CHAPTER 24
Office of the Governor—Division for Review of the Foster Care of Children

(Statutory Authority: 1976 Code §§ 43-13-10 and 43-13-60; Section 2, Part III General Appropriations Act, 1985)


A. All identifying information in the possession of the local boards and the Board of Directors shall be confidential and withheld from public inspection. If a local review board member takes individual case notes, these shall be kept in the official review board files when the board is not in session. Employees and officials of the Board of Directors and the local review boards shall maintain all case files in locked file cabinets in the review board system’s office. This regulation shall not be construed to permit disclosure of information broader than is permitted by law or to permit lesser confidentiality of records than the agency or facility providing the records. All board members and staff shall sign a statement agreeing to the confidentiality requirement and acknowledgement of notification of the penalties for violation thereof. Review Board members and staff are subject to the same standards of confidentiality as Department of Social Services and other agency employees.

B. Except when otherwise required by law, information from case records may be released to the following:

(1) the Board of Directors, and its staff;
(2) the local boards and their staff;
(3) the child-caring agency or facility involved;
(4) federal or state courts or other administrative bodies when required by law or pursuant to lawful court orders calling for production of the records or information in connection with legal proceedings.


The following policies shall determine which local review board shall review a particular child’s case unless extenuating or unusual circumstances arise:

A. Cases of children residing in foster families shall be reviewed by a review board in the judicial circuit of the county of the party holding legal custody. Although members of a sibling group may reside in different judicial circuits in different foster families, all of the siblings shall be reviewed by the same review board in the judicial circuit of the county of the party holding legal custody.

B. Cases of children who reside in child-caring facilities or residential group care homes where children routinely reside for six months or longer shall be reviewed by a review board assigned to the facility or residential group care home in the judicial circuit where the facility or residential group care home is located. The review will be held at the facility or residential group care home unless otherwise agreed by the parties. If a child is placed in a facility or residential group care home and the child’s siblings are placed in a family foster home or homes, all of the siblings shall be reviewed by the review board assigned to the child-caring facility or residential group care home until the child leaves said child-caring facility or residential group care home. If members of a sibling group are placed in different child-caring facilities or residential group care homes when they enter care, the case shall be reviewed by the review board assigned to the child-caring facility or residential group care home closest to the county of the party holding legal custody and the review will be held...
at the child-caring facility or residential group care home unless otherwise agreed by the parties. Cases of children who reside in child-caring facilities or residential group care homes where children do not routinely reside for six months or longer shall be reviewed by a review board in the judicial circuit of the party holding legal custody.

C. If the complexity of the case so warrants, the same review board shall continue to review the case regardless of the location of the child, the siblings, or the party holding legal custody. Factors to be considered are, but are not limited to, judicial proceedings in process and numbers of parties that have attended previous reviews.

D. If a question arises as to which review board shall review a particular case due to extenuating or unusual circumstances, review board staff shall make this decision.


Any local review board member involved with a child in a personal or a professional capacity may be heard by the review board as an interested party at the case review but shall not participate as a review board member. The following are designed to resolve possible conflicts of interest situations which include but are not limited to:

A. Review board members who are foster parents shall not participate as board members in the review of cases of children who are in their care.

B. A review board member who is an employee or an official of a child-caring agency, facility, or residential group care home shall not be assigned to review cases of children under the care or supervision of that agency, facility, or residential group care home.

C. Review board members who are past employees or past officials of a child-caring agency, facility, or residential group care home shall not participate as board members in the reviews of cases of children under their jurisdiction during the period of their services.


24–7. Agencies, Child-Caring Facilities, and Residential Group Care Homes Which Shall Be Invited and Encouraged to Attend Case Reviews.

Agencies, child-caring facilities, and residential group care homes which are assigned to a particular local review board, are legally responsible for a child, and/or are responsible for the placement of the child, shall be notified of the date, time, and location of a review board hearing by the review board staff assigned to their area and shall be invited and encouraged to attend. The following shall be notified and encouraged to attend a child’s case review:

A. Any Department of Social Services or other child placement agency worker (for child-caring facility or residential group care home workers, see B.) who is directly involved with a child’s case shall be invited and encouraged to attend the child’s case review. (See also Regulation 24-7 D. herein.) If a child, the child’s siblings, and/or the biological/legal parents, or legal guardians have different workers, all workers shall be invited and encouraged to attend the case review. The worker in the county Department of Social Services holding legal custody of the child shall invite the other workers. In cases other than those of the Departments of Social Services, the child’s worker shall invite the other workers. Supervisors shall automatically consider themselves to be invited to attend reviews involving their workers.

B. If a child resides in a child-caring facility or residential group care home, a representative of that child-caring facility or residential group care home shall be invited and encouraged to attend the case review. Preferably the representative shall be the worker responsible for the planning for the child and his family.

C. If a child is in the custody of a court and the court has assigned a worker to the child, that worker shall be invited and encouraged to attend the case review. The invitation shall be extended by the worker responsible for presenting the case to the review board. (See Regulation 24-23 herein.)

D. Agency workers other than those listed above who are directly involved with a child or a child’s parent(s) either for placement or treatment purposes shall be invited and encouraged to attend the case review. The invitations shall be extended by the worker responsible for presenting the case to the review board. (See Regulation 24-23 herein.) At the review board’s discretion such
workers may submit to the review board in lieu of attendance a written report such as, but not limited to, a prognosis of the parent’s ability to make a home for the child or the progress toward adoptive placement. If a child has been legally free for adoption for more than six months and has not been placed adoptively, the Department of Social Services State Office adoption worker or the adoption worker of any other agency may be asked to attend the child’s case review and if requested to attend, shall be encouraged to attend.


24–9. Individuals Who Shall Be Invited and Encouraged to Attend Case Reviews.

The worker responsible for presenting the case to the local review board shall send written notice of the review board hearing three weeks prior to the scheduled review to the following individuals at their last known address and the following shall be encouraged to attend with the exceptions noted below: both biological/legal parents; legal guardians; present guardians ad litem; parties holding legal custody or having held legal custody at the time of placement, if other than one of the above; both foster parents, and foster children ten years of age or older. If a party has been restrained by court order from visiting the child and the review is held at the child-caring facility or residential group care home where the child resides, or if there is no restraining order and the director of the child-caring facility or residential group care home expresses concern for the safety or emotional well-being of the custodial parent or child who would be present at a review, the review board may arrange for the restrained or non-custodial parent to attend the review at a different time and/or different location than that of the custodial parent and children. The following guidelines shall apply when issuing certain invitations:

A. Foster children ten years of age or older shall receive written invitations to attend their review board hearings on their case and shall be given the opportunity to attend. It is recommended that the invitations be given to the child personally by the worker or foster parent. The opportunity to attend for younger children shall be at the discretion of the agency, child-caring facility or residential group care home.

B. When the child is free for adoption, the biological/legal parent(s) or legal guardian(s) shall not be invited.


24–11. Other Parties Who Shall Be Invited and Encouraged to Attend Case Reviews.

In extreme and unusual cases, a local review board may decide that it needs to hear from certain other knowledgeable and interested parties in order to formulate its advisory decisions. Such parties shall be invited and encouraged to attend by the worker responsible for presenting the case if requested by the local review board, or by the local review board itself.

24–13. Requests to Attend Case Reviews.

When parties request to attend a case review, the following guidelines shall apply:

A. The local review board shall agree to hear anyone who formally requests to be heard at a child’s case review as long as the person has some connection with or knowledge of the child’s or family’s situation.

B. Because of the confidential nature of the case reviews, persons shall not attend reviews merely for the purpose of observing.

C. Legislators, public officials directly concerned with the Children's Foster Care Review Board System, or other persons with a legitimate interest in the review process may be permitted to attend a review hearing if:

(1) The agencies, child-caring facilities or residential group care homes which have children’s cases scheduled for review have agreed in advance to the presence of the observer and have agreed upon the circumstances of the person’s attendance such as is required to maintain confidentiality as required by statute. (See Section 20-7-690, Code of Laws of South Carolina (1976), as amended.)

(2) The observer has signed a confidentiality form.


The agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home which is legally responsible for a child whose case is being reviewed hereunder and/or is responsible for the placement of a child whose case is being reviewed hereunder shall furnish to the review board at the time of review of such child's case the following information and records if in its possession. If such information is not available at the time of the review, it shall be furnished thereafter to the Foster Care Review Board:

A. the name, age, and residence of the child;
B. the names and residences of the child’s parents. The foster Care Review Board will notify the responsible agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home before contacting the natural parents;
C. the names and residence of any siblings currently in foster care placement;
D. the name and address of the child’s foster parents or other placement. The Foster Care Review Board will notify the responsible agency, child-caring facility or residential group care home before contacting the child’s foster parents;
E. the chronological history of all former foster care placements including the names of former foster families, child-caring facilities, or residential group care homes; the length of stay in each foster care placement. The Foster Care Review Board will notify the responsible agency or facility before contacting the child’s former foster parents, child-caring facilities, or residential group care homes;
F. the dates (past and present) that the child has been placed in the custody or control of the agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home and the agency’s, child-caring facility’s, or residential group care home’s case or file number;
G. the county, court case, or docket number and the date of any order placing custody or control of the child with the agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home;
H. the facts and circumstances which caused the agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home to take custody or control of the child;
I. the agency’s, child-caring facility’s, or residential group care home’s effort to contact parents or relatives of the child, the plan and written contracts set up for rehabilitation of said parents or relatives, and the progress of said parents or relatives in following through with the plan and written contracts;
J. the dates and nature of actual contacts between the child and his parents or relatives, between the child and his siblings, between the child and the agency, and between the agency or facility and the parents or relatives. This information may be provided in the form of a list of dates with the nature of each contact (e.g. visit, phone call, letter, etc.);
K. the present status of the child’s physical and emotional health;
L. the present recommendations of the agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home as to the disposition of the child’s case, including any progress made toward providing the child with a permanent family home;
M. the reasons for which the agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home has determined, if at all, that return home or adoption is unfeasible or impossible;
N. the status of the agency’s, child-caring facility’s, or residential group care home’s case referred to counsel for action in the Family Court which affects the child’s permanent placement;
O. the names and addresses of all attorneys known by the agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home to be involved in the case;
P. copies of all filed pleadings, motions, and court orders involving the child, including a copy of the court ordered treatment plan for the review board file;
Q. social histories, social summaries, psychologicals and other relevant documents. Copies may be provided to the review board for its file. For children placed in foster care by public agencies, copies shall be provided if the board has filed a petition or motion to be a party in litigation involving the child or has referred the case to an attorney for legal assessment;
R. any other documentation or information which may be needed by the local boards to fully evaluate the case of each child in regard to permanent placement.

**HISTORY:** Added by State Register Volume 10, Issue No. 2, eff February 28, 1986.


The following procedures shall apply when a case review is scheduled:

A. The foster care agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home shall provide initially to the assigned review board coordinator the “Roster of All Children Presently In Foster Family, Child-Caring Facility, Or Residential Group Care Home In Excess Of Four Consecutive Months” for children in public foster care or the “Roster Of All Children Presently in Foster Family, Child-Caring Facility, or Residential Group Care Home In Excess Of Six Consecutive Months” for children in private foster care. These entities shall thereafter provide the “Monthly Update” of children in public foster care who are entering the four consecutive months period, children in private foster care who are entering the six consecutive months period, and/or children leaving care after residing in public or private foster care in excess of six consecutive months.

B. Unless emergency review is warranted as specified by the involved agencies, child-caring facilities, or residential group care homes, or review board, the review board coordinator shall notify the designated representative of the agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home at least four weeks in advance of:

1. the date, time and place of the review hearing;
2. the number of cases to be presented at the review hearing.

C. Unless otherwise specified, child-caring agencies, child-caring facilities, and residential group care homes shall be responsible for deciding which children shall be reviewed at a particular review and for presenting the case at the six months intervals specified in the review board statute. The agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home and the review board coordinator may mutually agree that the coordinator will assume this responsibility. Such an agreement shall be consummated by a written, signed statement to this effect; the absence of a written agreement shall imply that the agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home retains these responsibilities.

D. The initial review of each child in foster care shall be held after four consecutive months in public foster care or six consecutive months in private foster care and each child shall be reviewed every six months thereafter if continuing to reside in public or private foster care.

E. All members of a sibling group who are in public foster care in excess of four consecutive months or in private foster care in excess of six consecutive months shall be reviewed at one time.

F. For children residing in child-caring facilities, or residential group care homes, all cases involving Department of Social Services or other agency workers from one county shall be reviewed together when possible if travel is involved.

G. All case reviews which will be attended by Department of Social Services State Office adoption workers or adoption workers of other agencies shall be scheduled together when possible if travel is involved.

H. Effort shall be made to review the cases of one particular worker together when possible.

I. Specific times shall be scheduled for each case so as to minimize the waiting time for all invited parties.

J. Local review boards shall be notified by the review board coordinator in advance of the approximate number of cases to be reviewed and the approximate time the hearing will last. Each member shall make arrangements to stay until all cases are reviewed.

K. If a review board falls behind in the number of cases it should be reviewing in order to uphold the “every six consecutive months” clause of the statute, the review board coordinator shall notify the chairperson of the local review board and the South Carolina Department of Social Services. When a review board becomes delinquent, the chairperson of the local review board shall provide the State Board of Directors a written proposed solution for bringing the review board up-
to-date. The review board coordinator shall be responsible for keeping the local review boards informed as to the status of the caseloads.


A. Local review boards shall review every six months, but no less frequently than once every six months, the cases of children who have resided in public foster care for a period of more than four consecutive months and shall review every six months the cases of children who have resided in private foster care for a period of more than six consecutive months. Foster care includes family foster home, child-caring facility, and residential group home as defined below:

(1) “child-caring facility” means a campus with one or more staffed residences and with a total population of twenty or more children who are in care apart from their parents, relatives, or guardians, on a continuing full-time basis for protection and guidance.

(2) “family foster home” or “foster home” means a household of one or more persons who are licensed or approved to provide full-time care for one to five children living apart from their parents or guardians.

(3) “residential group care home” or “group Home” means a staffed residence with a population fewer than twenty children who are in care apart from their parents, relatives, or guardians on a full-time basis.

B. Cases of children residing in public or private foster care for a period of more than six consecutive months shall be reviewed every six months regardless of the funding source and the party holding legal custody. A written statement of any change in the agency’s or facility’s permanent plan for the child which had previously been agreed upon by the agency or facility and board shall be given to the local review board.


A child’s case, provided such child is continuing to reside in foster care shall be reviewed by a local review board every six months until the child reaches the age of eighteen (18). (See Pub.L. 96-272). Review shall be terminated if a child is declared legally emancipated or ceases to reside in foster care. Evidence that the child has left foster care shall be presented to the local review board in writing.


The following procedures shall be followed when conducting case reviews by local review boards:

A. Review board members may meet privately with the review board coordinator to discuss any cases of concern to the review board, and any other pertinent information.

B. The worker from the agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home responsible for placing the child in foster care or holding legal custody or in the case of a private placement, responsible for accepting the child into foster care will present the case to the review board. This party shall have completed a “Foster Care Review Summary Sheet” prior to the review hearing and shall submit at least two legible copies of that completed form to the review board. (See Regulation 24-15 Section A. through M. herein for definition of data to be enclosed on “Foster Care Review Summary Sheet.”) Copies of other relevant documents shall also be presented as specified in Regulation 24-15 herein.

C. The review board chairperson shall introduce the review board to all parties attending and shall explain the purpose of the case review. If any of the interested parties specified in Regulations 24-7 through 24-11 herein are not present, copies of the letters of invitation shall be provided for the review board file by the worker responsible for presenting the case. It is recommended that the worker show proof of the receipt of the invitation to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or foster child by one of the following methods: 1. an affidavit from the worker including a statement that the invitation was mailed and was not returned, the specific address to which it was mailed, and the date
of the mailing, 2. an invitation to attend signed by the absent party, or 3. a return receipt of certified or registered mail. (See Regulation 24-27 herein which addresses continuing the review at a later time if a key party was not invited or the copy of the invitation is not available at the review hearing.)

D. The review board coordinator or the review board chairperson shall read aloud any pertinent information in the review board case file, including the board’s previous “Advisory Recommendations.” Each party present may offer corrections to the review board file if needed. The review board and the professional staff present shall use their discretion to determine which parties may be present during the reading of the review board case file notes.

E. The party responsible for completing a “Foster Care Summary Sheet” will present the details of the child’s case to the review board. In particular, the party will present:

   (1) what permanent plans have been formulated for the child (i.e. return to the improved parent(s), termination of parental rights and adoption, or placement in a permanent foster home and a time frame for completion);

   (2) what are the reasons for preferring the chosen permanent plan over other possible plans;

   (3) what steps toward realization of the chosen permanent plan have been accomplished to date;

   (4) what steps toward realization of the chosen permanent plan can be accomplished before the next case review;

   (5) such other information as may be necessary to the review board in furtherance of its functions and powers. (See Regulation 24-1, 24-15, and 24-7 through 24-11 herein.)

F. Members of the review board shall allow each party who is present to address the board. Discretion shall be used to determine which parties may remain for the entire case review and which ones shall leave after presenting their information. The guardian ad litem as well as other parties present may be allowed to remain for the entire review unless another invited party requests to meet with the review board privately or the board elects to do so. The review board may discuss with any parties any information that it believes is necessary to its advisory recommendation for permanent placement of the child. The review board coordinator shall take notes of all proceedings.

G. In cases where parties present are involved in litigation, each may be heard separately at the request of either party.

H. The review board chairperson shall summarize the review board's final advisory recommendations for the review board coordinator to record.

I. The review board chairperson shall explain the advisory recommendations to those parties remaining at the end of the review hearing. For foster children in attendance, the worker shall decide if the child should remain to hear the board’s advisory recommendations.

J. The review board shall document in its “Advisory Recommendations” any Department of Social Services referral to a law enforcement agency for prosecution of child abuse.

K. In the case of a child who entered foster care through court action, the local review board shall document the status of judicially approved treatment plans in its “Advisory Recommendations.”


24–25. Procedure for Case Reviews When a Child is in Permanent Foster Care or Guardianship.

After permanent foster care or guardianship has been effected for a child, the case shall continue to be reviewed every six months by a local review board. After the review board has received a copy of the signed permanent foster care agreement or a legal document granting guardianship, subsequent reviews may consist of a brief written statement from the responsible agency, child-caring facility, or residential group care home affirming that the child is still with the same foster family or in the same child-caring facility or residential group care home and that there have been no changes in the status of the case since the last detailed review. Whenever the status of a child in permanent foster care or guardianship changes, the responsible agency, child-caring facility or residential group care home shall notify the review board.

24–27. Lack of a Key Party at a Case Review.

If one of the key parties as provided in Regulations 24-7 through 24-11 fails to appear for a case review as scheduled, the local review board shall hear the other key parties who have assembled for the case review. However, the review board shall not submit its written advisory recommendations until the absent party is given an opportunity to be heard if that party was not invited.


At least three of the five local review board members shall be present before a case may be reviewed. If only two board members are present, however, a review may proceed if all attending parties agree to proceed. Each local review board member may belong to only one local review board. In the event of a vacancy on a local review board due to an unfilled appointment, a member from another local review board may be invited to serve until the vacancy is filled. If a local review board member is absent from one-third or more of the local review board meetings involving case reviews during a year, and if the State Board of Directors or another interested party so reports to the Governor’s Office, the Governor may remove the person from office and may appoint someone else to the local board.


The local review board shall routinely issue a formal written advisory recommendation relating to the permanent placement of each child whose case is reviewed. Continued placement of the child in the child-caring facility or residential group care home shall be recommended by the review board, unless the parent is able to resume care, in at least those instances in which children are privately placed in privately owned facilities or group homes and a notarized affidavit of summary review is executed by the child-caring facility and is valid on its face. The affidavit of summary review must be submitted to the board every six months and accepted by the board if it is valid on its face.

A. The “Affidavit of Summary Review” must attest to the following conditions:

(1) The person who placed the child has legal custody of the child; and

(2) No court has ordered or approved the placement of the child in the care of the child-caring facility except as a part of an order granting legal custody of the child to a parent or legal guardian; and

(3) The facility has no knowledge that a child has ever been abused, neglected, or abandoned while under the care of the person who placed the child in the facility; and

(4) The person who placed the child contributes regularly to the support of the child to the level of his or her ability and has done so for a period of six (6) months immediately prior to the date of the affidavit; and

(5) The person who placed the child has maintained contact and visitation with the child to the best of his or her ability under existing circumstances.

B. An “Affidavit of Summary Review” shall be completed and submitted to the review board at each review by the child-caring facility or residential group care home if applicable. A child-caring facility and/or residential group care home may invite person(s) to the review by sending a letter of invitation or by sending a copy of the Affidavit of Summary Review with the date, time, and location of the review in lieu of the letter of invitation to said person(s).

C. A legal guardian shall not be the child-caring facility or residential group care home or one of its officials, administrators, or employees to meet the requirement of the “Affidavit of Summary Review”.

D. Cases of children privately placed in privately owned child-caring facilities and residential group care homes and for whom a proper “Affidavit of Summary Review” has been submitted, and accepted on face value by the review board shall not be subject to other review or disclosure hereunder.

24–33. Processing of “Advisory Recommendations” Form.

The following procedures shall be used to prepare and disseminate the “Advisory Recommendations” form of local review boards:

A. The review board coordinator shall record the review board’s advisory recommendations as directed by the chairperson at the case review and shall see that forms are sent to the review board chairperson for signature. No advisory recommendation is final until it is in writing and is signed by the review board chairperson.

B. A copy of the “Advisory Recommendations” form shall be made and mailed to the last address given at the review board hearing to each of the appropriate parties as follows:

(1) A copy of the review board “Advisory Recommendations” form shall be sent by the local Department of Social Services or other foster care providers to each of the parties invited to attend with the exception of foster children and observers who have no connection to the case. (See Regulation 24-7 through 24-11 herein.) For foster children ten years of age or older, the child’s worker shall be encouraged to personally take a copy of the advisory recommendations to the child, and to explain these to the child, and to answer any questions the child may have regarding these. For foster children under the age of ten years, the child’s worker shall use discretion in determining whether or not the child shall be given a copy and/or an explanation.

(2) For a child who entered foster care through court action, a copy of the review board’s “Advisory Recommendations” shall be sent to the appropriate Family Court by review board staff.

(3) For a child in Department of Social Services foster care who has already been freed for adoption, a copy of the review board’s “Advisory Recommendations” shall be sent to the Department of Social Services State Office adoption unit by the review board staff.

(4) For a child in Department of Social Services foster care for whom the review board believes termination of parental rights proceedings are needed, copies of the “Advisory Recommendations” shall be sent by review board staff to the Divisions of Substitute Care and Adoption of the Department of Social Services State office.

C. If the board’s advisory recommendations regarding permanent placement of a child who entered foster care through the Family Court upon a petition brought by the protective services agency have not been implemented, the local review board may refer a request to the State Office of the review board system for assessment as to whether the board should move the Family Court to request the scheduling of an early review hearing on the status of such child.


24–37. Procedures, Quorum, and Attendance for the State Board of Directors.

The State Board of Directors shall meet at least quarterly and a quorum shall consist of four members. Members who find themselves unable to attend a scheduled Board of Directors meeting shall notify the chairperson prior to the meeting. The Board of Directors shall adopt policies relating to attendance.