



COVID Guidance: Families on Creative Outreach, Temporary Out of Area or Temporary Reassignment Levels (CO, TO or TR)

The BPS indicates these levels are used for a period up to three months and supervisors can use discretion to extend beyond three months when reconnection at previous level seems imminent.

Many sites have kept families on these levels much longer, many since March, owing to the unprecedented nature of the pandemic.

We ask sites to do the best you can, exercising caution and utilizing the following recommendations with families who have been on CO, TO or TR for extended periods to help ensure the safety and welfare of the children and parents involved, and to reduce agency risk and liability.

Creative Outreach (CO)

- General expectations for families on CO:
 - Creative Outreach applies after the family has enrolled in HFA services, has had at least one home visit, but has not been available for subsequent home visits or who can no longer be located.
 - Family remains at case weight of pre-CO level, receives contacts (e.g. texts, notes, short calls, etc.) weekly, if the family was moved to CO from Level 1 or Level 1P, or every other week contacts when moved to CO from any other level.
- General COVID Guidance for Level CO:
 - Already enrolled families may be moved to CO if they have not been available for virtual home visits and the site is working to re-engage the family in virtual visits (or in-person visits when safe to do so).
 - In some instances, CO may be the best fit for families during this time, if the site has capacity for in-person or virtual visits, yet families are becoming disengaged (but not refusing) to receive such visits. The types of Creative Outreach may differ in a virtual capacity, but the intent would be the same – to be a stable presence in the lives of families, and to communicate genuine interest
- Families on CO for longer than 3 months:
 - Families may still be on CO because they have not been available for regular video or phone visits that can be counted as a home visit. However the family has been able to have some regularity of contact with their FSS via text, email or other creative outreach activities
 - If extensive length of time has passed without ability to “see” a family on CO, they should be engaged in a visual contact (video visit, physically distant in-person visit or recorded video shared by the parent) ideally involving parent(s) and child(ren)
 - While on CO, a visual contact is encouraged at least once monthly. A phone visit can be used as a backup option.

- If over the last 3-6 months, the family has been unwilling or unable to have any visual contact for a check-in or drop-off of supplies, the barriers to such should be discussed in supervision with problem-solving aimed at resolving these barriers
- If not possible, consider referral (with family consent) to other community services where direct contact can be made (if possible and available) and whether based on family circumstances and reluctance to engage more fully, HFA services should be closed.

Temporary Out of Area (TO)

- General expectations for families on TO:
 - HFA's Level Change Guidance describes TO as a temporary level for families who are temporarily out of the service area for work, family or other issues but who still want to remain in the program
 - Family remains at case weight of pre-TO level, with no contacts required, though periodic texts, emails, notes, etc. are recommended.
- General COVID Guidance for Level TO:
 - While TO is usually reserved for times when families are traveling out the area, if a family declines home visits related to health concerns, or is themselves ill or is quarantined, TO may be advisable for a period of time.
- COVID Guidance when Families are on TO for longer than 3 months:
 - If a family continues to decline contact, the barriers to such should be discussed in supervision with problem-solving aimed at resolving these barriers
 - Due to the length of time sites have not been able to connect with families on TO, they should either immediately engage the family in a visual contact (or by phone as a backup option), and begin to do so with some regularity (sufficient to consider them on CO vs TO) or refer the family to other community services (possibly to child welfare based on risk variables and inability to obtain parent consent to other referrals) and closed

Temporary Reassignment (TR)

- General Expectations for Families on TR:
 - HFA's Level Change Guidance describes TR as an appropriate level for sites to offer continuing services to families when a staff member is on temporary leave or while the site is hiring new staff.
 - Family case weight is .5 while on TR (not at previous weight because space is on another FSS caseload). "CO-type" contacts (e.g. texts, email, note, check-in phone

calls) are made at the frequency of previous level (i.e. if previously on Level 1, then weekly, if on Level 2 then bi-weekly, etc.)

- General COVID Guidance for Level TR:
 - While Level TR is usually reserved for times when sites are unable to offer regular visits due to staff transition, in the case of disease outbreak when staff are unavailable for visits due to being out of the office due to illness, or if they are temporarily reassigned to another area of the agency to help with community level care, Level TR is also allowable. This will exempt sites from the requirement of regular home visits. As guidance for TR suggests, sites should still support families as needed (and as able) throughout this time frame. Periodic virtual visits in the manner described above is recommended when feasible.
 - Already enrolled families (brand new families will never start out on Level TR) where originally assigned FSS has been redeployed to COVID duties within the organization, or with long-term absence or staff change, and family is now re-assigned temporarily pending FSS return
- COVID Guidance when Families are on TR for longer than 3 months:
 - If the staffing situation remains unchanged after three months or longer, these families should be reassigned to a staff who has capacity for making a virtual contact (video visit, physically distant in-person visit or recorded video shared by the parent) with the family or phone visits if video is not possible
 - If the site is unable to reassign to another staff person with this capacity, the family should be referred to other community services and closed

Additional Guidance for Supervision Conversations and Decision-Making:

The determination about whether families should remain on TO, TR and CO for an extended time beyond three months is based on family needs, rather than programmatic or organizational needs. A review of family needs should take place during supervision. Supervisors will document the review on the level change form or in weekly supervision notes, and will document the decision to either retain the family on CO, TO or TR, return to previous level, refer to other services, and/or close/terminate services. Things to consider in making this determination:

1. Family strengths and level of risk – If the site is not able to give the family the level of support they desire or require, or the family is not engaged in virtual services, sites should consider connecting them to other community services with the capacity to serve them.
2. Site staffing over the next few months – If the organization anticipates HFA staff return to full-time HFA work is imminent, sites may opt to continue the family on Level TR until that time. However if continued redeployment or absence is expected and three months on TR has already elapsed, HFA recommends that sites return these families to their previous level of service with a different FSS, refer to other services, and/or close services
3. Sites should return families to their previous level as soon as this becomes possible. HFA allows a virtual visit to be split into two shorter sessions during the same week, and this option should be considered if it will be helpful to the family with engagement.