirements for social worker contact with the child should be considered.

3.0 PROCEDURES

3.1 Children, as age appropriate, and caregivers will be provided with written contact information for the social worker, supervisor and After Hours Emergency Child Protection Service.

3.2 When a child is in care, social workers are responsible to arrange contact with the child to include opportunities for the social worker to:

- meet with the child independent of the caregiver, as age and developmentally appropriate;
- meet together with the child and the caregiver; and
- observe how the child interacts in the child's living environment.

3.3 When a child comes into care, within the first two (2) business days, the social worker will meet with the child in person to discuss how the child is settling into the placement. The social worker will plan for the needs of the child and ensure the placement is adequately supported.

3.4 For the first six (6) months a child is in care, the social worker will have in-person contact with the child minimally every two (2) weeks.

- 3.5 After the child has been in care for six (6) months, the social worker will maintain a minimum of monthly in-person contact with the child.
- 3.6 In the event a child has previously been in care, the social worker, in consultation with the child, caregiver, and supervisor, will use clinical judgment to determine if fewer visits with the child may be considered beyond the 3.5 and 3.6 standards. This decision will be based on recency and duration of previous time in care and familiarity with the caregiver and social worker.
- 3.7 The child's social worker will consult with the caregiver minimally every two (2) weeks for children in care less than six (6) months, and minimally once per month for children in continuous care for more than six (6) months; this contact may be done verbally by telephone.
- 3.8 In the event concerns are identified, it is expected the social worker will have more frequent contact with the child and caregiver.
- 3.9 In the event of a change in the child's social worker, the new social worker for the child must see the child, at a minimum, once every two (2) weeks for a minimum of six (6) weeks.
- 3.10 In situations where the social worker is temporarily unavailable, the social worker may substitute one in-person contact with a child by verbal telephone contact or arrange for a face-to-face contact with a support staff (family service worker, youth worker). This cannot happen more than twice in a twelve (12) month period and cannot happen more than two (2) consecutive visits.
- 3.11 In extenuating situations where a social worker may be unavailable for an extended period, the child and caregiver shall be provided contact information for another social worker, who will assume responsibility for the social worker contact for the file.
- 3.12 In order to support the best interests of the child and maintain continuity of care, the social worker will provide the caregiver with a brief update following any contact with the child that involves a significant event, significant emotional response, or a proposed change in the plan of care.

4.0 REFERENCES

After Hours Emergency Child Protection Service Policy 1.11