Arizona Department of Child Safety

Using the Removal Status Window
Practice Guide

Accurate and timely documentation of the date and time 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 working 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 Date

When:	The Removal Start Date is:
A **Temporary Custody Notice (TCN)** is served for a child to obtain a medical examination by a licensed health care provider (may be authorized by a court order or exigent circumstances).	The date the child is removed from their physical location to be taken for a medical examination.
A **Temporary Custody Notice (TCN)** is served (may be authorized by a court order, parent consent, or exigent circumstances).	The date the child is removed and taken into temporary custody.
A **dependency petition (including a private dependency petition)** is filed *and* the child is made a temporary court ward *and* the child is residing with a person who is not a biological parent, adoptive parent, or legal guardian.	The **date the juvenile court judge signed the court order** making the child a temporary court ward, in the care, custody and control of the Department. (<u>Not</u> the date the court order was filed, or the date the child was physically removed, if such occurred after the date the judge signed the order.)
A **Notice of Removal** is served, removing a dependent child from the home of a parent or guardian.	The date the child is removed and placed in out-of-home care.
A **Voluntary Placement Agreement (V P A)** signed by a parent or legal guardian.	The date the VPA is signed and the child is placed in an out-of-home care.

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 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 Date

When:	The Removal End Date is:
A child is returned to a parent, guardian or custodian after being taken into temporary custody (including temporary custody for the purposes of a medical examination).	The date the child is returned to a parent, guardian, or custodian.
A child is **reunified** with a parent, guardian, or custodian.	The date the juvenile court orders the return of the child to the **physical custody** of the parent/guardian; or, the date a Voluntary Placement Agreement is terminated by the Department or the parent/legal guardian.
A child is **adopted.**	The date the adoption is **finalized.**
A **guardianship** is granted.	The date of the guardianship **order.**
The child "**ages out.**"	- 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 for continued foster care (to age 21) 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**	The dependency **dismissal date.**

Do not enter a Removal End Date when:

- a child moves from one out-of-home care placement provider to another out-of-home care placement provider; or
- a child who is a court ward runs away (unless the dependency is dismissed).

Remember, timeliness is important! The above dates must be entered into CHILDS **not later than 5 work days** after the event occurs.