



Requesting Temporary (Temp) Breaks

Guide for DCS Providers

Tennessee Department of Children's Services | Network Development | September 2023



Overview for Temporary (Temp) Breaks

Temporary (Temp) breaks are utilized to account for children who are in a different physical location than the provider agency placement authorized by DCS and provide financial reimbursement to the provider agency for at least a portion of the days the child is away. Temp breaks, further outlined in the Contract Provider Manual, take the form of runaways, placements in detention or hospitalizations. Under no circumstances does a runaway, placement in detention or hospitalization equate to a discharge from placement. Placement change decisions are made in a child and family team meeting (CFTM). Temp break days will not be reimbursed if a provider agency does not commit to a child's return to placement.

Guidance

Upon runaway, placement in detention or hospitalization, the provider agency will immediately notify the Department of the event as required by policy and submit a Temp Break request to Network Development for consideration. The provider should indicate if the child will return to the placement they were in before the Temp Break occurred. Temp breaks without a commitment to the child return are considered unauthorized discharges and will not be approved.

If a provider is unable to commit to the child's return when initially requesting the Temp Break, they should include their reasoning in the 'Miscellaneous Notes' section of the Temp Break request. If the child later returns to the placement the child was in before the Temp Break occurred, the Temp Break will be considered for approval as long as the provider has met the other obligations outlined in the contract provider manual relative to the Temp Break.

Temp Breaks are a tool intended to support stability and continuity in the placement experience of children in DCS custody. Patterns of unauthorized discharges by a provider agency will be treated as an agency performance issue.

Procedure

This section outlines the procedures by which providers submit Temp Break requests and how the Department will respond to those requests.

1. Providers will submit Temp Break requests through the appropriate link at the 'Placement Central for Providers' webpage (tn.gov/DCS) following the Guidance provided in the above section.
2. The Network Development Invoicing/Billing support team will process each request as follows:
 - a. Document the request in DCS electronic system and secure the necessary approvals;
 - b. Hold the request in abeyance until commitment to the child's return is provided;
 - c. Enter the unauthorized discharge when a child does not return to the previous placement.