



Section 6 – Case Management

Standard 6.6

Child and Family Services Minimum Contacts

The Child Protection Worker or designate must adhere to specific requirements for contact with the child/youth, parent(s)/guardian(s) and foster care resource, which varies depending on the status of the case and placement type. Such contact must be consistent with the child/youth's **Case Plan** and **Permanency Plan**. Furthermore, the amount of contact may be more frequent depending on the child/youth's age; length of time the child/youth has been in care, the circumstances under which the child/youth was placed, the child/youth's adjustment to care, the child/youth's special needs, and placement stability. This is at the discretion of the Child Protection Worker in consultation with their Supervisor or Manager. However, minimum standards are set to ensure contact is maintained as part of ongoing case management services to the family.

REFERENCE

Department of Health and Social Services Policy

PURPOSE

- By having regular, purposeful, ongoing contact with a child/youth, their parent(s)/guardian(s) and foster care resource, the Child Protection Worker will be in a better position to ensure the safety and well-being of the child/youth, to make informed decisions and plan for the child/youth and collaborate further with the child/youth and their parents(s)/guardian(s), extended family and foster caregiver(s).
- Frequent contact during the first part of placement and throughout the placement is necessary to assess the child/youth's initial adjustment to care, to help the child/youth understand the reasons for entering care, and to begin and/or expand the development of the child/youth's **Case Plan** to learn about their wants and needs.
- Ongoing contact is essential in the development of a relationship with the child/youth and their parent(s)/guardian(s); ensuring lines of communication are clear and open; making sure the child/youth and parent(s)/guardian(s) **Case Plan** and **Permanency Plan** are collaboratively developed and monitored with input from the significant people in their lives, and ensuring the child/youth and parent(s)/guardian(s) are making progress with respect to their goals.
- Continuous and ongoing contact between the Child Protection Worker, child/youth, parent(s)/guardian(s) and foster care resources are also necessary to assess whether adequate supports and services are provided to them in a timely manner.

PROCEDURE

Child Protection Worker:

- a) Ensures the child/youth, parent(s)/guardian(s) and foster care resource are aware of **minimum contact** guidelines.

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b) Meets with the child/youth, parent(s)/guardian(s) and foster care resource as indicated below under the **Contact Requirements with child/youth, parent(s)/guardian(s) and foster care resource**. In instances where this is not possible, the Child Protection Worker or designate must consult with the Supervisor/Manager to devise an alternative contact schedule and document the rationale and approval of the planned contact schedule in MatrixNT as a **Case Note** and place a copy of the **Case Note** on the child/youth's hard file. The **Child and Family Services Minimum Contact Schedule form** may also be used to record contacts, although this is not mandatory.

c) Reviews each case with the Supervisor/Manager to determine the frequency and nature of contacts that are needed beyond the minimum contact guidelines throughout each **Case Review, Foster Care Report** and **Permanency Plan** review periods, particularly when the circumstances of the family change. This requirement is also part of the Clinical Supervision policy of the NTHSSA. Each case must be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Designate:

a) Completes the required contacts with the child/youth, parent(s)/guardian(s) and foster care resource, in the absence of the **assigned Child Protection Worker**. The designate could be a person who is an **Appointed Child Protection Worker, Authorized Person or Courtesy Supervision Worker, i.e., an Appointed Intern, Supervisor or Manager and an Authorized Case Aid, Family Preservation Worker, etc.** The rationale for the designate contact should be clearly documented in MatrixNT as a **Case Note**, and where the designate is not an appointed child protection worker; a copy of the signed **Authorization** should be included in the file. Circumstances where designate contact may occur include:

- periods when the assigned Child Protection Worker is unavailable and not able to meet the contact requirements;
- situations where extensive travel is involved, and there is another Child Protection Worker with children/youth placed in the same foster care resource that could meet the contact requirement on behalf of the assigned Child Protection Worker; or
- circumstances where courtesy supervision services are provided at the request of another Regional Health and Social Services Authority or the Out of Territory Specialized Services Program.

Supervisor/Manager:

a) Reviews each case with the Child Protection Worker or designate to determine the frequency and nature of contacts that are needed beyond the minimum contact guidelines throughout **Supervision, Case Reviews, Foster Care Reports** and **Permanency Plan** review periods, particularly when the circumstances of the family change.

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Assistant Director:

- a) Provides the necessary time, resources and funding to ensure full compliance with this Standard.
- b) Receives the results of the Quality Reviews from the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) and will collaboratively develop a plan with the NTHSSA to address any compliance issues.

Deputy Director, Practice:

- a) Conducts quarterly Minimum Contacts Quality Reviews through the NTHSSA to ensure Authorities/Regions are prioritizing and ensuring contact with children and families receiving protection services are occurring and that appropriate documentation of these contacts are completed.
- b) Provides the results of the Quality Reviews to the Assistant Director of the applicable Health and Social Services Authority/Region and supports them to implement meaningful actions in instances where improvements are required to ensure compliance and quality in this area.
- c) Provides the results of the Quality Reviews to the Director of Child and Family Services.

Director of Child and Family Services

- a) Receives the results of the Minimum Contacts Quality Reviews from the Deputy Director, Practice and considers trends, challenges and improvements to the Standard as required and in line with best practices.

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Contact Requirements with child/youth, parent(s)/guardian(s) and foster care resource

Contact is determined by status except for those individuals receiving In and Out of Territory Specialized Services and who are placed in a Group Home

VOLUNTARY SERVICES AGREEMENT (0-18) – Child/Youth in the Home

- a) There are no mandatory minimum contacts for this status. The Child Protection Worker and Supervisor/Manager are required to review the case to determine the frequency and the nature of contacts required. The Child Protection Worker will contact the **child/youth and parent(s)/guardian(s)** as needed.

VOLUNTARY SERVICES AGREEMENT (0-18) – Child/Youth out of the Home

Child/Youth:

- a) The assigned Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) private face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** in their placement within the first **seven (7) calendar days of placement**.
- b) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** every **thirty (30) days**.
- c) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** in **private**. The Child Protection Worker or designate must ensure a portion of this contact is spent with the child/youth at their placement.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** (if available) every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** (if available).

Foster Caregiver(s):

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **foster caregiver(s)** every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **foster caregiver(s)**.

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SUPPORT SERVICES AGREEMENT (16-18) – Youth in the Home

a) There are no mandatory minimum contacts for this status. The Child Protection Worker and Supervisor/Manager are required to review the case to determine the frequency and the nature of contacts required. The Child Protection Worker will contact the **youth and both parent(s)/guardian(s)** as needed.

SUPPORT SERVICES AGREEMENT (16-18) – Youth out of the Home

Child/Youth:

a) The assigned Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) private face-to-face contact** with the **youth** in their placement within the first **seven (7) calendar days** of placement.

b) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** every **thirty (30) days**.

c) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **youth in private**. The Child Protection Worker or designate must ensure a portion of this contact is spent with the child/youth at their placement.

Foster Caregiver(s):

a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **foster caregiver(s)** every **thirty (30) days**.

b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **foster caregiver(s)**.

EXTENDED SUPPORT SERVICES AGREEMENT (19-22) – Young Adult in or out of the Home

Young Adult:

a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **young adult** every **thirty (30) days**.

b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **young adult in private**, if within the Northwest Territories.

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PLAN OF CARE AGREEMENT OR SUPERVISION ORDER (0-15) – Child/Youth in the Home

Child/Youth:

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **sixty (60) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** and both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** (if applicable), interacting together in **private**. The Child Protection Worker or designate must ensure the location allows for communication and will not breach confidentiality.
- c) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** in **private**. The Child Protection Worker or designate must ensure a portion of this contact is spent with the child/youth at their placement.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** (if available), every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** (if available).

PLAN OF CARE AGREEMENT (0-15) – Child/Youth out of the Home

Child/Youth:

- a) The assigned Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) private face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** in their placement within the first **seven (7) calendar days** of placement.
- b) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** every **thirty (30) days**.
- c) Every **sixty (60) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** and both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** (if available), interacting together in **private**. The Child Protection Worker or designate must ensure the location allows for communication and will not breach confidentiality.
- d) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1)**

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face-to-face contact with the **child/youth** in **private**. The Child Protection Worker or designate must ensure a portion of this contact is spent with the child/youth at their placement.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** (if available) every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** (if available).

Foster Caregiver(s):

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **foster caregiver(s)** every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **foster caregiver(s)**.

TEMPORARY CUSTODY (0-18) *INCLUDES EXTENSIONS AND YOUTH PROTECTION ORDERS Child/Youth out of the Home*

Child/Youth:

- a) The assigned Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) private face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** in their placement within the first **seven (7) calendar days** of placement.
- b) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** every **thirty (30) days**.
- c) Every **sixty (60) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** and both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** (if available), interacting together in private. The Child Protection Worker or designate must ensure the location allows for communication and will not breach confidentiality.
- d) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** in **private**. The Child Protection Worker or designate must ensure a portion of this contact is spent with the child/youth at their placement.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** (if available), at least every **thirty (30) days**.

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b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** (if available).

Foster Caregiver(s):

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, face-to-face or email contact** with the **foster caregiver(s)** at least every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **foster caregiver(s)**.

PERMANENT CUSTODY (0-18) *INCLUDES EXTENSIONS AND YOUTH PROTECTION ORDERS

Child/Youth out of the Home*

Child/Youth:

- a) The assigned Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** in their placement within the first **seven (7) calendar days** of placement.
- b) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** every **thirty (30) days**.
- c) Every **sixty (60) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth and foster caregivers**, interacting together in private. The Child Protection Worker or designate must ensure the location allows for communication and will not breach confidentiality.
- d) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** in **private**. The Child Protection Worker or designate must ensure a portion of this contact is spent with the child/youth at their placement.

Foster Caregiver(s):

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **foster caregiver(s)** every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **foster caregiver(s)**.

IN TERRITORY SPECIALIZED SERVICES (0-18)

Child/Youth:

- a) The assigned Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **one (1) face-to-face contact** with the

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child/youth in their placement within the first **seven (7) calendar days** of placement.

- b) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the child/youth at least every **thirty (30) days**.
- c) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the child/youth in **private**. The Child Protection Worker or designate must ensure a portion of this contact is spent with the child/youth at their placement.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s): (not applicable to Permanent Custody Children/Youth)

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with both parent(s)/guardian(s) at least every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the parent(s)/guardian(s) (if available).

Specialized Service:

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **specialized service** every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with the **specialized service**.

Note:

This contact standard applies to those children receiving **In Territory Specialized Services** regardless of status. If a Child Protection Worker or designate is placing a child/youth in a specialized service within the Northwest Territories, but outside the originating Region, another Child Protection Worker in the receiving Region must be assigned to meet this minimum contact standard.

OUT OF TERRITORY SPECIALIZED SERVICES (0-18)

Child/Youth:

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** attend in person the child/youth's formal **admission** into the Out of Territory Specialized Service.
- b) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** attend in person the child/youth's formal **discharge** from the Out of Territory Specialized Service.
- c) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone contact or electronic communication** with the child/youth every **thirty (30) days**.
- d) The Child Protection Worker or designate must have **at least one (1) visit** with the child/youth in **private once a year**.

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Parent(s)/Guardian(s): (not applicable to Permanent Custody Children/Youth)

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with both parent(s)/guardian(s) at least every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with both parent(s)/guardian(s) (if available). This contact does not apply to those parent(s)/guardian(s) attending family treatment.

Courtesy Supervision Worker:

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone contact or electronic communication** with the **courtesy supervision worker** every **thirty (30) days**.

Specialized Service:

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone or electronic communication** with the **specialized service** every **thirty (30) days**.

Note:

This contact standard applies to those children receiving **Out of Territory Specialized Services**, regardless of status. If a Child Protection Worker or designate is placing a child/youth in a specialized service outside of the Northwest Territories, the Courtesy Supervision Worker in the receiving jurisdiction must be assigned to meet their own minimum contact standard.

CHILD/YOUTH PLACED IN A FOSTER PLACEMENT OUTSIDE OF THE TERRITORY (0-18)

Child/Youth:

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone or electronic communication** with the **child/youth** every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) The Child Protection Worker or designate must have **at least one (1) visit** with the **child/youth** in **private once a year**.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s): (not applicable to Permanent Custody Children/Youth)

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with both parent(s)/guardian(s) at least every **thirty (30) days**.
- b) Every **ninety (90) days**, the Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) face-to-face contact** with both parent(s)/guardian(s) (if available).

Courtesy Supervision Worker:

- a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone contact or electronic communication** with the **courtesy supervision worker** every **thirty (30) days**.

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Foster Caregiver(s):

a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** have **at least one (1) telephone or electronic communication** with the **foster caregiver(s)** every **thirty (30) days**.

Note:

This contact standard applies to those children placed in a foster placement outside of the Northwest Territories, regardless of status.

TRANSFERRING A FILE

When a file is transferred to a new Child Protection Worker

Child/Youth:

a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** establish **one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **child/youth** within the **first seven (7) calendar days** of the file being assigned.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** establish **one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with both **parent(s)/guardian(s)** within the **first seven (7) calendar days** of the file being assigned. This contact requirement excludes Permanent Custody and Extended Support Services Agreement files.

Foster Caregiver(s):

a) The Child Protection Worker or designate **must** establish **one (1) telephone, electronic communication or face-to-face contact** with the **foster caregiver(s)** within the **first seven (7) calendar days** of the file being assigned. This contact requirement excludes Extended Support Services Agreement

Note:

When a file is being transferred to a new Child Protection Worker for follow up of concerns, provide support and/or to take the lead in case management, best practice suggests that the previously assigned Child Protection Worker introduces the new Child Protection Worker to the child/youth and their parent(s)/guardian(s) via a **Transfer meeting**.

FORMS

- Child and Family Services Minimum Contact Schedule
- Case Note
- Child Placement Information

TOOLS

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