

Using the Removal Status Window Practice Guide

Accurate and timely documentation of the dates children enter and exit out-of-home care is critical to the department's ability to track progress in:

- reducing the number of children in out-of-home care;
- reducing the average length of time to achieve reunification, adoption, and guardianship; and
- increasing the rate of face-to-face contact with children in out-of-home care.

Children who meet the AFCARS definition of removal must have an active removal status documented in CHILDS within 5 work days after the event occurs. In other words, the Removal Status window identifies children who are in the care, custody and control of the department **and** placed in out of home care (not living with a parent, guardian or custodian). Out-of-home care means the placement of a child with an individual or agency other than the child's parent or legal guardian and includes the following: temporary custody, voluntary placement and placement due to dependency action.

The following charts provide guidance on when to enter a date on the Removal Status window, and what date to enter.

Removal Start Dates:

When.....	The Removal Start Date is.....
a TCN is served	the date of temporary custody.
a private petition is filed <i>and</i> the child is made a temporary court ward <i>and</i> the child is residing with a person who is not a biological parent, adoptive parent, or legal guardian	the date of the court order making the child a temporary court ward, in the care, custody and control of the department.
a notice of removal is served, removing a dependent child from the home of a parent or guardian	the date the notice of removal is served and the child is placed in out-of-home care.
a Voluntary Placement Agreement signed by a parent	The date the child is placed in a licensed out-of-home placement

Do not enter a removal start date when.....

• a private petition is filed, the child resides with a biological parent, adoptive parent or legal guardian, and the child never leaves the care of a parent or guardian;
• a child is removed from one parent and placed immediately with another parent and never enters out-of-home care;
• an in-home dependency or in-home intervention petition is filed and the child remains in the care of a parent or guardian;
• the department is ordered to investigate the circumstances of a delinquent ward, but the child is not ordered into the care, custody and control of the department, including when a child is in detention or placed with a person other than a parent or guardian;
• the department is ordered to pick a child up from detention, and places the child with a parent or guardian the same day;
• a TCN is not served because the parent arranges for another caretaker (for example, allows the child to stay with a friend or relative during the investigation);
• a dependent child leaves a parent's or guardian's home for short-term psychiatric or medical treatment and the child subsequently returns to the home of a parent or guardian; or
• a dependent child leaves a parent's or guardian's home for a short-term detention and the child subsequently returns to the home of a parent or guardian.

Removal End ("Returned Home") Dates:

When.....	The Removal End ("Returned Home") Date is.....
a child is returned after the <i>parent</i> or <i>guardian</i> arranges another caretaker	the date the child leaves out-of-home care.
a child is reunified with a parent or guardian	the date the child returns to the physical custody of any parent, or legal guardian by court order or termination of a voluntary foster care agreement.
a child is adopted	the date the adoption is finalized .
a guardianship is granted	the date of the guardianship order .
the child " ages out "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the child does not sign a voluntary agreement, the date the child turns 18 or the dependency dismissal date, whichever is earlier; or • if a voluntary agreement is signed, the date the voluntary agreement terminates and the child leaves out-of-home care.
a petition is dismissed while a child is on runaway status	the dependency dismissal date .

Do not Enter a Removal End Date When.....

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a child moves from one out-of-home care provider to another out-of-home care provider; or • a child runs away, unless the dependency is dismissed. |
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Remember, timeliness is important! The above dates must be entered into CHILDS **not later than 5 work days** after the event occurs.

If you have a situation that is not covered in this Policy Bulletin, or have other questions, please contact the policy unit at +DCYFPolicyUnit@azdes.gov