Child Welfare Policy Manual

1. AFCARS

1.1 AFCARS, Compliance and Penalties

1 ***Q:*** How are the penalties calculated for a submission (e.g., the 90% accuracy requirement)?

(Deleted 07/05/2002)

1.2 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions

1 ***Q:*** What procedures should a child welfare worker follow in order to most effectively obtain accurate information on the racial and ethnic status of children and adults?

A: AFCARS requires the reporting of race and Hispanic/Latino Origin on children in foster care, children who have been adopted, foster care providers, and adoptive parents. As noted in Appendices A and B of the Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355, in the sections related to the instructions for foster care and adoption data elements, race and Hispanic/Latino origin information is based on how a client/adult perceives him/herself, or in the case of young children, how the parent identifies the child. This means the information on race and Hispanic/Latino Origin is to be self-reported by the individual. Additionally, racial and ethnic information should be collected and stored as separate pieces of information about the client.

Workers must ask clients this information and not make assumptions on which and how many races a person may be and whether the client is Hispanic or Latino or not. When a worker, rather than the client, makes this determination, he or she may be under-representing all possible races.

For AFCARS extraction and submission purposes, information not collected or not available for a particular client record (for whatever reason) is mapped as all blanks (not all zeros, all 9?s, etc.). Missing information should never be mapped to a valid AFCARS value.

Source: 7/19/047/19/04

Reference: Section 479 of title IV-E of the Social Security Act; 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section II Definitions and Instructions for Foster Care Data Elements, II. Child¿s Demographic Information, c. Race/Ethnicity and Appendix B, Section II Definitions and Instruc

1.2A AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Adoption Specific Elements

1 ***Q:*** In terms of reporting adoptions it is not clear whether States are required to submit data on adoptions for which an agency may have limited involvement, such as only performing a home study. The agency's data on these adoptions may be very limited. Does the Department want information on such adoptions submitted to AFCARS?

A: The regulations encourage, but do not require, States to report data on children adopted without the types of State involvement indicated in the "Reporting Population" section in Appendix B to 45 CFR 1355. The State is required to report an adoption if : 1) the child was in foster care under the responsiblity and care of the State child welfare agency and subsequently adopted; 2) the child has special needs and on whose behalf the State provided reimbursementfor non-recurring expenses of adoption; or 3) an adoption service or payment is being provided by way of an arrangement with the State agency. Because a State that has performed only a home study does not fall within one of these three categories, the State is not required to report information on such a child. If the State chooses to report information on such a child, or other children adopted without State involvement as indicated above, - the appropriate response is to enter a "No" for adoption element 4 "Did the State Agency Have any Involvement in This adoption?"

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94); updated (5-28-02)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94); updated (5-28-02)*

Reference: *45 CFR 1355.40; Appendix B to 45 CFR 1355*

2 ***Q:*** What procedures should a child welfare worker follow in order to most effectively obtain accurate information on the racial and ethnic status of children and adults?

A: AFCARS requires the reporting of race and Hispanic/Latino Origin on children in foster care, children who have been adopted, foster care providers, and adoptive parents. As noted in Appendices A and B of the Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355, in the sections related to the instructions for foster care and adoption data elements, race and Hispanic/Latino origin information is based on how a client/adult perceives him/herself, or in the case of young children, how the parent identifies the child. This means the information on race and Hispanic/Latino Origin is to be self-reported by the individual. Additionally, racial and ethnic information should be collected and stored as separate pieces of information about the client.

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Source: 7/19/047/19/04

Reference: Section 479 of title IV-E of the Social Security Act; 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section II Definitions and Instructions for Foster Care Data Elements, II. Child¿s Demographic Information, c. Race/Ethnicity and Appendix B, Section II Definitions and Instruc

1.2A.1 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Adoption Specific Elements, Adoptive parents

1 ***Q:*** What procedures should a child welfare worker follow in order to most effectively obtain accurate information on the racial and ethnic status of children and adults?

A: AFCARS requires the reporting of race and Hispanic/Latino Origin on children in foster care, children who have been adopted, foster care providers, and adoptive parents. As noted in Appendices A and B of the Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355, in the sections related to the instructions for foster care and adoption data elements, race and Hispanic/Latino origin information is based on how a client/adult perceives him/herself, or in the case of young children, how the parent identifies the child. This means the information on race and Hispanic/Latino Origin is to be self-reported by the individual. Additionally, racial and ethnic information should be collected and stored as separate pieces of information about the client.

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Source: 7/19/047/19/04

Reference: Section 479 of title IV-E of the Social Security Act; 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section II Definitions and Instructions for Foster Care Data Elements, II. Child¿s Demographic Information, c. Race/Ethnicity and Appendix B, Section II Definitions and Instruc

1.2A.2 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Adoption Specific Elements, Birth parents

1 **Q:** When an adoption is dissolved and the child is then re-adopted, should the State submit the information on the first adoptive (legal) parents or the birth parents?

A: The AFCARS report should always include information on the legal parents. Therefore, in this case, the State should submit information on the previous adoptive parents.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

2 **Q:** What if a State has information on both the legal as well as one or more putative fathers? For whom should information be provided?

A: Information should be provided on the legal father; however, if a child has one or more putative fathers and a legal father is not established, the year of birth used should be that of the putative father whose parental rights were terminated last. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix B, Section I, Roman Numeral IV, Question A2. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Adoption, Element Number 17.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

1.2A.3 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Adoption Specific Elements, Child's demographics

1 **Q:** AFCARS reporting requires all data submissions to be in numeric format, however, the data element definitions, both for foster care and adoption, indicate the use of the U.S. Postal Service's two letter State abbreviation. What should be used?

A: A numeric code is to be used for the State identification. It is the first two digits of the State's Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS). (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix B, Section I, Roman Numeral I, Question A. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Adoption, Element Number

01.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

2 **Q:** What procedures should a child welfare worker follow in order to most effectively obtain accurate information on the racial and ethnic status of children and adults?

A: AFCARS requires the reporting of race and Hispanic/Latino Origin on children in foster care, children who have been adopted, foster care providers, and adoptive parents. As noted in Appendices A and B of the Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355, in the sections related to the instructions for foster care and adoption data elements, race and Hispanic/Latino origin information is based on how a client/adult perceives him/herself, or in the case of young children, how the parent identifies the child. This means the information on race and Hispanic/Latino Origin is to be self-reported by the individual. Additionally, racial and ethnic information should be collected and stored as separate pieces of information about the client.

Workers must ask clients this information and not make assumptions on which and how many races a person may be and whether the client is Hispanic or Latino or not. When a worker, rather than the client, makes this determination, he or she may be under-representing all possible races.

For AFCARS extraction and submission purposes, information not collected or not available for a particular client record (for whatever reason) is mapped as all blanks (not all zeros, all 9?s, etc.). Missing information should never be mapped to a valid AFCARS value.

Source: 7/19/047/19/04

Reference: Section 479 of title IV-E of the Social Security Act; 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section II Definitions and Instructions for Foster Care Data Elements, II. Child¿s Demographic Information, c. Race/Ethnicity and Appendix B, Section II Definitions and Instruc

1.2A.4 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Adoption Specific Elements, Court actions

No questions and answers are available at this time.

1.2A.5 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Adoption Specific Elements, Financial information

No questions and answers are available at this time.

1.2A.6 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Adoption Specific Elements, Placement

No questions and answers are available at this time.

1.2B AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Foster Care Specific Elements

1 *Q:* What procedures should a child welfare worker follow in order to most effectively obtain accurate information on the racial and ethnic status of children and adults?

A: AFCARS requires the reporting of race and Hispanic/Latino Origin on children in foster care, children who have been adopted, foster care providers, and adoptive parents. As noted in Appendices A and B of the Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355, in the sections related to the instructions for foster care and adoption data elements, race and Hispanic/Latino origin information is based on how a client/adult perceives him/herself, or in the case of young children, how the parent identifies the child. This means the information on race and Hispanic/Latino Origin is to be self-reported by the individual. Additionally, racial and ethnic information should be collected and stored as separate pieces of information about the client.

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Source: 7/19/047/19/04

Reference: Section 479 of title IV-E of the Social Security Act; 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section II Definitions and Instructions for Foster Care Data Elements, II. Child¿s Demographic Information, c. Race/Ethnicity and Appendix B,

1.2B.1 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Foster Care Specific Elements, Case plan goal

1 **Q:** Some States require that parental rights must be terminated before a child's case plan can reflect a goal of adoption. What should be indicated as a goal, if this is a State's policy?

A: The child's goal should be reflective of the "actual" goal; adoption. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section I, Roman Numeral VI. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 43.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

2 **Q:** If a child's case plan goal is Independent Living how is it indicated on the AFCARS questionnaire?

A: Any child with a case plan goal of independent living should be indicated as having a goal of emancipation. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section I, Roman Numeral VI. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 43.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

1.2B.2 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Foster Care Specific Elements, Child's demographics

1 **Q:** What if a parent refuses to disclose whether or not a child has been previously adopted?

A: If a parent refuses to answer this question, "Unable to Determine" would represent the correct response. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section I, Roman Numeral II. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 16.)

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*

2 **Q:** AFCARS requires race/ethnicity information on all children. But if a child is identified as Hispanic, what information is entered for the race question?

A: If a child is identified as Hispanic or "Latino" in element number 09, then his/her ethnicity should also be further clarified, using element number 08, according to how the child or the child's parents define him/her. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section I, Roman Numeral II, Questions C.1 and C.2. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Numbers 8 and 9.)

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*

3 **Q:** Should the FIPS code be that of the child's place of residence or that of the agency responsible for the case?

A: The FIPS code should be the agency's not the child's place of residence. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 3)

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*

4 **Q:** AFCARS reporting requires all data submissions to be in numeric format, however, the data element definitions, both for foster care and adoption, indicate the use of the U.S. Postal Service's two letter State abbreviation. What should be used?

A: A numeric code is to be used for the State identification. It is the first two digits of the State's Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS). (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section I, Roman Numeral I, Question D. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 4.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

5 Q: In the AFCARS regulation at section 1355.40 (b)(2) there is a reference to the most recent date of a periodic review (either administrative or court) being entered for children who have been in foster care for nine months or more and other references indicate seven months. Is this a typographical error?

A: No. It is not a typographical error. Section 422 of the Social Security Act requires periodic reviews at least every six months; in practice, a 30 day grace period has been allowed, resulting in a seven month period in which to complete a review without penalty. For AFCARS reporting this fact, coupled with the intention to allow 60 days to enter the date associated with the review, results in a nine month time frame for entry of information about the periodic review. Therefore, any child in foster care at least nine months must have a periodic review date entered into the AFCARS report.

In summary, the review must take place within seven months of the child's entry into the foster care system (or of the last periodic review). The review date must be entered into the system within 60 days of the review date. This results in the nine month time frame referenced in the regulation.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

6 ***Q:*** What procedures should a child welfare worker follow in order to most effectively obtain accurate information on the racial and ethnic status of children and adults?

A: AFCARS requires the reporting of race and Hispanic/Latino Origin on children in foster care, children who have been adopted, foster care providers, and adoptive parents. As noted in Appendices A and B of the Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355, in the sections related to the instructions for foster care and adoption data elements, race and Hispanic/Latino origin information is based on how a client/adult perceives him/herself, or in the case of young children, how the parent identifies the child. This means the information on race and Hispanic/Latino Origin is to be self-reported by the individual. Additionally, racial and ethnic information should be collected and stored as separate pieces of information about the client.

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Source: 7/19/047/19/04

Reference: Section 479 of title IV-E of the Social Security Act; 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section II Definitions and Instructions for Foster Care Data Elements, II. Child¿s Demographic Information, c. Race/Ethnicity and Appendix B, Section II Definitions and Instruc

1.2B.3 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Foster Care Specific Elements, Episode and removal circumstances

1 **Q:** Following a trial home visit which extends beyond six months and where the child is considered "discharged," what happens if the child returns to a group home? Is this a new placement, a new episode, or an entirely new removal?

A: The return to a group home or any other substitute care setting will represent a removal and the removal is the start of a new episode.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

2 **Q:** If a child is removed from a home in which a sibling was alleged to have been abused, but the child being removed from the home was not abused, should physical abuse (alleged/reported) be marked as a condition associated with the child's removal?

A: A record should only indicate conditions associated with the removal of the child who is the subject of the record. In the context of AFCARS, and using the above example of alleged abuse of the child's sibling, if physical abuse is alleged/reported for the child who is the subject of the record then that condition is considered to be associated with the decision to remove that child from home and Element #26 should be coded as 1 (yes). If physical abuse has not been alleged/reported for the child who is the subject of the record, physical abuse does NOT apply and element #26 should be answered as 0 (does not apply). (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element numbers 26 - 40.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

3 ***Q:*** What if the only reason for a child's removal from home is mental abuse? How do you code this for AFCARS?

A: You should mark "Neglect (Alleged/Reported)" (Foster Care, element number #28) with a "1". (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Numbers 26 - 40.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

4 ***Q:*** Please clarify the meaning of the terms removal, placement, episode, and discharge.

A: A Removal is either the physical act of a child being taken from his or her normal place of residence, by court order or a voluntary placement agreement and placed in a substitute care setting, or the removal of custody from the parent or relative guardian pursuant to a court order or voluntary placement agreement which permits the child to remain in a substitute care setting.

Placement occurs after removal and is the physical setting in which a child finds himself or herself, that is, the resultant foster care setting. A new Placement setting results when the foster care setting changes, for example, when a child moves from one foster family home to another or to a group home or institution.

An Episode is a removal with one or more placement settings. A previous episode is one that has been completed by a discharge. A current episode is a removal and one or more placement settings without a discharge.

A Discharge represents that point in time when the child is no longer in foster care under the care and responsibility or supervision of the State agency. For AFCARS purposes, situations in which the State retains supervision of a child and the child returns home on a trial basis, for an unspecified period of time, are considered a discharge from foster care after a six month period. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section I, Roman Numeral III, Questions A and B. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Numbers 18, 20, and 23.))

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94); Final Rule (65 FR 4020) (1/25/00)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94); Final Rule (65

FR 4020) (1/25/00)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

5 **Q:** Does the definition of Neglect include cases of failure to provide supervision (non-supervision)?

A: Yes. Neglect is alleged or substantiated negligent treatment or maltreatment, including failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or care and includes failure to provide supervision (non-supervision). (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section I, Roman Numeral IV, Question B. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 28.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

6 **Q:** For both of the computer-generated transaction dates: should the date be generated on the date that the data was first entered or the date that the data was last updated?

A: This date should represent the date that the data was FIRST entered. The reason for this element is to insure that the record is entered into the system in a timely fashion. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 22 and 57.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

7 **Q:** For a child who is in and out of the foster care system over a period of several years, what does the State report for foster care element 18 "Date of first removal from home" if it does not have the date of the first removal?

A: This information is required by the regulations at appendix A to 45 CFR 1355 and should exist in the case record or a court record. As is the case for all missing data, if the date of the child's

first removal from home is not available, the date should be left blank.(See: 45 CFR1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 18.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95), updated (5-28-02)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95), updated (5-28-02)

Reference: 45 CFR 1355.40; Appendix A to 45 CFR 1355

1.2B.4 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Foster Care Specific Elements, Financial elements

1 **Q:** Should a State report that a child is eligible for, but not actually receiving title IV-E foster care maintenance payments in foster care element 59, "Sources of Federal Financial Support/Assistance for Child?"

A: No. The State should only indicate whether a child received a title IV-E foster care maintenance payment during the reporting period in answering foster care element 59.

Source: (5-28-02)(5-28-02)

Reference: Appendix A to 45 CFR 1355.40

1.2B.5 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Foster Care Specific Elements, Foster family home

1 **Q:** What procedures should a child welfare worker follow in order to most effectively obtain accurate information on the racial and ethnic status of children and adults?

A: AFCARS requires the reporting of race and Hispanic/Latino Origin on children in foster care, children who have been adopted, foster care providers, and adoptive parents. As noted in Appendices A and B of the Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355, in the sections related to the instructions for foster care and adoption data elements, race and Hispanic/Latino origin information is based on how a client/adult perceives him/herself, or in the case of young children, how the parent identifies the child. This means the information on race and Hispanic/Latino Origin is to be self-reported by the individual. Additionally, racial and ethnic information should be collected and stored as separate pieces of information about the client.

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Source: 7/19/047/19/04

Reference: Section 479 of title IV-E of the Social Security Act; 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section II Definitions and Instructions for Foster Care Data Elements, II. Child¿s Demographic Information, c. Race/Ethnicity and Appendix B, Section II Definitions and Instruc

1.2B.6 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Foster Care Specific Elements, Outcome information

1 ***Q:*** Some States do not capture information about outcomes except when the children not only are discharged from agency custody, but also the case is closed and the agency is no longer providing any type of services to the family. If this is the case for a particular State, how will penalties be assessed for lack of information?

(Deleted 07/05/2002)

1.2B.7 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Foster Care Specific Elements, Placements

1 ***Q:*** How does a State code a record where the status of the placement changes? For example, if a child is in a foster family home placement setting and that family decides to adopt the child, thus becoming a pre-adoptive home placement setting, how do States record the placement setting, the date of placement, and the number of placements?

A: The State should change the placement setting to pre-adoptive home. However, the number of placements should not change nor should the date of placement. There is no internal consistency check among these elements and therefore, there will be no error detected with the change of placement even though the number of placements has not increased. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Numbers 23, 24, and 41.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ 95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ 95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

2 ***Q:*** The internal consistency check for date of placement in current foster care setting states that it must be later than the date of latest removal from home. Can't it also be equal to the date of latest removal?

A: Yes. The system will not consider it an error if the date of placement in current foster care setting is the same day as the date of latest removal from home. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 23.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

3 ***Q:*** If a child is on a trial home visit or has run away as of the end of the reporting period, what is to be reported in the "Date of placement in current foster care setting" field?

(Deleted 07/05/2002)

4 ***Q:*** How do States indicate emergency shelter care - as "institution" or "group home?"

A: Generally, the shelter should be coded as the type of placement that it most closely resembles. Therefore, the size of the facility should determine whether the shelter care is considered as an institution or a group home. It is also possible for an emergency shelter to be coded as relative or non-relative foster care if the shelter is a home.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

5 ***Q:*** Please provide a more inclusive definition of Pre-Adoptive Home, Foster Family Home (Non-Relative), Institution and Trial Home Visit.

A: A Pre-Adoptive Home is a home in which the family has been approved to adopt the child. The family may or may not be receiving a foster care payment or an adoption subsidy on behalf of the child. The child is considered in foster care until the adoption has been finalized, that is, a judge has signed the adoption decree.

A Foster Family Home (Non-Relative) is a licensed or approved foster family home regarded by the State as a foster care living arrangement. This placement setting also includes what are referred to in some States as receiving foster homes.

An Institution is a child care facility operated by a public or private agency and providing 24-hour care and/or treatment for children who require separation from their own homes and group living experience. These facilities may include: child care institutions, residential treatment facilities, maternity homes, nursing homes, hospitals, etc.

A Trial Home Visit occurs when the child has been in a foster care placement, but, under continuing State agency supervision, is then returned to the principal caretaker for a limited and specified period of time. If a time period is not specified the child should be identified as having been returned home at the point at which the trial home visit exceeds six months. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section I, Roman Numeral V, Question A. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 41.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

6 **Q:** "Group homes" as they are called in some States may more closely match the AFCARS definition of "institutions" by their size, so the data reported may look like the State has foster homes and institutions as placements, and nothing much else. Won't this be a problem?

A: For AFCARS' reporting purposes "Group Homes" are defined as substitute care settings which house 12 or fewer children, whereas, an "Institution" provides care for more than 12 children. Given this distinction of size, and if States are consistent in their use of size as a distinguishing factor, it should be clear as to the types of substitute care children are in and should not pose a major problem.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

7 **Q:** Please clarify the meaning of the terms removal, placement, episode, and discharge.

A: A Removal is either the physical act of a child being taken from his or her normal place of residence, by court order or a voluntary placement agreement and placed in a substitute care setting, or the removal of custody from the parent or relative guardian pursuant to a court order or voluntary placement agreement which permits the child to remain in a substitute care setting.

Placement occurs after removal and is the physical setting in which a child finds himself or herself, that is, the resultant foster care setting. A new Placement setting results when the foster care setting changes, for example, when a child moves from one foster family home to another or to a group home or institution.

An Episode is a removal with one or more placement settings. A previous episode is one that has been completed by a discharge. A current episode is a removal and one or more placement settings without a discharge.

A Discharge represents that point in time when the child is no longer in foster care under the care and responsibility or supervision of the State agency. For AFCARS purposes, situations in which the State retains supervision of a child and the child returns home on a trial basis, for an unspecified period of time, are considered a discharge from foster care after a six month period. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section I, Roman Numeral III, Questions A and B.

Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Numbers 18, 20, and 23.)

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*

8 **Q:** For AFCARS reporting purposes what information is entered for a child who returns to a placement setting different than the placement setting from which he/she ran away or left for a trial home visit?

A: If the child, after having run away or experienced a trial home visit, returns to a placement setting different than the one he/she ran away from or left for a trial home visit, then the "Date of Placement in Current Foster Care Setting," "Current Placement Setting," and "Number of Previous Placement Settings during this Removal Episode" will be changed. The following information should be entered, "Date of Placement in Current Foster Care Setting" will be changed to the date the child enters the "different" placement setting, "Current Placement Setting" will be changed to the appropriate setting, and "Number of Previous Placement Settings during this Removal Episode" will be increased by one (+1). (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 23, 41, and 24, respectively.)

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*

9 **Q:** Why are trial home visits (which count as placements for element 41 and may last up to 6 months or more) not counted as placements for element 24 - number of placements?

A: Trial home visits and Runaway are the same in that they are recorded as placement settings. This allows the State to more accurately show the physical setting that the child is in at the time the report period ends. However, they are not counted in the number of placements in order to guard against misleading data. For example, in the case of a child in a group home who runs away for one week and then returns to the group home, if the runaway were counted as a placement it would appear that the child had three placements, when actually the agency had only placed the child once. Likewise, if the child was placed in a trial home visit with the intent that the child would be discharged back to the family the trial home visit should not be

considered a placement. The number of placements element is meant to gather information on how many times the agency found it necessary to move the child while in foster care. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 24.)

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*

10 **Q:** "Runaway" is an option for a child's "Current Placement Setting"; should it be counted when calculating the answer to, "Number of Previous Placements During This Removal Episode"?

A: No. While it is important for ACF to know the number of children in runaway status at a particular time, "runaway" is not a placement setting and should not be counted as such. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Numbers 41 and 24, respectively).

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*

11 **Q:** For AFCARS reporting purposes what information is entered for a child who returns to the same placement setting from which he/she ran away or left for a trial home visit?

A: If the child returns to the same placement setting they were in, prior to running away or having the trial home visit, only the "Current Placement Setting" will be changed and it will be changed to the placement setting he/she was in prior to running away or leaving for their trial home visit. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 41.)

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*

12 **Q:** The data element, "Number of Previous Placement Settings During This Removal Episode" clearly indictes previous placement settings; however, the definition in the regulation says to include the current placement setting in this count. This seems to be contradictory. Which is correct?

A: When answering the question, "Number of Previous Placement Settings During This Removal Episode", include the current placement setting. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 24. Also see: Appendix A, Section II, Roman Numeral III, Removal/Placement Setting Indicators.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

13 **Q:** Mental health institutions and jails are not normally considered to be the same type of facility. Some States expressed concern with counting them as the same for AFCARS. Why are they counted all the same as "institutions?"

A: "Institution," as it is used for AFCARS reporting, generally indicates large groups of children, even though we acknowledge that this could represent children in mental health facilities, nursing homes, long-term hospital care, juvenile justice facilities, and many other placement settings serving large numbers of individuals. To assist ACF in clarifying placements, we encourage States to footnote significant percentages, for example, 25% of children in institutional care are in juvenile justice facilities.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

14 *Q:* If a child goes home on a regular basis (e.g., the child is placed in an institution, but goes home to his or her family on weekends), is this considered two placements each week?

(Deleted 07/05/2002)

15 *Q:* Occasionally a child may be placed in the home of a neighbor or family friend who is in the process of being licensed but is not licensed at the end of the reporting period. In this case, how should that placement setting be coded?

A: ACF hopes that it will be a rare occasion when a child is placed in an unlicensed facility. But in those rare cases, code the placement setting as the definition that most closely resembles the placement setting. For this case, the placement setting should be coded as a non-relative foster home. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 41).

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

16 *Q:* How are children in shelter care indicated on the AFCARS questionnaire?

(Deleted 07/05/2002)

17 *Q:* If the provider changes status (e.g. was a county service foster home and changes to a child placement service) and the child remains with the same family is this 1 placement setting or 2 placement settings?

A: AFCARS reporting is not concerned with the status of the substitute care provider, only the number of placement setting changes a child experiences. Consequently, the child in the above question does not experience a placement setting change, therefore, no change will be made to "Number of Previous Placement Settings during this Removal Episode", (See: 45

CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 24.)

If a child's placement setting status changes to a setting as defined for AFCARS reporting, e.g., a group home becomes licensed as an institution, then for AFCARS reporting purposes we would request that the child's "Current Placement Setting" be changed as appropriate. However, there would be no change in the "Date of Placement in the Current Foster Care Setting" nor in the "Number of Previous Placements During this Removal Episode". (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 41, 23, and 24 respectively.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

18 Q: If a child is in a foster family home and then goes to a different foster family home, is this one placement or two placements?

A: Two placement settings in the current episode. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Number 24.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

19 Q: If a foster family moves to another city or county or State, is the move considered to be a new placement for the child living with the family?

A: If the child remains with the same family, it should not be considered a new placement if the family moves. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Numbers 23, 24, and 41.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

20 Q: The AFCARS definition of "institution" seems different from the definition used for IV-E and adoption programs. Why?

A: The definitional use of institutional care setting for AFCARS was purposely broadened to make it applicable to situations which cannot be recorded in any other manner. But it remains the same for purposes other than AFCARS reporting.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

21 Q: How should the State count *brief* periods spent away from the child's foster care provider in foster care element 24, " Number of previous placement settings during the removal episode"?

A: In general, the State is required to count a placement that lasts more than 24 hours while the child is in foster care under the placement, care or supervision responsibility of the State agency. See 45 CFR 1355.40 and CWPM 1.2B.7 and 1.3. This includes moves that may be made on an emergency or unplanned basis, such as shelter care placements, treatment facility placements, and certain placements for juvenile justice purposes. See CWPM 1.3. However, there are certain temporary living conditions that are not placements, but rather represent a temporary absence from the child's ongoing foster care placement. As such, the State must exclude the following temporary absences from the calculation of the number of previous placement settings for foster care element 24.

- Visitation with a sibling, relative, or other caretaker (i.e., preplacement visits with a subsequent foster care provider or preadoptive parents)
- Hospitalization for medical treatment, acute psychiatric episodes or diagnosis
- Respite care
- Day or summer camps
- Trial home visits
- Runaway episodes

Source: (5-28-02)(5-28-02)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR 1355.40 & appendices; Child Welfare Policy Manual Sections 1.2B.7 and 1.3

22 Q: How should a State count a child's placement back into a previous foster home in foster care element 24, "Number of previous placement settings during the removal episode"? Should a State only increase the number of previous placement settings if the child is placed in a foster care setting in which he has not been placed before?

A: Foster care element 24 is meant to gather information on how many times the agency found it necessary to move the child while in foster care. Therefore, the number of previous placement settings during the removal episode must reflect all placement moves including the current placement and placements into a previous foster care setting, regardless of whether the child was previously placed in that setting. The exception to this policy is with regard to a child who returns to the same foster care setting following a temporary absence that is specifically excluded from the calulation of previous placment settings.(see CWPM 1.2B.7).

Source: (5-28-02)(5-28-02)

Reference: Appendix A to 45 CFR 1355.40

23 Q: If a child is on a trial home visit or has run away how should the State report this child in AFCARS?

A: The State must indicate the date the child was placed on the trial home visit, or known to have run away from the last placement setting as the "Date of placement in current foster care setting" (foster care element 23). The State must also change the "Current Placement Setting" (foster care element 41) to either "Runaway" or "Trial Home Visit", as appropriate. The State should not increase the "number of previous placement settings during this removal episode" (foster care element 24).

Source: (5-28-02)(5-28-02)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR 1355.40 & appendices

1.2B.8 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Foster Care Specific Elements, Principal caretaker

1 ***Q:*** When an adoption is dissolved and the child is then re-adopted, should the State submit the information on the first adoptive (legal) parents or the birth parents?

A: The AFCARS report should always include information on the legal parents. Therefore, in this case, the State should submit information on the previous adoptive parents.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

2 ***Q:*** What if a State has information on both the legal as well as one or more putative fathers? For whom should information be provided?

A: Information should be provided on the legal father; however, if a child has one or more putative fathers and a legal father is not established, the year of birth used should be that of the putative father whose parental rights were terminated last. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix B, Section I, Roman Numeral IV, Question A2. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Adoption, Element Number 17.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

3 ***Q:*** If a child's principal caretakers are a same sex couple how is it indicated for AFCARS reporting?

A: The couple should be entered as either an unmarried or married couple depending on how State law views them. (See: 45 CFR 1355, Appendix B, Section I, Roman Numeral VII, Question A. Also see: Appendix D, Detailed Foster Care, Element Numbers 44 and 49.)

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

1.2B.9 AFCARS, Data Elements and Definitions, Foster Care Specific Elements, Termination of parental rights

No questions and answers are available at this time.

1.3 AFCARS, Reporting Population

1 ***Q:*** Please clarify the definition of the AFCARS foster care reporting population, that is, the children States are to submit AFCARS data on.

A: Foster care is defined in 45 CFR 1355.20 and 1355.40. Section 1355.20 gives the general definition of foster care as 24 hour substitute care for all children placed away from their parent(s) or guardian(s) and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. Section 1355.40 (a)(2), defines the foster care population for AFCARS reporting purposes. Each State's data transmission must include all children in foster care, as defined in section 1355.20, for whom the State title IV-B/IV-E agency has responsibility for placement, care or supervision.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

2 ***Q:*** Should children who are still receiving funding from the State agency be reported on in AFCARS even if they are age 18 or over?

A: In general, States are to report all children in foster care and under the placement, care of supervision of the State agency to AFCARS. In the case of youth 18 years of age or over, State must report to AFCARS:

- youth who have not yet reached the State's legal age of majority; and
- youth who have attained 18 years of age, but not yet 19 years of age on whose behalf the State is providing title IV-E foster care maintenance payments.

Pursuant to long-standing Departmental policy, States are instructed to exclude those youth who are considered to be adults in a State from the child protection requirements in section 422 of the Act and AFCARS reporting requirements. However, youth who receive title IV-E foster care maintenance payments must be reported to AFCARS and be provided the section 422 protections regardless of whether they have reached the legal age of majority in the State.

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95); updated (5-28-02)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95); updated (5-28-02)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Part 1355*

3 **Q:** Are past placement histories to be included or only current active cases?

A: All cases which are open at any time during the reporting period, whether or not there have been any changes in the file, need to be reported. Any cases which are closed, that is, the child is discharged from care, etc., need to be included in the current report only if the closure activity was entered into the system during the current reporting period.

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*

4 **Q:** Do States report on the children in State custody even though the State has no placement or financial responsibility?

A: Yes. Children who are under State custody and in foster care are included in AFCARS regardless of whether or not a payment is made.

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*

5 ***Q:*** Do States report on children whose care is in the control of tribal courts?

A: What court the child goes through is not of particular importance. The determining factor is whether the State title IV-B/IV-E agency has placement and care responsibility and/or supervision.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

6 ***Q:*** What guidelines or qualifiers, if any, exist as to the inclusion of American Indian children in the AFCARS reporting population?

A: There are no guidelines or qualifiers related to American Indian children. They are to be included in AFCARS as any other child under the care and responsibility or supervision of the State child welfare agency.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

7 ***Q:*** Do States report on children in private agency care?

A: If the care of the child is under the State child welfare agency (e.g., the private agency is providing care by contract with the State), that child should be included in AFCARS reporting; if it is strictly private, that is, there is no contractual relationship with the IV-B/IV-E agency, do not report on the child.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

8 **Q:** What is the relationship between State and tribal organizations to access client data, especially non-IV-E funded clients?

A: Children affiliated with Tribes which have title IV-E agreements with a State are to be included in the AFCARS reporting population. Any child in substitute care in which joint custody exists between the tribal court and IV-B/IV-E agency, is included in the AFCARS reporting population. If an agreement exists the title IV-B/IV-E agency should have access to the necessary records.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

9 **Q:** What agency submits data on adoption for children placed out of State (i.e., cooperative placement agreements)?

A: The State which has/had custody of the child or is party to the adoption assistance agreement must submit the AFCARS data.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

10 **Q:** Under what circumstances, if any, should children in emergency care be included in the AFCARS reporting population?

A: The reporting population includes children in emergency care, if the emergency care exceeds 24 hours, regardless of whether the placement and care responsibility or supervision is on the basis of a court order, legislation or regulation.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

11 ***Q:*** Are children at home (i.e., trial home visits) to be included in the AFCARS reporting population?

A: Yes. Any child who is returned home on a trial home visit, for a specifically limited period of time and for whom the State agency continues to maintain placement and care responsibility or supervision should be included in AFCARS. If a child is returned home on a trial basis with no specific time period indicated, and the State agency maintains placement and care responsibility or supervision, he or she should be indicated as in foster care for a period of up to six months. After six months such child should be indicated as discharged from foster care and returned home and should not be included in subsequent AFCARS reports unless the child is returned to foster care.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

12 ***Q:*** Are children in juvenile justice facilities included in AFCARS reporting?

A: Children who are removed from their home and initially placed in a juvenile justice facility are not to be included in AFCARS reporting.

For children already in a juvenile justice facility with respect to whom a subsequent court order is signed giving placement, care or supervision to the title IV-E/IV-B agency, the date of the court order will be used as the date of removal from the home.

Children in a foster care setting who are moved to a juvenile justice facility and who are expected to be returned to a foster care setting should continue to be included in the AFCARS reporting population. The child's move into the juvenile justice facility should be reported as a placement change and recorded as an institutional foster care setting.

Children in a foster care setting who are moved to a juvenile justice facility and who become the responsibility of another agency should not be included in the AFCARS reporting population. The date the court order was signed will serve as the date of discharge from foster care and the reason for discharge would be reported as transfer to another agency.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94); ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94); ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

13 **Q:** What if a child in care is known to two different State agencies? Which agency should report on the child?

A: The agency which currently has placement and care responsibility or supervision should report on the child. If there is joint responsibility (e.g., both the juvenile justice agency and the child welfare agency) then the child welfare agency should report on the child.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)ACYF-CB-PIQ-94-01 (7/8/94)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

14 **Q:** If the State has placement and financial payment responsibility for some children, but the State does not have custody, do we report them?

A: Yes. These children should be included in the AFCARS reporting population.

Source: ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)

Reference: Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357

1.4 AFCARS, Technical Requirements

1 **Q:** For programming purposes, are "6 months" and "180 days" supposed to be literally the same? Automated systems must be programmed precisely as to what date to use.

A: The reference to 6 months is 6 calendar months, whereas, 180 days equals 180 days, irrespective of calendar months.

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*

2 ***Q:*** What links are States to maintain between children in the AFCARS foster care data transmission and the AFCARS adoption data transmission? If the State uses encrypted numbers, the child's number will appear the same on both the foster care and the adoption reports. Does this violate confidentiality?

A: No link may be maintained in the AFCARS transmissions for children who leave foster care and are adopted. If the State is still concerned about possible linkage of the foster care and adoption records, it should adopt a different encryption algorithm for the adoption data report.

Source: *ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)ACYF-CB-PIQ-95-01 (3/8/95)*

Reference: *Social Security Act - section 479; 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357*