



TITLE	POLICY NUMBER	
Missing Child Notification	DCS 15-28	
RESPONSIBLE AREA	EFFECTIVE DATE	REVISION
Office of Licensing and Regulation	August 11, 2026	

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to describe the reporting requirements that congregate care staff must follow when a child in care is missing. This policy underscores the urgency associated with the prompt return of children to a safe living arrangement.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all child welfare agencies operating residential group care/shelter facilities that serve youth licensed under Arizona Administrative Code (A.A.C.) Title 21, Chapter 7.

III. AUTHORITY

[A.A.C. Title 21, Chapter 7](#)

Child Welfare Agency Licensing

[A.R.S. § 8-503](#)

Powers and duties

[A.R.S. § 8-505](#)

Issuance of licenses; application; investigation; Renewal

[A.R.S. § 8-810](#)

Missing; abducted; runaway children; notification; training; audit

[A.R.S. § 8-529](#)

Children in foster care and kinship foster care; rights

IV. DEFINITIONS

Child: An individual who is under 18 years of age.

Child in care: A child who is placed in a residential group care facility.

Child welfare agency (“CWA” or “Agency”): Any agency or institution maintained by a person, firm, corporation, association, or organization to receive children for care and maintenance or for 24-hour social, emotional, or educational supervised care or who have been adjudicated as a delinquent or dependent child.

Congregate care staff: Employees of child welfare agencies including shelters and group homes that are licensed under A.A.C Title 21, Chapter 7 and contracted with DCS.

Department or DCS: The Arizona Department of Child Safety.

Missing child: A child is considered missing when the responsible agency staff has made reasonable attempts to locate the child including contacting the child’s school, friends, and other places the child may frequent and has no information indicating when the child will return and:

- the responsible agency staff is unaware of the child’s whereabouts;
- a child in care has left the home without the permission of the responsible agency staff; or
- a child in care has failed to return home at an agreed upon time.

Office of Licensing and Regulation (OLR): The administration within DCS that is responsible for reviewing and evaluating applications for licensure; supervising and monitoring licensees; and completing all official licensing actions, including issuing, denying, amending, suspending, and revoking a license.

V. POLICY

A. All child welfare agencies shall:

1. complete a [*Child Identification Sheet*](#) (DCS-4785) for each child immediately upon placement/intake;

2. complete page 1 of the [*Child Identification Sheet*](#) for each child every three months the child is in their care and when the child makes any significant changes to their appearance;
3. maintain all [*Child Identification Sheets*](#) for each child in their file/record.

VI. PROCEDURES

- A. When it has been determined that a child in care is missing, the following procedures shall occur.
 1. Congregate care staff shall:
 - a. contact law enforcement immediately and:
 - i. complete page 2 of the [*Child Identification Sheet*](#);
 - ii. provide current, completed pages 1 and 2 of the [*Child Identification Sheet*](#) to law enforcement;
 - b. notify the Centralized Intake Hotline (888) SOS-CHILD immediately;
 - c. notify the child placing entity immediately;
 - d. submit the [*Child Identification Sheet*](#) (page 1 and 2) and [*Incident Report for the Arizona Department of Child Safety*](#) (CSO-1151A) to OLRincidentreportscwl@azdcs.gov within their contractual timeframe, if applicable, or 48 hours (whichever is more restrictive).

VII. FORMS INDEX

[CSO-1151A](#) or [CSO-1151AS](#) Incident Report for the Arizona Department of Child Safety

[DCS-4785](#) Child Identification Sheet