



TEXAS
**Department of Family
and Protective Services**

Child Protective Services

**Locating Missing Children
in DFPS Conservatorship - Resource Guide**

September 2020

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Resource Guides

The purpose of Resource Guides is to provide information that helps you do your job better. This information includes reference material, procedures, and guidelines that help you complete the tasks you are required to do by policy.

It's important to remember that the information in Resource Guides **does not substitute for policy**. We may sometimes include policy statements, but only to show you the policy to which the information is related. We will highlight any policy that actually appears in the Resource Guide and will almost always include a link to the actual policy. For example:

Per [4222.2 Re-Allowing Placement](#):

If the caseworker learns of a detailed justification for changing the status of and considering placements in a foster family that is on Disallowed Placement status, the caseworker must elevate this consideration through the regional chain of command to the regional director.

The policy in the handbook always takes precedence over what is in the Resource Guide. We try to keep policy and Resource Guides synchronized, but sometimes there is a delay. **If you have questions, always follow the policy in the Policy Handbook.**

Resource Guides provide important information on a range of topics, for the purpose of assisting and guiding staff to:

- make essential decisions
- develop strategies to address various issues
- perform essential procedures
- understand important processes
- identify and apply best practices

The information in the Resource Guides is not policy (except where noted), and the actions and approaches described here are not mandates. You should adapt the way you perform critical tasks to the individual needs and circumstances of the children and families with whom you work.

State office and field staff are working together to identify Resource Guide topics, define the content, and develop the appropriate guides. CPS will regularly post Resource Guides as they are developed and update them as needed. Check the Resource Guides page, in the CPS Handbook, to see new or revised Guides.

We hope these Guides provide useful information to guide and assist CPS staff in effectively performing their job tasks. These Guides, combined with clear and concise policy in the Handbook, should help staff provide a high level of service to children in Texas.

Overview

Children and youth are in foster care because they, or their sibling(s), have experienced abuse and/or neglect and the risk to their safety could not be mitigated through less restrictive interventions. When children and youth in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) are missing or have run away, it is important to recover them as soon as possible to ensure child safety and minimize potential to experience violence, abuse, neglect or trafficking victimization. This guide helps you determine timeframes, responsibilities, and actions to be taken when a child or youth is missing or runs away from care.

Per CPS Handbook [6460](#) When a Child or Youth is Missing from CPS Conservatorship:

Staff in Bexar, Dallas, Harris, Tarrant, and Travis counties, which participate in the Human Trafficking Response Protocol, use the [Runaway/Missing Youth and Victims of Human Trafficking Protocol Resource Guide](#) as the procedures to follow when looking for children and youth who run away or otherwise go missing from DFPS Conservatorship.

Staff in all other counties use this guide, the [Locating Missing Children in DFPS Conservatorship Resource Guide](#).

The primary caseworker will continue to have primary responsibility for the case while working closely with the assigned special investigator (SI) until the child or youth is recovered. In addition, this guide contains the following resources to assist staff:

- Interview Guide: Missing and Abducted Child or Youth Interview.
- Resources on Human Trafficking.
- Flow chart for Missing and for Recovery of CVS Children and Youth.

When staff, from any stage of service, involved in the case learns that a child, youth, or young adult aged 0-20, is missing or has been abducted, they must work with the primary caseworker to provide notification to:

- The appropriate law enforcement officials in the jurisdiction where the child or youth went missing; and
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

The regional director assistants serve as the Missing Children Regional Coordinator and point of contact on missing children issues, and ensure every missing child and youth is being tracked. **It is crucial for primary caseworkers to coordinate all missing children and youth efforts with the assigned SI.** It is extremely important that the Special Investigations (SI) division has access to updated case information pertaining to children and youth that are missing.

Background

In 2014, President Obama signed into law the [Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act](#), Public Law (P.L. 113-183), amending reporting requirements for missing children and suspected victims of sex and labor trafficking. This law amends the Title IV-E foster care program and requires child welfare agencies, such as DFPS, to collect additional information on children and youth who run away in an effort to prevent future occurrences.

For example, the law required DFPS to develop and implement specific protocols for:

- Expeditiously locating any missing child from foster care.
- Determining the primary factors that contributed to the child's running away or otherwise being absent from care, and to the extent possible and appropriate, responding to those factors in current and subsequent placements for the child.
- Determining the child's experiences while on runaway or otherwise absent from care, including screening to determine if the child is a possible victim of sex trafficking.

What is Human Trafficking?

Human Trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act ([22 U.S.C. 7102\(11\)-\(12\)](#)), or for labor or services. Sex and labor trafficking are forms of human trafficking.

What is Sex Trafficking?

Sex Trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act ([22 U.S.C. 7102\(12\)](#)). This includes the exchange of anything tangible for a sexual act or the promise of a sexual act. For minors, the use of force, fraud, or coercion is not required.

What is Labor Trafficking?

Labor Trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery ([22 U.S.C. 7102\(11\)\(B\)](#)).

What is a "Confirmed" Human Trafficking Victim?

DFPS defines a trafficking event as "confirmed" when evidence supports the conclusion that the child or youth has been trafficked. The supporting evidence must be more than just an allegation or suspicion but does not have to be a direct outcry from the child or youth. See CPS Handbook [6462](#) Confirmed or Suspected Victims of Human Trafficking.

What is a "Suspected-unconfirmed" Human Trafficking Victim?

DFPS defines a trafficking event as "suspected-unconfirmed" when specific information regarding the child or youth and the surrounding circumstances creates a reasonable belief that the child or youth has been trafficked. A runaway or missing episode, in and of itself, does not equal to "suspected-unconfirmed." [6462](#) Confirmed or Suspected Victims of Human Trafficking.

What constitutes a Missing Child or Youth?

A child or youth in DFPS managing conservatorship is categorized as missing if the child or youth runs away, is abducted by a known or unknown person, or is otherwise absent from care with no known location.

See CPS Policy [6461](#) Child or Youth Missing from Substitute Care Placement

Statewide Intake

Notification to Statewide Intake (SWI) occurs when children or youth in conservatorship are missing or recovered. Statewide Intake will receive reports from providers notifying DFPS that a child or youth in conservatorship is missing or has run away, as well as when a child or youth has been recovered or returned to their placement.

Statewide Intake Notifications

| Type of Notification Received | Actions to be taken |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Child or youth in conservatorship is missing or has run away | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These Missing or Runaway reports are considered Situations That Always Require an I&R Call Regarding Existing CPS Case (I&R to Existing Case). • SWI must generate an I&R to Existing CPS Case and notify field staff. • If the field office is open, standard routing processes will be followed. • If the field office is closed, SWI will call out the I&R to Existing CPS Case to on-call staff. |
| Child or youth in conservatorship is recovered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These Recovery reports are considered Situations That Always Require an I&R Call Regarding Existing CPS Case (I&R to Existing Case). • SWI must generate the I&R to Existing CPS Case and notify field staff. • If the field office is open, standard routing processes will be followed. • If the field office is closed, SWI will call out the I&R to Existing CPS Case to on-call staff. |
| <p>Note: The above statements only apply when SWI receives the notification. SWI is not the only method by which notification can be received, as children and youth may let their primary caseworker know directly, the placement may contact the agency, etc.</p> | |

Primary Caseworker Actions

Part 1: Primary Caseworker Initial Notifications When a Child is Missing or Runs Away

When a child or youth is missing or runs away, it is imperative that proper notifications be made. These events can occur during regular business hours or after hours, on weekends, or holidays. Part 1 discusses specific actions that must be taken by a primary caseworker, special investigator, or on-call CPI or CVS worker.

Notifications During Regular Business Hours

The regional router will contact the assigned primary CVS caseworker’s program director to ensure the CVS supervisor and CVS primary caseworker are notified timely that a child or youth is missing or has run away.

Immediately, but no later than 8 hours after notification that the child or youth has gone missing or has run away, the caseworker makes the notifications cited in the CPS Handbook [6461.1](#) Notification Requirements.

The caseworker must follow any local rules that have been established and communicated to regional field staff when making required notifications. Generally acceptable methods of notification are telephone call, text message, or email.

The caseworker must complete the following notifications **immediately** when a child or youth is missing or runs away from DFPS conservatorship.

Caseworker Notifications - Immediate:

| Notify | Information to Share or Obtain |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Regional director assistant (RDA)¹ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report the child or youth’s missing status and any actions taken to report or recover the child or youth up to this point. |
| Designated Regional Mailbox (CC: regional director assistant (RDA) and supervisor) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email the designated regional mailbox to request a special investigator be assigned to assist in recovery efforts. • The subject line of the email should state, “Missing child request for assistance”. • Include in the email the Preliminary Sheet, Form K-908-4100, (if already completed). • If the Preliminary Sheet is not complete, include the following information in the body of the email: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS Case ID number. • Missing child or youth’s name. • Date of birth. • IMPACT Person ID • Legal county. • Location child or youth went missing from, type of placement, and address. • Region child or youth went missing from. • Did the child or youth go missing alone? • If not, who do you believe they may be with? • Do you suspect the child or youth was abducted? • Law enforcement agency name and case number. • NIC Number generated from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Database (Note: This number is unique for each runaway event reported. The same number should never be used twice). • National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) case number. • Brief description of the circumstances surrounding the missing child or youth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any additional information requested by the special investigator program director (SIPD) or RDA regarding the referral. |
| Supervisor and chain of command | Confirm that supervisor and program director for the primary caseworker are informed of child or youth’s missing status. |

¹ Note: This is the regional director assistant for the child or youth’s legal region.

| Notify | Information to Share or Obtain |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <p>Note: If any initial actions were completed after hours by on-call staff, refer to Primary caseworker tasks on next business day, when on-call notifications occurred after business hours in the After-Hours section to ensure all tasks have been completed.</p> | |

Caseworker Notifications - Immediately, but no later than 8 hours:

| Notify | Information to Share or Obtain |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Law enforcement</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report the child or youth’s missing status or confirm that law enforcement has received a report of the child or youth’s missing status. Provide a description of the child or youth (clothes, hair color, height, weight, etc.). Obtain the law enforcement case number. Obtain the NIC² number generated from the NCIC Database (Note: This number is unique for each runaway event reported. The same number should never be used twice). Report to law enforcement, if a missing child or youth meets the definition of an endangered child (see Appendix A), so that the child or youth can be designated as such in NCIC/ Texas Crime Information Center (TCIC). |
| <p>National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) https://cmfc.missingkids.org/reportit or 1-800-The-Lost (1-800-843-5678)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the local law enforcement case number. Provide the NIC number, if available (Note: This number is unique for each missing event reported. The same number should never be used twice). All other information that is requested. Obtain the confirmation number and NCMEC number. |
| <p>Court</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report a child or youth’s missing or runaway status to the court with legal jurisdiction. Follow all local protocols required by the court. |
| <p>Probation or parole officer, if applicable</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report a child or youth’s missing or runaway status. Inquire if they have any ideas as to where the child or youth may be located. Ask that they contact the primary caseworker if they are contacted by the child or youth. If requested, provide the date and time the child or youth went missing and the circumstances of the disappearance. |
| <p>Child or youth’s parent(s) (unless rights have been terminated)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report a child or youth’s missing status. Inquire if they have any ideas as to where the child or youth may be located. |
| <p>Attorney ad litem appointed to the child or youth</p> | |

² NIC (NCIC) Number: The NIC Number is a ten-character reference number consisting of an alphabetic character which identifies the NCIC File that the record is indexed in, followed by nine digits.

| Notify | Information to Share or Obtain |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Guardian ad litem appointed to the child or youth, if applicable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask that they contact the primary caseworker if they are contacted by the child or youth. |
| A volunteer advocate appointed to the child or youth (CASA), if applicable | |
| Attorney(s) for the parent(s) | |
| The licensed administrator of the child-placing agency (CPA) responsible for placing the child or youth or the licensed administrator’s designee | |
| The foster parent, kinship caregiver, prospective adoptive parent, or director of the group home or general residential operation where the child or youth is residing (child or youth’s placement) | |
| Care Coordination Team (CCT) if applicable. Applicable if child’s legal or placement county has a CCT implemented. | |
| Human Trafficking/ Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY) Advocate Agency, if applicable. | |
| Any other person determined by a court to have an interest in the child or youth’s welfare | |

Notifications After Regular Business Hours

According to standard business procedures, SWI will notify the on-call CPI caseworker when an I&R involving an Existing CPS Case is received. Reports to SWI regarding a child or youth who has run away or is missing are treated as I&R referrals.

The on-call staff and primary caseworker will make the following notifications:

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Call out from SWI | <p>According to standard business procedures, the on-call CPI caseworker will receive a call out from SWI of an I&R to Existing DFPS Case. The on-call CPI caseworker is responsible for contacting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-call CVS caseworker, and • On-call special investigator program director (SIPD) for special investigator assignment. |
| On-call caseworker tasks within 8 hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 8 hours, completes and documents notifications to law enforcement (unless completed by the child’s caregivers), NCMEC, and identified required parties. See CPS Handbook 6151.3 Notification Requirements and Schedule. • Notifies the primary caseworker and chain of command of the child or youth’s missing status. |
| Primary caseworker tasks on next business day, when on-call notifications occurred after business hours | <p>On the next business day from being notified the child or youth’s missing status, the primary caseworker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides assigned SI a copy of the court order granting DFPS conservatorship and the CPS Missing Child Preliminary Sheet, Form K-908-4100. • Ensures a current photo of child or youth is uploaded in IMPACT. |

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifies the regional director assistant (RDA) of the missing child or youth. • Confirms on-call notification tasks were completed and documented. • In legal counties with the Protocol for Care Coordination implemented: Caseworker will coordinate with the CVS supervisor, SI, and SIPD to identify participants for the Recovery Meeting for confirmed victims of trafficking. |
| <p>Note: At the end of the on-call period, the primary caseworker will resume regular business hours activities as described in the chart below.</p> | |

Part 2: Initial Caseworker Actions

When a child or youth runs away or goes missing, it is imperative that specific actions be taken to recover the missing child or youth. Part 2 discusses specific actions that must be taken by a primary caseworker.

Caseworker Actions - Immediately, or within 8 hours:

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Assign special investigator (SI) as secondary to case</p> | <p>The caseworker will designate the assigned SI as secondary to the child or youth’s SUB stage in IMPACT.</p> |
| <p>Provide the assigned SI(s) with critical information</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The caseworker must participate in a telephone staffing with the SI to review information about the child or youth. • During the staffing, the caseworker: • Provides information on all relatives, friends, and associates. • Provides all relevant health information for the child or youth (including information relating to medications the child or youth may be prescribed). <p>Within 8 hours of notification that the child or youth is missing or next business day if after hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures recent photos of the child or youth are uploaded in IMPACT. • Provides CPS Missing Child Preliminary Sheet K908-4100, if not already provided. • Provides a copy of all court orders granting DFPS conservatorship of the child or youth. |
| <p>Request an Amber Alert, if necessary</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the caseworker believes that a child or youth has unwillingly left the substitute care placement or has been removed by an unauthorized person, the caseworker coordinates with the special investigator program director (SIPD) and the assigned SI to request that the child be placed on the Amber Alert System when they make the report to law enforcement. Local law enforcement officials will work with the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to decide if Amber Alert criteria are met; see Appendix A. • The Amber Alert System requires law enforcement to confirm abduction prior to issuing an alert and only a law enforcement agency can activate the system and assume responsibility for updates and extensions. • If a child or youth in DFPS conservatorship is abducted by biological family, and local law enforcement declines to file a missing person report on the child with the NCIC, the |

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | caseworker must immediately notify the supervisor and the SIPD. The SIPD must request that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) place the child or youth and the family on the Child Safety Check Alert List (CSCAL). For CSCAL procedures see CPS Handbook 3100 When a Child Who is With His or Her Family Cannot be Recovered. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See CPS Handbook 6461.2 Other Initial Actions. |
| Document a Missing or Runaway Episode in IMPACT | Within 24 hours of DFPS notification the assigned caseworker must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the Missing Child Episode into IMPACT on the <i>Missing Child Detail</i> page by completing all the required fields. • Any fields not completed when entering the Missing Child Episode must be completed no later than 48 hours of receiving notification, or within 24 hours of the child or youth’s recovery if this occurs sooner. • The caseworker must enter the National Crime Information Center (NIC) number on the <i>Missing Child Detail</i> page. |

Primary Caseworker Actions - Second business day after being notified:

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Coordinate a Recovery Meeting if the child or youth is confirmed trafficking victim. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For legal counties with Protocol for Care Coordination implemented: • For all confirmed victims of trafficking, a Recovery Meeting is scheduled to develop a Recovery Plan. • Ensure standard releases and confidentiality agreements are addressed with external parties, as needed. • See Human Trafficking Support Systems Section |

Part 3: Primary Caseworker Ongoing Efforts to Recover

At times despite active efforts to recover a child or youth who is missing the recovery may not occur quickly. Part 3 discusses ongoing and active efforts that must be taken to recover the missing child or youth. Refer to policy in the CPS Handbook [6461.3](#) Ongoing Efforts to Recover.

Primary Caseworker Actions - Ongoing:

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Maintain regular contact with the special investigator (SI) to recover the child or youth | The primary caseworker continues to have primary responsibility for the case and works closely with the assigned SI until the child or youth is recovered. |
| Primary caseworker will coordinate and update monthly efforts to recover the child or youth | Continue active efforts to recover the child or youth in missing status, until the child or youth is recovered or returns. The primary caseworker will coordinate active efforts to locate the child and maintain monthly contacts with the assigned SI. Active efforts may include monthly contacts, as applicable, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCMEC for tips and leads. • Appropriate law enforcement agencies. • Child or youth’s relatives. |

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth’s former caregivers. • CCT and HT/CSEY Advocate, if applicable, and • Any state or local social service agency that may be providing services to the youth. |
| <p>Update the child or youth’s placement in IMPACT</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the 14th day, if child or youth is still missing, update the placement in IMPACT to reflect a Living Arrangement of “Runaway”, “Abducted Known Person”, or “Abducted – Stranger.” See CPS Handbook 4142 Enter the Placement Change Information in IMPACT. • If caregiver provides discharge notice that they will not accept the child or youth back from missing status, then the placement in IMPACT should be updated at the time of notification. |
| <p>Keeping IMPACT updated</p> | <p>As circumstances can change quickly when a child or youth is missing, the primary caseworker has a responsibility to ensure that all case documentation is updated and entered timely in IMPACT. Active efforts to recover the child should be documented in a contact narrative in the child’s SUB stage and included in monthly evaluations.</p> |
| <p>Participate in quarterly staffing</p> | <p>Quarterly, the case will be staffed with CVS supervisor, CVS program director, SI, special investigator program director, and regional director assistant to determine whether sufficient efforts have been made to recover the child or youth and whether other action is needed. This staffing must be documented in IMPACT.</p> |
| <p>If youth turns 18 while on runaway or missing status</p> | <p>If a youth turns 18, or ages out of substitute care while still missing, the primary caseworker must notify law enforcement that the young adult is no longer under the conservatorship of DFPS. Active efforts to recover especially vulnerable young adults will continue until the young adult’s Trial Independence period is complete. See CPS Handbook 10510 Trial Independence.</p> |

Part 4: Primary Caseworker Actions when the Child or Youth is Recovered

When the child or youth with a missing status has been recovered, specific actions must be taken by the primary caseworker or special investigator (SI). Like missing statuses, recoveries can occur during regular business hours or after hours, on weekends, or holidays.

See the CPS Handbook [6461.4](#) When a Child Who is Missing is Recovered and [6461.5](#) Caseworker Actions When a Missing Child Returns to Care.

Recovery During Regular Business Hours

Primary Caseworker or Special Investigator Actions - Immediately:

| If the primary caseworker recovers the child or youth: | If the special investigator (SI) recovers the child or youth: |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary caseworker arranges for placement of the child or youth unless the child or youth is being detained by law enforcement. • The caseworker will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the child’s or youth’s immediate physical and crisis needs. • Seek appropriate services. • If the child or youth refuses to return to placement and DFPS knows the child or youth and is staying in an unauthorized location, the primary caseworker must enter a new placement in IMPACT and use the Living Arrangement of “Unauthorized Placement”. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the SI recovers the child or youth without law enforcement involvement, and law enforcement has no pending criminal or delinquent conduct charges, the SI coordinates with the primary caseworker to arrange for transfer of the child or youth. • The primary caseworker is responsible for arranging for placement of the child or youth. |

If Protocol for Care Coordination is implemented in the legal or placement county, Primary Caseworker or Special Investigator Actions - Immediately:

| If the primary caseworker recovers the child or youth: | If the special investigator (SI) recovers the child or youth: |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary caseworker will coordinate with the SI to determine how the response to recovering the child or youth and supervisor notification will occur (i.e. who will conduct actual recovery and notify the supervisor). • Implement the Recovery Plan, if applicable. • Determine appropriate timing/location/interviewer (law enforcement/SI/Children’s Advocacy Center) for the recovery interview. • If child or youth is recovered by someone other than the primary caseworker, then respond to the child’s or youth’s location to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the child’s or youth’s immediate physical and crisis needs. • Seek appropriate services. | <p>Immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SI will coordinate with the primary caseworker to determine how the response to recovering the child or youth and supervisor notification will occur (i.e. who will conduct actual recovery and notify the supervisor). • Implement the Recovery Plan, if applicable. • Determine appropriate timing/location/interviewer (law enforcement/SI/Children’s Advocacy Center) for the recovery interview. |

Notifications relating to the recovery

The primary caseworker is responsible for making the notifications cited in the CPS Handbook [6461.1](#) Notification Requirements. When a Child Runs Away or is Missing. Notifications are required to be documented in IMPACT. See the CPS Handbook [6461.5](#) Caseworker Actions When a Missing Child Returns to Care.

Immediate Notifications Include:

| Notify | Information to Share or Obtain |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Assigned special investigator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date, time, and circumstances relating to the recovery. If Protocol for Care Coordination implemented in the legal county: CVS supervisor/designee will ensure the Recovery Meeting participants are immediately notified and kept apprised of the recovery process. |
| Recovery Meeting participants, when applicable. | |

Immediately, but no later than 12 hours, notify:

| Notify | Information to Share or Obtain |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Law enforcement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date, time, and circumstances relating to the recovery. |
| National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) | |
| Regional director assistant | |

Immediately, but no longer than 24 hours, notify:

| Notify | Information to Share or Obtain |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Court | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date, time, and circumstances relating to the recovery. |
| Child’s parent(s) unless rights have been terminated. | |
| Attorney(s) for the parent(s) | |
| Attorney ad litem appointed to the child | |
| Guardian ad litem appointed to the child, if applicable | |
| A volunteer advocate appointed to the child (CASA), if applicable. | |
| Probation or parole officer, if applicable | |
| The licensed administrator of the child-placing agency (CPA) responsible for placing the child or the licensed administrator’s designee | |
| The foster parent, kinship caregiver, prospective adoptive parent, or director of the group home or general residential operation where the child is residing (child’s placement) | |
| Care Coordination Team (CCT) if applicable. Applicable if child’s legal or placement county has a CCT implemented. | |
| Human Trafficking/ Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY) | |

| Notify | Information to Share or Obtain |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Advocate Agency, if applicable. | |
| Any other person determined by a court to have an interest in the child’s welfare. | |

Recovery After Regular Business Hours

This section identifies the recovery tasks that should be completed when a child or youth is recovered or returns outside regular business hours (on-call) including tasks:

- On-call staff complete before on-call shift ends.
- Primary special investigator (SI) and CVS staff complete **within the first two business days** after an on-call recovery.

On the third business day after a child or youth was recovered during on-call hours, the primary SI and CVS staff must complete all subsequent tasks found in [Recovery during Regular Business Hours](#) section.

Actions to be taken by CPI, CPS, or special investigators in on-call situations:

| Timeframe | Actions to be taken |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Immediately | On-call CPI caseworker will be responsible for contacting the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-call CPS caseworker. • On-call special investigator program director (SIPD) for SI assignment. |
| Immediately | On-call CPS caseworker or on-call SI will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to the child’s or youth’s location to: • Assess the child or youth’s immediate physical and crisis needs. • Seek appropriate services. • Determine appropriate timing/location/interviewer for recovery interview. |
| Prior to end of on-call shift | On-call CPS caseworker or on-call SI will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify correct law enforcement jurisdiction(s), and NCMEC of child or youth’s recovery. • Refer to Recovery Plan for guidance regarding interventions and services for confirmed victims of trafficking, if one exists. • Seek appropriate services. • Caseworker will seek and complete placement in IMPACT. • Notify all identified required parties of child or youth’s recovery. • Ensure primary caseworker and chain of command, including regional director assistant (RDA) are informed of child or youth’s recovery. |
| On first business day | Primary caseworker will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm on-call notification tasks were completed. • See section Notifications relating to the recovery. |
| Note: At the end of the on-call period, the primary caseworker will resume normal business hours activities . | |

Actions to be taken by the primary caseworker upon recovery:

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Child or youth recovery interview</p> | <p>As soon as possible, and with law enforcement cooperation, the primary caseworker and special investigator (SI) will coordinate an interview with the recovered child or youth. The interviews should consist of questions to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If any child abuse and/or neglect occurred while the child or youth was missing. • Any indicators of human trafficking activities. • Other experiences of the child or youth while absent from care. • The reasons why the child or youth ran away from care. • See Appendix C Missing and Abducted Child Recovery Interview Guide. • Share results of the interview with the SI, if the SI is not present. The primary caseworker must document the results of the interview(s) in IMPACT. • Note: Recovery interview must be entered into IMPACT within 7 days of the child or youth being recovered. |
| <p>Document a Missing or Runaway Recovery Episode in IMPACT</p> | <p>Within 24 hours of the child’s or youth’s recovery, the primary caseworker must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the required child’s or youth’s recovery information on the <i>Child Recovery Detail</i> page in IMPACT. • This page must be completed in its entirety within 7 days of the child or youth’s recovery from missing or runaway status. |
| <p>Update child or youth’s placement</p> | <p>On the day of placement or by 7:00 PM the next calendar day, the primary caseworker must update the child’s or youth’s placement status in IMPACT, if needed.</p> |
| <p>Conduct Youth Recovery Roundtable (e.g., Wraparound Meetings)</p> | <p>When a missing child or youth is recovered after a missing or runaway episode, the primary caseworker will follow regional procedures and protocols to conduct a Youth Recovery Roundtable (see CPS Handbook 6461.5 Caseworker Actions When a Missing Child Returns to Care), also known as a wraparound meeting, with the child or youth. This meeting also allows the child or youth an opportunity to discuss the reasons for runaway behaviors and to develop alternatives to running away in the future.</p> |
| <p>If a child or youth discloses victimization</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately notify the correct law enforcement jurisdiction, where victimization occurred, unless there is an existing law enforcement case. • Immediately call in a referral to Statewide Intake (SWI) regarding the abuse or neglect if the abuse or neglect was by a family member or caregiver. • Participate in an ongoing DFPS investigation as needed. • Ensure criminal actions are reported to correct law enforcement jurisdiction(s). • If the child or youth is suspected of or discloses sex or labor trafficking, the primary caseworker will ensure this is documented on the <i>Trafficking Page</i> in IMPACT. See Special Situations Section for additional instructions. |
| <p>Schedule a forensic interview, if necessary</p> | <p>If, after recovery, child abuse/neglect or trafficking is suspected-unconfirmed or confirmed, the primary caseworker:</p> |

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedules a forensic interview as soon as possible, in coordination with law enforcement, at a Children’s Advocacy Center. Consults with the assigned SI. Ensure results of interviews are documented in IMPACT. The primary caseworker or SI may document the results of the interview(s) in IMPACT. |
| Create a referral to Statewide Intake (SWI) if necessary | If the primary caseworker learns of allegations of abuse or neglect of the child or youth that may have occurred in the child or youth's placement or by a household or family member while the child or youth was missing from placement, the primary caseworker makes a referral to SWI and notifies the SI. |
| Staff the case with the SI | Have a final discussion with the SI to ensure the special investigator information has been entered into IMPACT. If all documentation is complete, the SI may be removed as secondary on the case. |
| Arrange follow-up services | Primary caseworker will arrange follow-up services to address needs. See Special Situation section as applicable. |
| If youth turned 18 while on missing status | If not already completed, DFPS Staff will notify law enforcement that the young adult is no longer under the conservatorship of DFPS for a youth who turned 18, or aged out, while on missing status. If contact is made with the young adult, DFPS staff will provide the young adult with information regarding Extended Foster Care (see CPS Handbook 10400 Extended Foster Care for Youth Who Are Age 18 or Older) and other applicable services. If the primary caseworker confirms or suspects that the young adult is a victim of sex or labor trafficking, the primary caseworker notifies law enforcement. |

If Protocol for Care Coordination is implemented in legal or placement county, additional actions to be taken by the primary caseworker upon recovery of a child or youth who is a confirmed or suspected-unconfirmed victim of sex trafficking:

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| On day of placement or by 7 PM next calendar day | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize the decision whether to refer to the CAC/CCT and Human Trafficking (HT)/Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY) Advocate Agency where available Note: Written PD approval is required if decision is to opt out of CCT referral. Participate in Child Advocacy Center (CAC)/Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) and/or CCT staffing and continue for duration of service delivery, if applicable. |
| On first business day after recovery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify CCT and/or HT/CSEY Advocate Agency that the child or youth has been recovered, if applicable. <p>CVS supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the Recovery Meeting participants for confirmed trafficking victims, if applicable. |
| Within 3 business days of Recovery for a Confirmed victim of human trafficking | Coordinate a Recovery Meeting to implement and/or adjust Recovery Plan to prioritize actions and to address the child or youth’s additional physical and emotional needs. |

Special Investigator Actions

Part 1: Special Investigator Actions to Recover a Missing Child or Youth

When DFPS is notified that a child or youth is missing or has run away, a special investigator (SI) is assigned from the child or youth's legal region and the regional director assistant (RDA) is notified. If the SI needs assistance from another region, the SI e-mails a courtesy request to the designated regional mailbox. The SI in the courtesy region will provide all necessary assistance to recover the missing child or youth.

Special Investigator or Special Investigator Program Director - Within the first business day of missing child or youth notification:

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Staff with the primary caseworker | <p>The SI (from the child’s or youth’s legal region) will conduct a telephone staffing with the primary caseworker, primary caseworker’s supervisor, child or youth’s caregiver, and others identified by the primary caseworker. During the staffing, the SI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews information submitted in email request and obtains additional information from the primary caseworker as needed. This includes obtaining the local law enforcement, NIC, and NCMEC case numbers that the primary caseworker obtained. Refer to the CPS Runaway or Missing Child Preliminary Sheet, K-908-4100. • Confirms recent photos of the child or youth are uploaded in IMPACT. • Gathers information on all relatives, friends, and associates. • Obtains all relevant health information for the child or youth (including information on medications). • Obtains a copy of all court orders granting DFPS conservatorship of the child or youth. |
| Special investigator program director (SIPD) coordinates with CVS supervisor | <p>The SIPD contacts the CVS supervisor to determine if the missing child or youth has any history of human trafficking (suspected-unconfirmed or confirmed) to assist with recovery action plan.</p> |
| Provide information to law enforcement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SI contacts law enforcement where the report was filed and provides the law enforcement with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All photos. • Court orders. • Diagnoses. • Medication information. • Available information on family, friends, and associates of the child if not already done. • Coordinate with local law enforcement to develop a plan to locate the child or youth as quickly as possible. • If appropriate, the SI conducts an initial search with law enforcement at the last known place the child or youth was staying. The owner of the residence must provide permission to enter. If the SI has reliable or compelling information that the child or youth is there (for example, the child or youth is seen running into the residence), the SI relays that information to law enforcement who takes the lead in speaking to the homeowner. |

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) | The SI verifies the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) has received notification of the missing child or youth. |
| Request a Flier | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SI requests that law enforcement or NCMEC produce a flier on the child or youth, and SI confirms that the child or youth is entered in the NCIC database. • The SI documents this contact in IMPACT and includes the NIC number³. • The SI will ensure NCMEC has all required documents to produce a flier for the child or youth and will follow-up with primary caseworker for additional information as needed. • The SI provides the primary caseworker with a copy of any fliers produced by law enforcement or NCMEC. |
| Obtain a Writ of Attachment | <p>In some regions, the court may issue a Writ of Attachment for the child or youth to have the child or youth physically removed upon recovery and returned to DFPS care.</p> <p>If a Writ of Attachment is issued by the court, the SI contacts the applicable County Sheriff’s Department Civil Warrants Division or the local Constable's Office to serve the Writ of Attachment. In some instances, this must be provided to a Sheriff's Department or Constable's Office, not a police department.</p> |

If Protocol for Care Coordination is implemented in legal county and, the child or youth is a previously confirmed trafficking victim, Special Investigator - second business day from notification:

| Action Required | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Participate in a Recovery Meeting, if confirmed victim | Participate in a Recovery Meeting to develop a Recovery Plan for confirmed victims of trafficking coordinated by primary caseworker. |

Special Investigator and Special Investigation Program Director - ongoing tasks:

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Maintain regular contact with primary caseworker | The primary caseworker continues to have primary responsibility for the case and works closely with the assigned special investigator (SI) until the child or youth is recovered. |
| Maintain relevant contacts | <p>Continued active efforts must be conducted until the missing child or youth is recovered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide any new information or changes that occur in the case on a continuous basis, but at a minimum weekly basis with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary caseworker, • Law enforcement, and • NCMEC (if applicable). • Maintain relevant monthly contacts with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the child or youth's relatives, • former caregivers, and |

³ NIC (NCIC) Number: The NIC Number is a ten-character reference number) consisting of an alphabetic character which identifies the NCIC File that the record is indexed in, followed by nine digits.

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any state or local social service agency that may be providing services to the child or youth. • The SI sends information to the special investigator program director (SIPD) or regional director assistant (RDA) as requested. |
| Electronic searches | <p>The SI conducts a search for evidence through all accessible internet sites and cell phone records, when appropriate. The SI will document evidence of the child or youth's location, online activity, and/or the online enticement into, or compelling the child or youth into, human trafficking activity. The SI should consider the child or youth's online activity, such as whether the child or youth has a blog, instant messaging accounts, Facebook, or other social media accounts. The SI should also investigate whether the child or youth's cell phone or online activity has continued or stopped.</p> |
| Interviewing individuals | <p>The SI reviews the child or youth's record and interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case reporters. • Parents. • Other caregivers. • Witnesses. • Siblings. • Friends. • School staff. • Neighbors. • CCT and HT/CSEY Advocate, if applicable. • Any other persons with information about the child or youth, and family. |
| Ongoing efforts to recover the child or youth | <p>Until the child or youth is recovered, the SI assigned to the case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents in IMPACT all active efforts to recover the child or youth, including all interviews and communication with the primary caseworker, law enforcement, NCMEC, relatives, former caregivers and any state or local social service agency that may be providing services to the child or youth. |
| Report to the court | <p>As requested by the primary caseworker or ordered by the court, the SI reports to the court on the status of efforts to recover the child or youth. The SI documents their active efforts in the SUB stage narrative of the child or youth.</p> |
| Participate in quarterly staffing | <p>On a quarterly basis, participate in a staffing with CVS supervisor, CVS program director, other special investigators who may be assisting, SIPD, and RDA to determine whether sufficient efforts have been made to recover the child or youth and whether other action is needed. This staffing will be documented in IMPACT.</p> |

Part 2: Special Investigator Actions when the Child or Youth is Recovered

When a child or youth with a missing status has been recovered, specific actions must be taken by the special investigator (SI). See CPS Handbook [6461.4](#) When a Child Who is Missing is Recovered.

The SI will follow the listed SI actions in the [Recovery during Regular Business Hours](#) in the Caseworker section of this document.

If the special investigator recovers the child or youth, the special investigator takes the following actions:

| Action Required | Actions to be Taken |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Notify appropriate agencies and individuals | Notify the regional director assistant (RDA), primary caseworker, law enforcement, and NCMEC as required in the notifications (see CPS Handbook 6151.3 Notification Requirements and Schedule). |
| Recover the child or youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the SI recovers the child or youth without law enforcement involvement and law enforcement has no pending criminal or delinquent conduct charges, the SI coordinates with the primary caseworker to arrange for transfer of the child or youth. • The primary caseworker is responsible for arranging for the placement of the child or youth. |
| Recovery interview with the child or youth | <p>As soon as possible and with law enforcement cooperation, the SI and primary caseworker will coordinate an interview with the recovered child or youth. The interview(s) should consist of questions to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If any child abuse or neglect occurred while the child or youth was missing. • Any indicators of human trafficking activities. • Other experiences of the child or youth while absent from care. • The reasons why the child or youth ran away from care. • See Appendix C Missing and Abducted Child Recovery Interview Guide. • Share results of the interview with the primary caseworker, if not present for it and SI documents the recovery interview results in IMPACT within 7 days of the child or youth being recovered. • Note: Recovery interview must be entered into IMPACT within 7 days of the child or youth being recovered. |
| Schedule forensic interview (if necessary) | If child abuse or neglect or human trafficking is suspected, the primary caseworker schedules a forensic interview as soon as possible, in coordination with law enforcement at a Child Advocacy Center. The results of the interview(s) are documented in IMPACT. If necessary, the SI will advise the caseworker to schedule the interview and may attend the interview if warranted. |
| Create a referral to Statewide Intake (SWI) (if applicable) | If the SI is made aware of allegations of abuse or neglect of the child or youth that may have occurred in the child or youth's placement or while the child or youth was missing from placement, the SI makes a referral to SWI and notifies the primary caseworker. If human trafficking allegations are present, see Working with Victims of Human Trafficking Section regarding Child or Youth in DFPS Conservatorship who has been or is suspected to be Trafficked. |
| Enter recovery information into IMPACT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SI will assist in entering Recovery Information in IMPACT, when they conduct the recovery interview. • Primary caseworker is ultimately responsible for verifying that this page is complete. <p>Note: The recovery interview must be completed as soon as possible and entered into IMPACT within 7 days of the child or youth being recovered.</p> |

| Action Required | Actions to be Taken |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Forward all documents to the primary caseworker | Once the SI completes all required documentation, the SI forwards all hard copy documents to the primary caseworker to be placed in the case file. |
| Prior to removing the SI from the case | <p>Upon the SI receiving notification from the primary caseworker that the child or youth has been found the SI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows up with the primary caseworker to get information, help with interviews, and offer any other assistance if needed. • Ensures that all SI's efforts have been documented in IMPACT. • Requests to be removed as a secondary caseworker on the case from the primary caseworker or RDA. |

Youth Parent with Child

Youth in conservatorship might have their child placed with them in foster care. The child will either have a:

- Regular SUB stage (SUB REG in IMPACT) if the youth parent’s child was removed and placed in DFPS conservatorship; the child may or may not be placed with the youth parent; or
- A Case Related Special Request (CRSR) SUB stage (SUB C-PB in IMPACT) if the youth continues to have custody of the child, but DFPS needs to facilitate the daily reimbursement rate to the residential care provider (the youth’s placement).

If the youth parent runs and takes the child with a SUB REG stage with them:

- The primary caseworker for the child, if different from the youth parent's primary caseworker, must be notified and involved in the recovery efforts.
- The placement actions in IMPACT for the child should mirror what is done for the youth parent.
- If the youth parent runs away and takes the child with a SUB C-PB stage with them:
 - The placement actions in IMPACT for the child should mirror what is done for the youth parent.
 - If appropriate, make an abuse and neglect referral on the child to SWI.
- If the youth parent and child are recovered and go to a non-DFPS paid placement, the SUB C-PB stage is closed.

Working with Victims of Human Trafficking

Child or Youth in DFPS Conservatorship who has been or is suspected to be Trafficked

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Documenting a ‘Suspected-unconfirmed’ or ‘Confirmed’ Human Trafficking Record in IMPACT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any time a child or youth is ‘Suspected-unconfirmed’ or ‘Confirmed’ to be a victim of human trafficking, the assigned primary caseworker must enter a trafficking record in IMPACT on the <i>Trafficking Detail</i> page within 48 hours of notification. Notification means the primary caseworker has received reliable information that the child or youth is suspected or confirmed to be a victim. • A trafficking event is “suspected-unconfirmed” when specific information regarding the child or youth and the surrounding circumstances creates a reasonable belief that the child or youth has been trafficked. A runaway episode, in and of itself, does not equal to “suspected-unconfirmed.” • A trafficking event is “confirmed” when evidence supports the conclusion that the child or youth has been trafficked. The supporting evidence must be more than just an allegation or |

| Action Required | Actions to be taken |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>suspicion and does not have to be a direct outcry from the child or youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The notification could come from other individuals involved with the case (e.g., law enforcement, the child or youth’s attorney ad litem, a placement, service provider, etc.), an outcry by the child or youth, or other serious concerns and suspicions that confirm that the child or youth is or is suspected to be a victim of human trafficking. • If the caseworker or anyone else has any indications that a child or youth is a Suspected-unconfirmed or Confirmed victim of human trafficking, the case must be staffed with the supervisor. • Each unique ‘Suspected-unconfirmed’ or ‘Confirmed’ human trafficking event must be added into IMPACT as a Trafficking Record on the <i>Trafficking Detail</i> page. |
| Create a referral to Statewide Intake (SWI) if necessary | <p>If the primary caseworker learns abuse (including sex and labor trafficking) or neglect occurred in the child or youth's placement or by a household or family member while the child or youth was missing from placement, the primary caseworker reports information to SWI.</p> |
| Prior to removing the Special Investigator (SI) from the case | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon the SI receiving notification from the primary caseworker that the child or youth has been recovered, the SI: • Follows up with the primary caseworker to get information, help with interviews and offer any other assistance if needed. • Ensures that all SI efforts have been documented in IMPACT. • Requests to be removed as a secondary caseworker on the case from the primary caseworker or regional director assistant. |
| Arrange follow-up services | <p>Primary caseworker will arrange follow-up services to address needs. See Coordination of Services Regarding Human Trafficking section as applicable.</p> |
| If youth turned 18 while on runaway or missing status | <p>If not already completed, DFPS Staff will notify law enforcement that the young adult is no longer under the conservatorship of DFPS for a youth who turned 18, or aged out, while on missing status.</p> <p>If contact is made with the young adult, DFPS staff will provide the young adult with information regarding Extended Foster Care (see CPS Handbook 10400 Extended Foster Care for Youth Who Are Age 18 or Older) and other applicable services. If the primary caseworker confirms or suspects that the young adult is a victim of sex or labor trafficking, the primary caseworker notifies law enforcement.</p> |

Coordination of Services Regarding Human Trafficking

If a child or youth makes a disclosure of being trafficked, DFPS must ensure the immediate safety of the child or youth and notify the correct law enforcement jurisdiction of the outcry. In addition, DFPS must contact Statewide Intake (SWI) of the outcry if the allegation involves a family member or caregiver. Once DFPS identifies a child or youth has been, is currently being, or is at risk of being sex or labor trafficked, DFPS will identify risk as well as mitigating factors and determine if services are needed to further reduce risk of trafficking. When needed, the primary caseworker should seek placements which specialize in long-term residential care for victims of human trafficking, as well as trauma-informed medical and psychological care for the child or youth. Current residential contract providers for DFPS utilize trauma-informed intervention services for victims of trafficking.

When planning for service provision for victims of trafficking, ensure coordination with local and state law enforcement, juvenile justice, and social service agencies. (See [Appendix E.](#))

Resources on Human Trafficking:

The Department of Family and Protective Services Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation (DFPS HTCE) Division has additional information and resources including definitions, videos, and national, statewide, and regional resources on the [DFPS Human Trafficking](#) website.

APPENDIX A: TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY (DPS) "ENDANGERED CHILD" CRITERIA

An "endangered child" is one who is in foster care or in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services and has been reported missing on two or more occasions in the 24-month period preceding.

The following is required so that law enforcement can properly enter the child or youth into the TCIC/NCIC system:

- Copies of prior missing person reports from law enforcement.
- A written statement from a parent, legal guardian, family member, or other authoritative source confirming prior incidents.
- A written statement from a parent, legal guardian, family member, the Department of Family and Protective Services or other authoritative source confirming the missing individual is in foster care or in DFPS conservatorship.

APPENDIX B: TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY (DPS) AMBER ALERT CRITERIA

A requesting law enforcement agency must meet all the below criteria in order to activate the State AMBER Alert Network:

- Is this child 17 years of age or younger, whose whereabouts are unknown, and whose disappearance law enforcement has determined to be unwilling which poses a credible threat to the child or youth's safety and health; and
 - If abducted by a parent or legal guardian, was the abduction in the course of a murder or an attempted murder?

OR

- Is this child 13 years of age or younger, who was taken (willingly or unwillingly) without permission from the care and custody of a parent or legal guardian by:
 - Someone unrelated and more than three years older, or
 - Another parent or legal guardian who attempted or committed murder at the time of the abduction?
- Is this child in immediate danger of sexual assault, death, or serious bodily injury?
- Has a preliminary investigation verified the abduction and eliminated alternative explanations for the child's disappearance?
- Is sufficient information available to disseminate to the public to help recover the child, a suspect, or the vehicle used in the abduction?

APPENDIX C: MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILD RECOVERY INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviewing children and youth following a missing event from foster care (missing, runaway, or abducted) can help to identify victims of child abuse or neglect, as well as human trafficking; gain insight into their victimization experiences; and understand their individual service needs. An interview is necessary as many victims of child sex trafficking do not view themselves as a victim.

Texas Family Code Sec. [264.123](#) already requires certain protocols to help recover missing children and youth, including immediate reporting to law enforcement. Upon locating the child or youth, this same section also requires that DFPS attempt to determine whether the child or youth was a victim of any crime while missing and, if so, to report such crime to law enforcement within 24 hours.

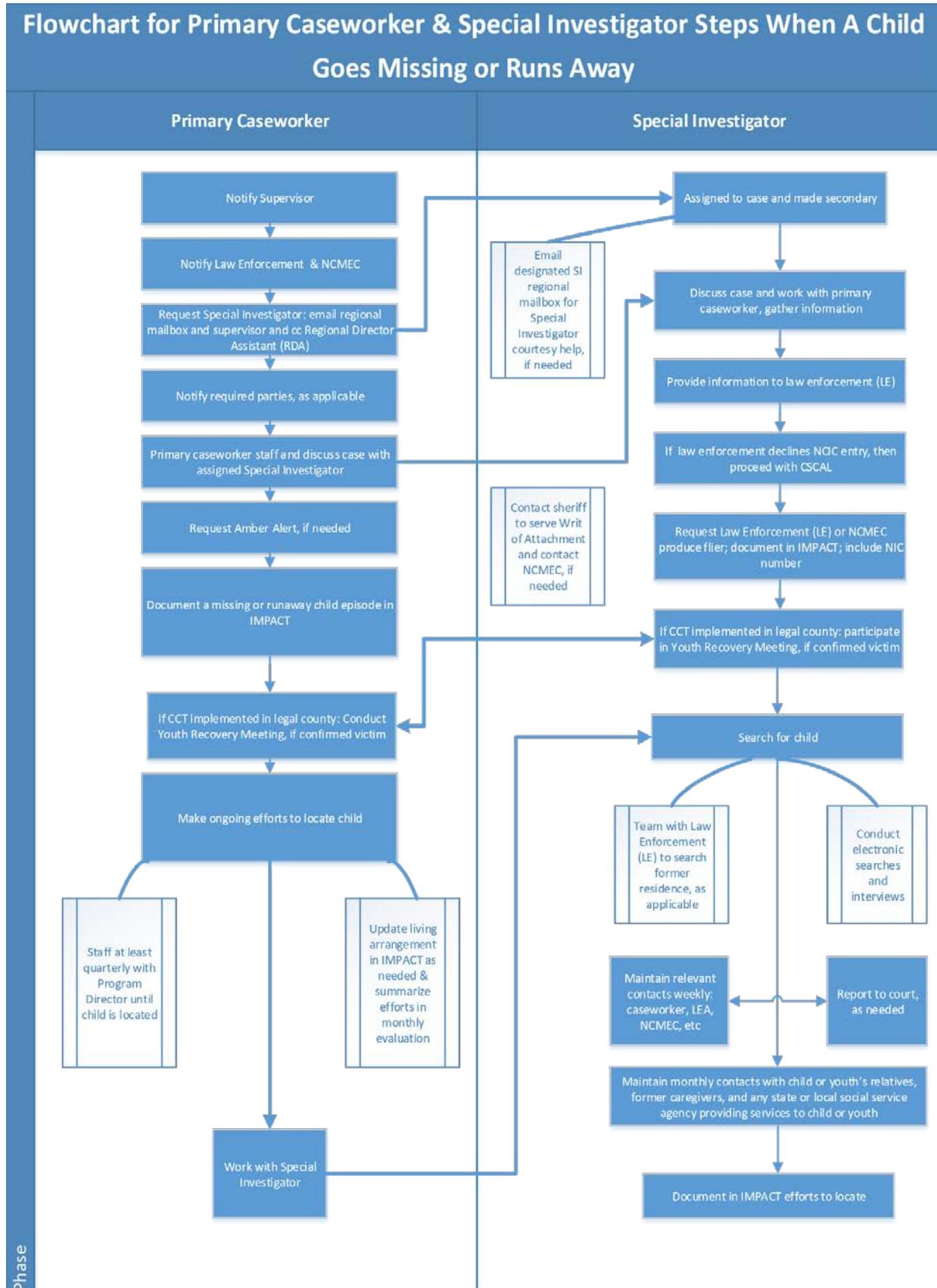
Below is a list of questions to be asked, upon recovery, of all children or youth who were on missing status or abducted. The type and order of the questions should be tailored to individual situations and amended to enhance effectiveness and support of the child or youth.

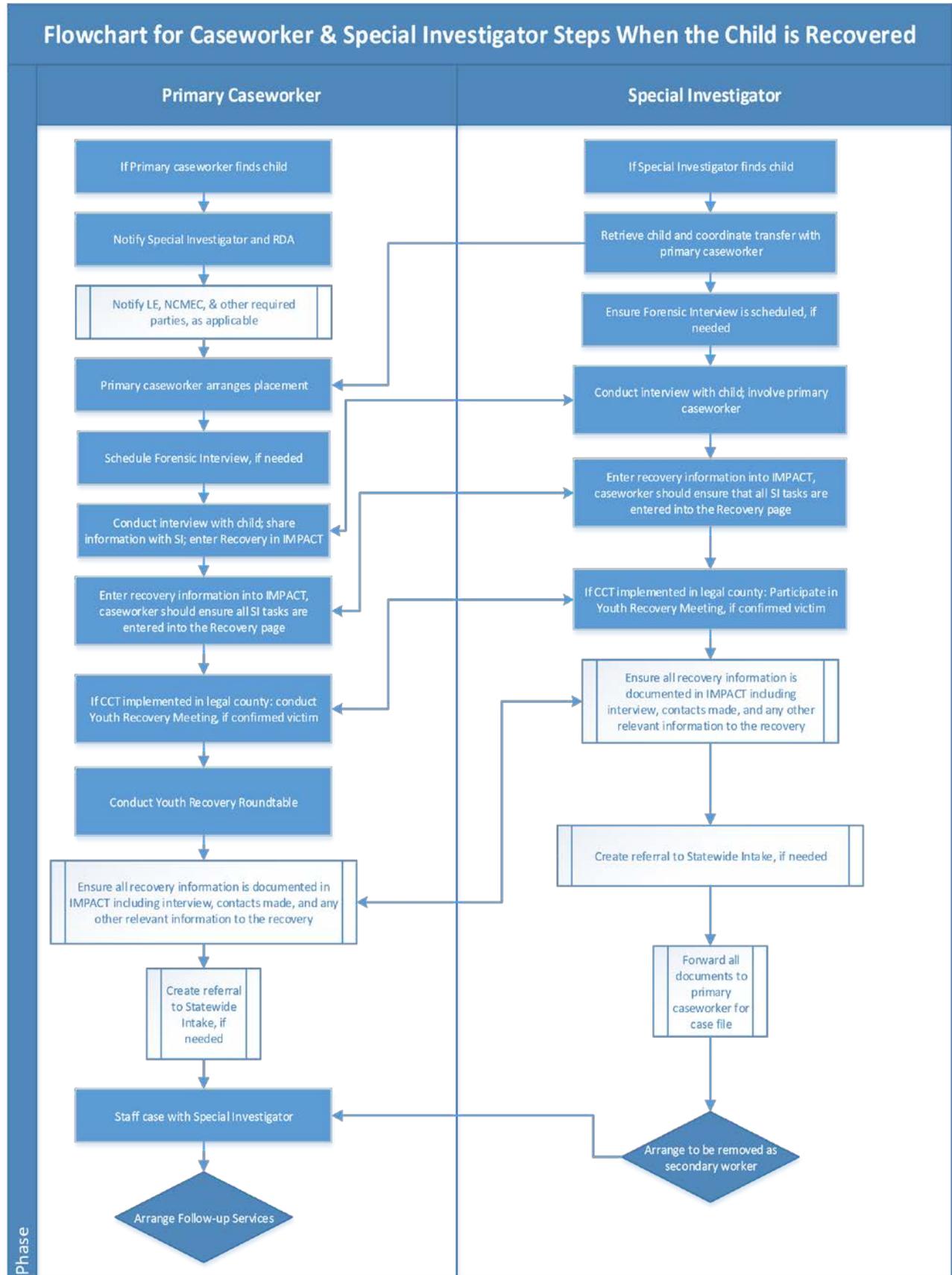
Conversational Interview

The interview should remain fluid and comfortable. Do not read the questions in order from a sheet; instead, engage the child or youth in conversation about them and their situation. When engaging with the child or youth, use phrases such as: "Tell me more about that," "Help me understand," or "I am wondering about."

- Tell me about your placement, what made you leave your current placement?
- Did anyone leave with you? If yes, where are they now? Who are they with? How do we get in touch with them?
- Tell me how you use social media to connect with people.
- Tell me how you chose that name for your Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, etc. accounts.
- If you ever decide to run away again, can you share with me your e-mail address, so we can stay in touch?
- Have you ever had one of your pictures posted online advertising for sex?
- What made you decide to return to care? (if applicable)
- While you were gone, how did you survive?
- How did you eat, sleep, and have money to take care of yourself?
- While you were gone, where were the places you went and where did you stay?
- Did you get to see your old friends, or did you make new friends?
- Were you able to talk to your family while you were gone?
- Were there experiences you weren't prepared for or didn't know how to handle?
- Who helped you while you were gone?
- What type of help was offered?
- Did you have to do anything in return for this help?
- Were you allowed to leave the place you were staying? Did someone try to stop you from leaving?
- Were you being made to do things that you do not want to do?
- Were you ever threatened with anything if you tried to leave?
- Did anyone ever force you to do something physically or sexually that you didn't feel comfortable doing?
- Were you ever physically abused (shoved, slapped, hit, kicked, scratched, punched, burned, etc.) by anyone?
- Were you ever sexually abused (sexual assault, unwanted touching, rape, sexual exploitation, etc.) by anyone?
- Did anyone take pictures of you?
- Were there any objects or weapons used against you or others?
- Did anyone ever give you alcohol, drugs, or medications?

APPENDIX D: PRIMARY CASEWORKER AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR ACTIONS





APPENDIX E: Human Trafficking Support Systems (alphabetical order)

Care Coordination Teams

The Office of the Texas Governor – Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) and local communities are establishing Care Coordination Teams (CCT) across the state to provide children and youth victims of sex trafficking with a continuum of care. The CCT is made up of professional organizations in the community who provide services for trafficking victims, or who investigate and prosecute trafficking cases. In most communities across Texas, Children’s Advocacy Centers are leading the CCT development process and serving as the local Care Coordinator.

Involvement with CCT is the default structure for children and youth identified as human trafficking victims, including children and youth in DFPS conservatorship.

If DFPS chooses **not** to use the CCT on a specific case, staff must:

1. Obtain Program Director **approval to opt out** of the CCT process.
2. Provide clear documentation within the case narrative as to why DFPS opted out of the CCT process.

A referral to, or removal from, the CCT may occur at any point in the life of a youth’s case.

Decisions within the Care Coordination Team structure

For a child or youth in the custody of his/her parent/legal guardian in Investigations (INV) and/or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS) cases:

- All final decisions on placement, services, and/or referrals for the child or youth lie with their parent or legal guardian.
- All decisions made within the CCT structure are recommendations. DFPS must clearly document the CCT recommendations.
- If the child or youth’s parent/legal guardian decides to not follow CCT recommendations, staff must document the parent/legal guardian’s reasoning, if known.
- A parent/legal guardian’s refusal to participate in CCT services does not in itself rise to the level for opening a case to FBSS or warrant removal of the child(ren) or youth.

For children or youth in conservatorship:

- All final decisions on placement, services, and/or referrals for the child or youth lie with CPS, as the legal guardian.
- CCT recommendations must be strongly considered.
- DFPS must clearly document the CCT recommendations and any reasons for not following CCT recommendations.

Children’s Advocacy Center

Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs) provide a safe, child-friendly environment where law enforcement (LE), Child Protective Services, prosecution, medical and mental health professionals may share information and develop effective, coordinated strategies sensitive to the needs of each unique case and child.

Local CACs provide an array of child-focused services including:

- Multidisciplinary Team Case Reviews
- Joint Investigation Coordination
- Specialized Forensic Interviews
- Family Advocacy and Victim Support

- Trauma-Focused Therapy
- Medical Evaluations

Human Trafficking Advocate Agency

Human Trafficking Advocate Agencies (HTAA) provide Child Sex Trafficking Advocates that are specifically trained to offer a variety of services that may include: crisis intervention, ongoing case management, and healthy, supportive long-term relationships for survivors.

Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth Advocacy Agencies

Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY) Advocate Agencies are supported by the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) with funding, training, and technical assistance. CSEY Advocate Agencies agree to abide by a set of common minimum standards and best practices developed by CSTT in coordination with Praesidium.

CSEY Advocacy Agencies are nonprofit that employ advocates to provide individualized 24/7 crisis response and ongoing trust-based relational support to child, youth, and young adult survivors (up to age 22). CSEY Advocates may also provide robust case management that is flexible to support and not duplicate, replace or interfere with efforts of other case managers and advocates. CSEY Advocates work collaboratively with other stakeholders in support of the victim-centered goals pursued by the survivor and their family, law enforcement, prosecutors, child welfare, juvenile justice, healthcare, and other partners. They help survivors gain the strength and empowerment needed to participate in investigation/prosecution of exploiters.

Referrals for a HT/CSEY Advocate

For a child or youth in the custody of his/her parent/legal guardian (INV and FBSS cases):

- A parent/legal guardian's refusal to participate with either recommendations of the CCT or the consent for HT/CSEY Advocate Agency services does not rise to the level for opening a case to FBSS or warrant removal of the child(ren) or youth.
- All final decisions on placement, services, and/or referrals for the child or youth lie with their parent or legal guardian.

For children and youth in conservatorship:

- Children or youth in DFPS conservatorship who are victims of sex trafficking may access HT/CSEY Advocate services with agencies who have Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) fully executed with DFPS. Some HT/CSEY Agencies may serve Youth at Risk. For a listing of Human Trafficking Advocate Agencies with MOUs, see DFPS Safety Net Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation (HTCE) page.
- Engagement with a HT/CSEY Advocate is optional, if the child or youth has not previously been matched with an advocate.
- DFPS must provide clear documentation within the case narrative regarding why the decision to opt in or opt out was made.
- DFPS must provide written consent for services prior to a HT/CSEY Advocate engaging with a child in DFPS conservatorship. Written consent may be via text or email with formal consent paperwork being completed within a reasonable amount of time (i.e. the next business day). For consent forms, see DFPS Safety Net Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation (HTCE) page. The signature for consent may be provided by:
 1. The child or youth's DFPS caseworker;
 2. The child or youth's DFPS caseworker's supervisor; or
 3. The child or youth's current caregiver, with written approval from their DFPS caseworker/supervisor.

A referral to, or removal from, a HT/CSEY Advocate Agency may occur at any point in the life of the child or youth’s case.

If at any time either DFPS or HT/CSEY Advocate Agency determines that the advocate relationship is not in the best interest of the child or youth, either party shall notify the other party, and within 48 hours will initiate a staffing regarding what actions need to be taken, including but not limited to the termination of the advocate relationship with the child or youth.

Recovery Meetings for Confirmed Victims

Within business days after DFPS learns that a child or youth is missing or has run away from care who is a confirmed victim of trafficking, a Recovery Meeting is held. The Recovery Meeting participants will develop a Recovery Plan. The goal of the Recovery Meeting is to ensure the appropriate actions are being taken to locate the child or youth as quickly as possible and appropriate interventions and services are initiated for them upon recovery.

A confirmed victim for DFPS is when evidence supports the conclusion that the child or youth has been trafficked. Note: The supporting evidence must be more than just an allegation or suspicion and does not have to be a direct outcry from the child or youth.

Recovery Meetings are optional on a case by case basis for any child or youth who is **not** a confirmed victim of trafficking and is missing or has run away from care.

Within three business days of recovery for confirmed victims of trafficking, a subsequent Recovery Meeting will be held to ensure appropriate actions are being taken and appropriate interventions and services are initiated. If a planning meeting (i.e. WRAP meeting) is scheduled with the child or youth within 72 hours of recovery, then the Recovery Meeting will be held in conjunction with this planning meeting.

Recovery meetings for a child or youth who runs away chronically may not require a Recovery Meeting at every recovery. Whether or not to hold a Recovery Meeting in these circumstances will be made on a case by case basis. Example: If an updated plan is needed, or CCT or HT/CSEY Advocate is being reconsidered.

Recovery Meeting Participants

The Recovery Meeting may include the following:

| DFPS | KEY STAKEHOLDER, IF APPLICABLE | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVS worker • CVS Supervisor • CVS PD • SI • SIPD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad litem • CAC staff • Care Coordinator • CASA • Crime Analyst • HT/CSEY Advocate • DFPS Attorney (Regional or CA/DA) • LE with jurisdiction • Coordinators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing Child/Human Trafficking Regional and Statewide Coordinators • Other DFPS staff as needed (e.g. CPI, FBSS, PAL, DDS, LPS) • Primary Caregivers • Probation/Parole Officer • Relatives and Fictive Kin • Others as needed (i.e. CPA, CBC/SSCC staff) |

Standard releases and confidentiality agreements must be addressed with external parties as needed. Stakeholder availability should not impede adherence to timeframes.

Recovery Meeting Plan

The Recovery Meeting participants will develop a Recovery Plan. The Recovery Plan is a coordinated outline

of all planned and active efforts to locate a child or youth and preliminary interventions and services to be initiated upon recovery. The plan can be revised throughout the missing/runaway episode as needed. The plan will include, but is not limited to:

- Information regarding locating the child or youth,
- Tasks assigned to Recovery Meeting Participants,
- Potential engagement with a CCT (See [CCT](#)),
- Potential engagement with a HT/CSEY Advocate (See [HTAA](#)),
- Potential engagement with a CAC (See [CAC](#)),
- Child or youth's placement options upon recovery, and/or
- A communication plan which includes the frequency of updates and meetings.