



## **CASEWORK ACTIVITY: Travel by Foster Children with Foster Parents**

May 26, 2011

*Replaces OCM 38.00*

### **PURPOSE**

- To provide guidelines for decision-making around travel with a foster parent; and
- To provide a set of criteria which case managers can use to determine the role of the guardian and the foster parent in determining the best interest of the child regarding travel planning.

### **PROCEDURE**

Vacations are generally considered an activity that is within the normal range of care and placement responsibility under the CHIPS order. Foster parents may plan a range of travel activities that include the child in their care.

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), has the authority to consent to all usual and customary vacations. For those usual and customary trips:

1. Foster parents should notify the case manager of the planned trip and provide a full itinerary at the earliest opportunity.
2. Case manager must make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian of the planned trip before the trip or subsequently if advance notice was not given. Consent is not necessary.
3. Every attempt must be made to work around or make up scheduled family interaction (planned visitation).

In the event that the parent/guardian voices objections to the planned trip, the case manager should seek supervisory consultation. Decisions should be made in the best interest of children and consider:

- **The permanency goal.** If the case is on track for reunification, parent/guardian objections generally should be given greater weight than if the case is on track for TPR.
- **The reason for the parent/guardian's objection.** The case manager should have a comprehensive discussion with the parent/guardian to understand the nature of the objection.



- **The importance of the trip to the child.** The case manager should consider what the child may gain by the trip or miss if not allowed to go. This should be communicated to the parent/guardian.
- **Respite alternatives.** The case manager should determine where the child will stay during the time the foster family is on the trip, and consider how that respite will affect the child.

If the decision is made that all factors indicate it is in the best interest of the child to allow the trip despite parent/guardian objection, the Ongoing Case Management program manager must document approval in eWiSACWIS case notes.

If the decision is made that all factors indicate it is in the best interests of the child to honor the parent/guardian objection, the foster family should be notified at the earliest opportunity, and alternative arrangements must be made for the child.

For trips beyond usual and customary (e.g. those requiring a passport, those longer than 10 days in duration, those with an element of unusual risk to the child, such as extreme sports, including, but not limited to other non-routine dangerous activities or circumstances), the BMCW attorney should be consulted.