

232.102 Transfer of legal custody of child and placement.

1. *a.* After a dispositional hearing the court may enter an order transferring the legal custody of the child to one of the following for purposes of placement:

(1) A parent who does not have physical care of the child, other relative, or other suitable person.

(2) A child-placing agency or other suitable private agency, facility, or institution which is licensed or otherwise authorized by law to receive and provide care for the child.

(3) The department of human services. If the child is placed in a juvenile shelter care home or with an individual or agency as defined in [section 237.1](#), the department shall assign decision-making authority to the juvenile shelter care home, individual, or agency for the purpose of applying the reasonable and prudent parent standard during the child's placement.

b. If the child is sixteen years of age or older, the order shall specify the services needed to assist the child in preparing for the transition from foster care to adulthood. If the child has a case permanency plan, the court shall consider the written transition plan of services and needs assessment developed for the child's case permanency plan. If the child does not have a case permanency plan containing the transition plan and needs assessment at the time the order is entered, the written transition plan and needs assessment shall be developed and submitted for the court's consideration no later than six months from the date of the transfer order. The court shall modify the initial transfer order as necessary to specify the services needed to assist the child in preparing for the transition from foster care to adulthood. If the transition plan identifies services or other support needed to assist the child when the child becomes an adult and the court deems it to be beneficial to the child, the court may authorize the individual who is the child's guardian ad litem or court appointed special advocate to continue a relationship with and provide advice to the child for a period of time beyond the child's eighteenth birthday.

2. The court shall not order group foster care placement of the child which is a charge upon the state if that placement is not in accordance with the service area plan for group foster care established pursuant to [section 232.143](#) for the departmental service area in which the court is located.

3. After a dispositional hearing and upon the request of the department, the court may enter an order appointing the department as the guardian of an unaccompanied refugee child or of a child without parent or guardian.

4. *a.* Whenever possible the court should permit the child to remain at home with the child's parent, guardian, or custodian. Custody of the child should not be transferred unless the court finds there is clear and convincing evidence that:

(1) The child cannot be protected from physical abuse without transfer of custody; or

(2) The child cannot be protected from some harm which would justify the adjudication of the child as a child in need of assistance and an adequate placement is available.

b. In order to transfer custody of the child under [this subsection](#), the court must make a determination that continuation of the child in the child's home would be contrary to the welfare of the child, and shall identify the reasonable efforts that have been made. The court's determination regarding continuation of the child in the child's home, and regarding reasonable efforts, including those made to prevent removal and those made to finalize any permanency plan in effect, as well as any determination by the court that reasonable efforts are not required, must be made on a case-by-case basis. The grounds for each determination must be explicitly documented and stated in the court order. However, preserving the safety of the child is the paramount consideration. If imminent danger to the child's life or health exists at the time of the court's consideration, the determinations otherwise required under this paragraph shall not be a prerequisite for an order for removal of the child. If the court transfers custody of the child, unless the court waives the requirement for making reasonable efforts or otherwise makes a determination that reasonable efforts are not required, reasonable efforts shall be made to make it possible for the child to safely return to the family's home.

5. A child placed in foster care may participate in age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities subject to the approval of the child's

foster parents or the appropriate licensed foster care facility staff. A court shall make a finding at all review hearings to address the child's participation in such activities and how barriers to participation are being addressed.

6. The child shall not be placed in the state training school.

7. In any order transferring custody to the department or an agency, or in orders pursuant to a custody order, the court shall specify the nature and category of disposition which will serve the best interests of the child, and shall prescribe the means by which the placement shall be monitored by the court. If the court orders the transfer of the custody of the child to the department of human services or other agency for placement, the department or agency shall submit a case permanency plan to the court and shall make every reasonable effort to return the child to the child's home as quickly as possible consistent with the best interests of the child. When the child is not returned to the child's home and if the child has been previously placed in a licensed foster care facility, the department or agency shall consider placing the child in the same licensed foster care facility. If the court orders the transfer of custody to a parent who does not have physical care of the child, other relative, or other suitable person, the court may direct the department or other agency to provide services to the child's parent, guardian, or custodian in order to enable them to resume custody of the child. If the court orders the transfer of custody to the department of human services or to another agency for placement in group foster care, the department or agency shall make every reasonable effort to place the child in the least restrictive, most family-like, and most appropriate setting available, and in close proximity to the parents' home, consistent with the child's best interests and special needs, and shall consider the placement's proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.

8. Any order transferring custody to the department or an agency shall include a statement informing the child's parent that the consequences of a permanent removal may include the termination of the parent's rights with respect to the child.

9. An agency, facility, institution, or person to whom custody of the child has been transferred pursuant to [this section](#) shall file a written report with the court at least every six months concerning the status and progress of the child. The court shall hold a periodic dispositional review hearing for each child in placement pursuant to [this section](#) in order to determine whether the child should be returned home, an extension of the placement should be made, a permanency hearing should be held, or a termination of the parent-child relationship proceeding should be instituted. The placement shall be terminated and the child returned to the child's home if the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the child will not suffer harm in the manner specified in [section 232.2, subsection 6](#). If the placement is extended, the court shall determine whether additional services are necessary to facilitate the return of the child to the child's home, and if the court determines such services are needed, the court shall order the provision of such services. When the child is not returned to the child's home and if the child has been previously placed in a licensed foster care facility, the department or agency responsible for the placement of the child shall consider placing the child in the same licensed foster care facility.

a. The initial dispositional review hearing shall not be waived or continued beyond six months after the date of the dispositional hearing.

b. Subsequent dispositional review hearings shall not be waived or continued beyond twelve months after the date of the most recent dispositional review hearing.

c. For purposes of [this subsection](#), a hearing held pursuant to [section 232.103](#) satisfies the requirements for initial dispositional review or subsequent permanency hearing.

10. a. As used in [this subchapter](#), "reasonable efforts" means the efforts made to preserve and unify a family prior to the out-of-home placement of a child in foster care or to eliminate the need for removal of the child or make it possible for the child to safely return to the family's home. Reasonable efforts shall include but are not limited to giving consideration, if appropriate, to interstate placement of a child in the permanency planning decisions involving the child and giving consideration to in-state and out-of-state placement options at a permanency hearing and when using concurrent planning. If returning the child to the family's home is not appropriate or not possible, reasonable efforts shall include the efforts made in a timely manner to finalize a permanency plan for the child. A child's health and

safety shall be the paramount concern in making reasonable efforts. Reasonable efforts may include but are not limited to family-centered services, if the child's safety in the home can be maintained during the time the services are provided. In determining whether reasonable efforts have been made, the court shall consider both of the following:

(1) The type, duration, and intensity of services or support offered or provided to the child and the child's family. If family-centered services were not provided, the court record shall enumerate the reasons the services were not provided, including but not limited to whether the services were not available, not accepted by the child's family, judged to be unable to protect the child and the child's family during the time the services would have been provided, judged to be unlikely to be successful in resolving the problems which would lead to removal of the child, or other services were found to be more appropriate.

(2) The relative risk to the child of remaining in the child's home versus removal of the child.

b. As used in [this section](#), "*family-centered services*" means services and other support intended to safely maintain a child with the child's family or with a relative, to safely and in a timely manner return a child to the home of the child's parent or relative, or to promote achievement of concurrent planning goals by identifying and helping the child secure placement for adoption, with a guardian, or with other alternative permanent family connections. Family-centered services are adapted to the individual needs of a family in regard to the specific services and other support provided to the child's family and the intensity and duration of service delivery. Family-centered services are intended to preserve a child's connections to the child's neighborhood, community, and family and to improve the overall capacity of the child's family to provide for the needs of the children in the family.

11. The performance of reasonable efforts to place a child for adoption or with a guardian may be made concurrently with making reasonable efforts as defined in [this section](#).

12. If the court determines by clear and convincing evidence that aggravated circumstances exist, with written findings of fact based upon evidence in the record, the court may waive the requirement for making reasonable efforts. The existence of aggravated circumstances is indicated by any of the following:

a. The parent has abandoned the child.

b. The court finds the circumstances described in [section 232.116, subsection 1](#), paragraph "i", are applicable to the child.

c. The parent's parental rights have been terminated under [section 232.116](#) or involuntarily terminated by an order of a court of competent jurisdiction in another state with respect to another child who is a member of the same family, and there is clear and convincing evidence to show that the offer or receipt of services would not be likely within a reasonable period of time to correct the conditions which led to the child's removal.

d. The parent has been convicted of the murder of another child of the parent.

e. The parent has been convicted of the voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent.

f. The parent has been convicted of aiding or abetting, attempting, conspiring in, or soliciting the commission of the murder or voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent.

g. The parent has been convicted of a felony assault which resulted in serious bodily injury of the child or of another child of the parent.

13. Unless prohibited by the court order transferring custody of the child for placement or other court order or the department or agency that received the custody transfer finds that allowing the visitation would not be in the child's best interest, the department or agency may authorize reasonable visitation with the child by the child's grandparent, great-grandparent, or other adult relative who has established a substantial relationship with the child.

[S13, §254-a20, -a23, 2708, 2709; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, [§3637](#), [§3646](#), [§3647](#); C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, [§232.21](#), [§232.27](#), [§232.28](#); C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, [§232.33](#); C79, 81, [§232.102](#); [81 Acts, ch 11, §17](#); [82 Acts, ch 1260, §23](#)]

[83 Acts, ch 96, §157, 159](#); [84 Acts, ch 1279, §16 – 18](#); [85 Acts, ch 173, §13](#); [87 Acts, ch 159, §3](#); [88 Acts, ch 1134, §52](#); [88 Acts, ch 1249, §14](#); [90 Acts, ch 1239, §10, 11](#); [91 Acts, ch 232, §7, 8](#); [92 Acts, ch 1229, §5](#); [92 Acts, 1st Ex, ch 1004, §2](#); [95 Acts, ch 67, §16](#); [97 Acts, ch 99, §5](#); [98](#)

Acts, ch 1190, §11 – 17; 2000 Acts, ch 1067, §10; 2001 Acts, ch 24, §40; 2001 Acts, ch 135, §17 – 19; 2002 Acts, ch 1081, §3; 2003 Acts, ch 117, §5; 2004 Acts, ch 1116, §8 – 10; 2007 Acts, ch 172, §6, 9; 2007 Acts, ch 218, §114; 2008 Acts, ch 1098, §1; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §263; 2014 Acts, ch 1092, §52; 2016 Acts, ch 1063, §14, 15; 2017 Acts, ch 54, §31; 2019 Acts, ch 100, §4; 2020 Acts, ch 1062, §94

Referred to in §225C.49, 232.2, 232.95, 232.96, 232.99, 232.101A, 232.103, 232.104, 232.111, 232.116, 232.117, 232.127, 232.182, 232.189, 232B.5, 233.2, 234.6, 234.35

Copy of dispositional order under subsection 9 to be submitted to foster care review boards; 84 Acts, ch 1279, §42

Limitation on placing child in mental health institute; 86 Acts, ch 1246, §305

Code editor directive applied