

FLORIDA FOSTER CARE

WHAT HAPPENS TO A CHILD ENTERING FOSTER CARE?

1

CALL TO CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

Florida Department of Children and Families ("DCF") monitors the hotline. When a report has been made of abuse, neglect, or abandonment, DCF conducts an investigation to assess a child's safety.

2

PLACEMENT & FAMILY PRESERVATION

Once DCF verifies that a child's safety is a concern, DCF begins a search of any family members who the child can be placed with before placing the child into foster care. The goal is to minimize any trauma related to placement. If it's possible that a child can stay safely in the home, DCF will recommend family preservation.

3

"SWACWS" SYSTEM

As soon as there is a report of abuse, neglect, or abandonment the child's information is immediately placed into the State-Wide Automated Child Welfare System, which tracks all of the personal information of the child, including location and citizenship status.

4

FLORIDA FOSTER CARE

The Florida foster care system is privatized. Because different communities have different needs, regional foster care is divided into 20 geographical locations called "community-based care."

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COMMUNITY-BASED CARE

If DCF finds no relatives for a child to stay with, the child is placed into foster care with the community-based care in their region. DCF monitors children's welfare at each regional care provider.

6

MATCHING FOR PLACEMENT

Each regional care has a system called "Core Match." Once a child is set for foster care placement, this system finds a matching foster home for the child based on factors such as sex, age, prior abuse, school location, siblings, and any preferences of the foster family.

7

MONITORING CHILD WELFARE

DCF continues to monitor a child placed in foster care. If a child needs to be moved for any reason, DCF will attempt to stabilize the living situation before removing the child again.

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MONITORING FOSTER FAMILIES

Regional community-based care providers continue to monitor the foster family by continuously running background checks, requesting financial statements, and ensuring that homes are non-hazardous.

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REUNIFICATION

Chapter 39 governs child-welfare in Florida. As DCF continues to monitor a child placed in foster care, the ultimate goal is for reunification and family preservation.