

## Planning to Travel with Your Foster Child?

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*Many foster parents are planning trips to the neighbor islands or the mainland and would like to take their foster child or children. DHS Program Development Office has provided this clarification on Travel Requests from CWS Procedures, Part III, Casework Services, Section 3, page 3-8.*

When foster children have the opportunity to travel with their foster parents, parental consent of birth parents is required. Informing the parents ahead of time of the travel plans and explaining how the child will benefit from the experience will help the parents feel comfortable consenting and supporting their child's traveling.

*Voluntary cases:* For a foster child traveling off island or out of state with his/her foster parents, efforts must be made to inform the parents and obtain their consent. If the parents do not consent, the foster child cannot travel.

*Court cases:* For a foster child traveling off island or out of state with his/her foster parents, efforts must be made to inform the parents and obtain their consent. If the parents consent and the GAL is in agreement, DHS must inform the court that there are no objections by the parents and the GAL. The worker will provide the court with the travel dates and destination, the purpose of the trip, and where the foster child and foster family will be staying. For example: Leaving on 03/15/07 for Disneyland, returning on 03/21/07, spring vacation trip, staying at the Disneyland Hotel 1-800-555-1212.

If there is an objection by the parents or the GAL to the foster child's traveling with his/her foster parents, DHS must ask the DAG to file a motion. The Family Court will hear the matter and render a decision on whether the foster child can travel.

In situations where the parents cannot be located and the Department and the GAL are in agreement with the foster child's traveling with his/her foster parents, the worker will inform the court of the Department's efforts to locate the parents for their consent and that there are no objections by the Department and the GAL. The worker will also provide the court with the travel dates and destination, the purpose of the trip, and where the foster child and foster family will be staying.

If the foster child's social worker is not willing to consider the foster child's traveling with the foster parent, the foster parent should speak with the social worker's supervisor or section administrator. The foster parent can also speak with the GAL as well as submit a letter to the court requesting a hearing to discuss the travel plans.