

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
HANDBOOK



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ISSUED/REVISED: 01-01-10

RELATIVE NOTIFICATION FOR
CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME
PLACEMENT

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I. OVERVIEW

When a child is removed from their parents because of neglect or abuse they are often removed from their extended families and community support. Studies have shown there are added benefits of having children placed with willing and available relatives. It is imperative that every effort be made to identify locate and inform relatives of their participation options if they could potentially care for the child or help support the family.

II. POLICY

A. Relative Notification Requirements:

Assembly Bill 938 (Chapter 261, Statutes of 2009) requires all counties perform an investigation to identify and locate the child's relatives when the child is being removed or at risk of being removed from parental care. This bill further requires that relatives be notified of options they have under federal, state and local laws including what the requirements are to foster the child.

B. Identifying and Locating Relatives:

Staff shall use diligent efforts to identify and locate relatives within **30 days** of the child's initial removal from the home and on an ongoing basis. Notification shall be provided to all identified adult relatives with the exception of a relative with domestic violence or inappropriate history.

All efforts should be made to locate all grandparents, adult siblings, parents of a half-sibling of the child, and other adult relatives, including those suggested by parents or children. The child's grandparents, aunts, uncles or siblings should receive preferential consideration.

C. Detention hearing:

1. The court shall order the parent/s to provide names, addresses and any other information necessary to help further identify and locate any maternal or paternal relatives of the child.
2. Efforts to identify relatives shall include asking the child about relatives

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important to the child. Once a relative/s is identified by the child, efforts shall be made to locate and notify said relative/s.

D. Relative notification is an ongoing process. When meeting with parent/s, social workers should follow up and update relative information or add additional relatives to contact.

III. RELATIVE NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

A. **Clerical specialists** will notify the Relative Notification staff of each new detention.

B. **Relative Notification Staff** will:

1. Email the SW (cc: SWSII) to inform them that Relative Notification is being initiated and to identify any safety concerns
2. Create a Relative Notification log using any relatives identified by the SW and/or child and by conducting LexisNexis search on mother and father
 - a. Run address checks in order to ensure a valid address is included on the Relative Notification log.
3. Send the Initial Relative Notification Letter to all appropriate identified relatives who have been located. The initial letter must include the following:
 - a. Statement that the child(ren) (First Name, Last Initial) have been removed from the custody of the parents/guardians.
 - b. Information about the relative's role in providing care for the child(ren) while the parent/s receive reunification services.
 - c. Option to appear in court.
 - If the relative responds to the letter and requests to appear in court, the SW will need to complete a JV 285.
 - d. Information about becoming a foster family or approved relative or non-related extended family member.

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- e. Available out-of-home placement services information.
 - f. Contact options the relative may have with the child, including but not limited to visitation.
 - g. Consequences for failing to respond to this notification.
4. 30 days after mailing the Initial Relative Notification letter, e-mail the Social Worker (and cc: SWSII) the completed log detailing relative responses, as well as a narrative summary. Log should include any new relative contacts identified.
 5. Upload log and summary into CWS under the green tab in the case documents folder.
 6. Enter narrative summary into CWS as a contact note (under the child's name, type Collateral) with start date of the day the Initial Notification letter was mailed and end date 30 days from the date the Relative Notification was initiated.
 7. After confirming relative does not already have an existing client notebook, add each confirmed relative into the client notebook as a related client.
 8. Monitor the Relative Notification 1-888-811-4918 line voicemail and the Relative Notification email box and document all messages.
- C. If a relative responds to the Initial Notification Letter, the Relative Notification staff will:
1. Speak to them about their options and connect them with the social worker as appropriate.
 2. Mail a Relative Notification packet which includes the following:
 - a. Notification Letter to Relatives
 - b. Important Information for Relatives – Q&As
 - c. Overview of Juvenile Court
 - d. Return Business Reply Envelope

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- e. Record relative response in Relative Notification Log

D. **Social Worker** will:

1. Follow-up with parents to make sure they received the Genogram/Relationship Chart packet.
 - a. Review the Genogram/Relationship Chart packet with parent/s to ensure the Relationship Chart Worksheets are completed to the best of their ability.
 - b. Ensure any completed chart worksheets are submitted to the relative notification staff.
2. At time of removal, before or during the Detention hearing, ask child(ren) what relatives are important to them and locate any additional information that can be used to contact adult relatives.
 - a. Notify Relative Notification staff of any possible identified relatives.
3. At the time of detention if there is a relative who is willing and able to care for the child, the SW will contact the Resource Family Approval unit to initiate the approval process and refer the relative to attend an orientation.
 - a. Child may be placed prior to approval if emergency placement process is completed. (see ER Request Form 1)
4. Social Workers will confirm with the Relative Notification Clerk the receipt of Relative Notification summary and that they have reviewed the findings.
5. Upon the receipt of the Relative Notification log, Social Workers will complete the JV-285, Relative Information for contacts who wish to

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engage or be involved in the case of the child(ren).

6. At any time throughout the active case of the child(ren), Social Workers shall complete the Relative Notification Referral form (FF-4) as additional relative information surfaces. Social Workers will indicate *On-Going Family Finding* and *Notification* as appropriate, and send completed forms to the Relative Notification Clerk's inbox at: RelNotice@ehsd.cccounty.us.

IV. REFERENCE

All County Letter No. 09-86, Notification of Relatives ([ACL09-86](#))
All County Letter No. 16-16, Relative Notification and Definition of Sibling
Assembly Bill 938
Welfare & Institutions Code (WIC) Sections 309, 319, 361.1, and 628 ([WIC 319 \(f\) \(3\) \(d\)](#))
Family Code Section 7950
Public Law 110-351
DM 31-211, effective 10-01-2006, Approval Process for Relatives and Non-Related
Extended Family Members

V. Forms

FF-2 Paternal Relationship Chart Worksheet
FF-3 Maternal Relationship Chart Worksheet
FF-4 Relative Notification Referral Form
FF-5 Important Information for Relatives – Q&As
FF-6 Relative Notification/Family Finding Flow Chart

CONTACT PERSON: First-line Supervisors and above may contact the Relative Notification Program Analyst with questions concerning this Department Manual Section.