

232.21 Placement in shelter care.

1. No child shall be placed in shelter care unless one of the following circumstances applies:

- a. The child has no parent, guardian, custodian, responsible adult relative or other adult approved by the court who will provide proper shelter, care and supervision.
- b. The child desires to be placed in shelter care.
- c. It is necessary to hold the child until the child's parent, guardian, or custodian has been contacted and has taken custody of the child.
- d. It is necessary to hold the child for transfer to another jurisdiction.
- e. The child is being placed pursuant to an order of the court.

2. a. A child may be placed in shelter care as provided in [this section](#) only in one of the following facilities:

- (1) A juvenile shelter care home.
- (2) A licensed foster home.
- (3) An institution or other facility operated by the department, or one which is licensed or otherwise authorized by law to receive and provide care for the child.
- (4) Any other suitable place designated by the court provided that no place used for the detention of a child may be so designated.

b. Placement shall be made in the least restrictive facility available consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child. Foster family care shall be used for a child unless the child has problems requiring specialized service or supervision which cannot be provided in a family living arrangement.

3. When there is reason to believe that a child placed in shelter care pursuant to [section 232.19, subsection 1](#), paragraph "c", would not voluntarily remain in the shelter care facility, the shelter care facility shall impose reasonable restrictions necessary to ensure the child's continued custody.

4. A child placed in a shelter care facility under [this section](#) shall not be held for a period in excess of forty-eight hours without an oral or written court order authorizing the shelter care. When the action is authorized by an oral court order, the court shall enter a written order before the end of the next day confirming the oral order and indicating the reasons for the order. A child placed in shelter care pursuant to [section 232.19, subsection 1](#), paragraph "c", shall not be held in excess of seventy-two hours in any event. If deemed appropriate by the court, an order authorizing shelter care placement may include a determination that continuation of the child in the child's home is contrary to the child's welfare and that reasonable efforts as defined in [section 232.57](#) have been made. The inclusion of such a determination shall not under any circumstances be deemed a prerequisite for entering an order pursuant to [this section](#). However, the inclusion of such a determination, supported by the record, may be used by the department to assist in obtaining federal funding for the child's placement.

5. If no satisfactory provision is made for uniting a child placed in shelter care pursuant to [section 232.19, subsection 1](#), paragraph "c", with the child's family, a child in need of assistance complaint may be filed pursuant to [section 232.81](#). Nothing in [this subsection](#) shall limit the right of a child to file a family in need of assistance petition under [section 232.125](#).

6. A child twelve years of age or younger shall not be placed in a group shelter care home, unless there have been reasonable but unsuccessful efforts to place the child in an emergency foster family home which is able to meet the needs of the child. The efforts shall be documented at the shelter care hearing.

[S13, §254-a24; SS15, §254-a16; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §3633; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, §232.17; C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §232.17, 232.18; C79, 81, §232.21; [82 Acts, ch 1209, §3](#)]

[83 Acts, ch 96, §157, 159](#); [88 Acts, ch 1249, §10, 11](#); [2001 Acts, ch 135, §5](#); [2001 Acts, ch 176, §64](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1050, §22](#); [2009 Acts, ch 41, §263](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §592](#)

Referred to in [§232.19, 232.20, 232.44, 234.35](#)

Subsection 2, paragraph a, subparagraph (3) amended