

# Children's Property

(Revised 07/12/24)

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## Forms

This policy references the following form:

- 04-61 Clothing Inventory and Record Personal Belongings

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## Information

Each office must provide a **secure location** to store a child's personal belongings and provide a **contact person** for CFWB staff to consult for storage locations when they cannot be stored elsewhere. These spaces must only be used for a child who cannot take personal belongings into placement, has no other storage, resources or is Absent With Out Leave (AWOL). The maximum storage time is 180-days. After 180-days the items in storage will be donated unless a plan is made between the Social Worker (SW) and Protective Services Supervisor (PSS).

At Polinsky Childrens Center (PCC), personal belongings are packed by cottage SW and given to the primary SW when the child leaves PCC. Intake calls the assigned SW to pick up items that were stored in the safe such as cell phones, tablets, etc. The primary SW must sign-out any items that are in the safe.

**NOTE:** There is no storage for parents' personal belongings. SW staff should not personally store any items for parents.

There are procedures if the child's property needs to be shipped out of county or to the County of San Diego. The Health and Human Services Agency has an agreement with a shipping service to send children's personal belongings from San Diego County to a location outside of the County, or from a location outside of San Diego County into the county.

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## Birthday Cards and Gifts for Special Occasions

SW staff must make every effort to ensure the child's personal belongings consisting of birthday cards, gifts for the child's birthday or other special occasions are given to the child. Only when it is not possible (e.g., the child is AWOL, a no contact order has been issued for the person providing the gift, the child refuses the gift, etc.) to give these items to the child, such items should be placed in storage to be given to the child at a later time.

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## SW Responsibilities

Prior to placing a child's personal belongings in storage, the SW is responsible for:

- Exploring other storage resources, such as the parent or other relative
- Monitoring the items to be stored by completing the 04-61
- Directing any storage inquiries to the identified contact person in the office.

The following items **cannot** be placed in storage or stored by the SW:

- Cigarettes, alcohol, prescribed medications, and illegal substances
- Weapons, including knives
- Chemicals
- Items with sharp protruding edges
- Valuable items (e.g., jewelry, heirlooms, coin collections)
- Cash, regardless of the amount.

The SW must work with the caregiver/resource parent to determine the best way to store a child's valuable items and cash. Valuable items may be stored in a safety deposit box, a locked jewelry box etc. Cash is best stored in a bank account for the child.

**NOTE:** Children detained at PCC are exempt from the policy as it pertains to valuable and cash items. PCC is able to store valuable items in a secure manner.

The SW is responsible for:

- ensuring all the items to be stored are packed in duffle bags, or small box
- labeling all items with the child's name, date of birth, case name, case number, the SW's name/worker number and date placed into storage.

**NOTE:** PCC purchases their own duffle bags.

After a child's personal belongings have been placed in storage, the SW is responsible for:

- monitoring the items in storage to ensure the items do not stay in storage past the 180-day time limit.
- developing an alternate storage plan with your PSS if the SW determines the items must remain in storage after the expiration of the 180-day time limit.

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## Procedure When Transporting Personal Belongings

The CFWB Staff that transports the belongings will record in a CWS/CMS contact that the child's personal belongings were picked up and delivered to the child along with the completed 04-61.

**Note:** Duffle bags or luggage should be used to transport personal belonging. Each office has their own process for maintaining or storing duffle bags for use and the bags are usually from donations or ordered. PCC purchases duffle bags for storing children's property.

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**Procedure When Shipping Out-of-County**

If a child's property needs to be shipped, it is the SW's responsibility to prepare items for shipping and to transport them to the shipping service. The SW will be responsible for packaging items into boxes. Boxes should be obtained prior to taking the items to the shipping service and can be picked up at the 8911 Balboa Avenue office. SW should contact the senior office assistant for boxes and assistance. FedEx is available for SWs who need to ship a child's personal belongings.

**Note:** Belongings are to be shipped FedEx ground shipping only. The Agency's shipping account does NOT cover box or labor fees from the shipping service.

When a dependent child's possessions need to ship **outside** of the County of San Diego, SW will follow these steps:

Step	Action
1	Package up the items to be shipped and transport them to your nearest FedEx pickup location. Provide the FedEx # when dropping the package off to ensure the invoice is sent to CFWB Fiscal/Program Support.  Staff will be given a copy of the air bill, which they will then send to CFWB Fiscal/Program Support at MS- W94 once they return to the office.
2	For packages that are too big and heavy for FedEx, contact an account clerk at 8911 Balboa Avenue

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**Procedure When Shipping to the County of San Diego**

When a dependent child's possessions need to be shipped to the County of San Diego from an outside location, the following procedure will be followed:

Step	Action
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact the individual who will be shipping the items.</li><li>• Request that the individual:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ pack up the items and transport them to their nearest FedEx pickup location,</li><li>○ give them the County of San Diego's account number to the FedEx clerk, and</li><li>○ send the FedEx shipping receipt or air bill to the SW.</li></ul></li><li>• Call the clerk in CFWB Fiscal/Program Support to advise that:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ the shipment has been set up with FedEx, and</li><li>○ provide name of individual shipping the package.</li></ul></li></ul>

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**Procedure When Shipping to the County of San Diego (cont.)**

Step	Action
2	Once the FedEx air bill and/or shipping receipt is received, send to CFWB Fiscal/Program Support at MS- W94.

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**Alignment with SET**

This policy support [SET Value 3](#) and the guiding principle to have a continual focus on children’s well-being while they are in our care. It also supports the agency practice to help the youth maintain connections to important things in their life.

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