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# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



State of New Jersey  
Department of  
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DIVISION OF YOUTH  
AND FAMILY SERVICES

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**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

**State of New Jersey**  
**Department of Institutions and Agencies**  
**DIVISION OF YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**DYFS 8-66**  
**(new 7/76)**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. <i>HISTORY</i>	1 - 2
II. <i>EMPLOYMENT POLICIES</i>	
Equal Opportunity Policy	2
Hours of Work	2
Rest Periods	3
Attendance and Punctuality	3
Paychecks	3
Overtime	3 - 4
Emergency Closing	4
<b>Accidents</b>	= 4
Telephone	4
III. <i>BENEFITS</i>	
Holidays	4 - 5
Vacation Leave	6
Sick Leave	6 - 7
Administrative Leave	7
Maternity Leave	7 - 8
Military Leave	8
Disability Leave - Sick Leave Injury	8
Jury Duty	9
Other Leave	9
Health Benefits	9 - 10
Termination of Health Benefits Coverage	10
Prescription Drug Plan	10
Pension (Public Employees' Retirement System - PERS)	10 - 11
Lump Sum Reimbursement	11

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**  
(conc.)

	PAGE
III. <b>BENEFITS (conc.)</b>	
Disability Retirement	11 - 12
Loans	12
Group Life Insurance	12
Supplemental Annuity Program	12 - 13
Sickness and Accident Insurance	13
Unemployment Insurance	13
Social Security	13
United States Savings Bonds	13
Awards Program	14
Blood Bank	14
Staff Development and Training	15
IV. <b>PERSONNEL ACTIONS</b>	
Appointments	15
Open Competitive Examinations	15
Promotional Examinations	16
Veterans Preference	16
Probationary Period	16
Increments	17
Performance Evaluation (EPEIS)	17
Transfers	18
Disciplinary Actions	18
Grievance Procedure	18
Resignations	19
Office of Personnel and Human Development Services	19
Lump Sum Reimbursement	19
Pension (Public Employees' Retirement System - PERS)	19
Prescription Drug Plan	19
Termination of Health Benefits Coverage	19
Health Benefits	19
Other Leave	19
Jury Duty	19
Disability Leave - Sick Leave Injury	19
Military Leave	19
Administrative Leave	19
Sick Leave	19
Vacation Leave	19
Holidays	19
Emergency Closing	19
Overtime	19
Paychecks	19
Attendance and Punctuality	19
Rest Periods	19
Hours of Work	19
Equal Opportunity Policy	19

(ii)  
(i)

**I. HISTORY**

The history of the Division of Youth and Family Services dates back to March 14, 1899. On that date, the Governor of New Jersey, Foster M. Voorhees, signed into law a statute creating the State Board of Children's Guardians. Prior to this law, indigent and dependent children in New Jersey were cared for in almshouses where they received little individual attention. The enactment of the law authorized the Board to remove every child then in an almshouse, or later committed to it, and to place them in a family home, or if physically or mentally ill or retarded, in an institution where the child's disability could be treated.

With this as its initial purpose, the State Board of Children's Guardians was given increasing opportunity to help other children who might never be committed to almshouses as indigents. In 1918, the Board of Children's Guardians became one of the agencies in the newly-created State Department of Charities and Correction, whose name was changed the following year to the Department of Institutions and Agencies. Succeeding years was an elaboration of the scope and character of the agency's work. To keep pace with its increased responsibilities, the name of the agency was officially changed in 1947 from the State Board of Children's Guardians to the State Board of Child Welfare.

A significant development occurred with the enactment of Chapter 138 in 1951. This legislation was a progressive step in making practical application of modern concepts of child welfare. Its provisions gave recognition to the values of preserving family living for the child, the importance of a diagnostic and preventive approach to meeting children's needs and the partnership elements characterizing the relationship between the voluntary agencies on the one hand and the public child welfare agency on the other.

The Division of Youth and Family Services was created in May, 1972. The Division assumed the responsibilities of the Bureau of Children's Services, the Day Care 100 program, the Office of Juvenile Justice, Day Care Licensing and responsibility for the Early Childhood Development Demonstration Programs and the State Child Care Coordinating Committee. The Division also assumed responsibility for

supervision of the Social Services Units of the County Welfare Boards.

In order to fulfill its mission, the Division has five major spheres of operations: Field Services; Development; Fiscal and Management; Contract Development and Administration; and Regulatory and Legislative Affairs. Each is under the supervision of an Assistant Director. Within these five areas, there are a total of seven bureaus and various units which provide intensive support and direct client services in an effort to solve the problems and meet the needs of the agency's growing number of clients in the most humane, efficient and economical way.

The Division provides supervisory services to approximately 74,600 children annually – approximately 49,000 at any given time. These services are provided to children in foster placements, group care, institutional or residential placement facilities and to those in their natural homes or the homes of relatives.

## **II. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

### *Equal Opportunity Policy*

As an equal opportunity employer, it is the policy of the Division to afford equal opportunity to qualified individuals regardless of their race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or physical handicap and to conform to applicable laws and regulations. This policy of equal opportunity includes all aspects of the employment relationship including recruitment, hiring, upgrading, transfer and termination.

### *Hours of Work*

Work weeks vary according to employee title. They include a 35 hour work week, a 40 hour work week or a "no limit" work week. Lunch periods vary also. For further information, check with your supervisor.

### *Rest Periods*

Work schedules provide for a 15 minute rest period during each half day. If a rest period is not taken on any given day, it will be considered a loss and not entitlement to compensatory time off.

### *Attendance and Punctuality*

All staff members are required to be at work stations, ready to work, at their assigned starting time. Whenever employees are delayed in reporting for scheduled work assignments, they shall endeavor to contact their supervisor in advance. An employee who has a reasonable excuse and is less than 15 minutes late will not be reduced in salary or denied the opportunity to work and shall not be disciplined except where there is evidence by repetition or neglect. A record of such lateness shall be maintained and charged against compensatory time or vacation time.

### *Paychecks*

Paychecks are distributed every other Friday for a total of 26 weeks in a calendar year. Enclosed with the paycheck is a pay stub which lists all deductions from the gross salary and accumulated deductions for the calendar year. If a payday falls on a holiday, the checks will be distributed the preceding workday. If an employee is absent on a payday, the check may be held in their office or mailed to their home.

### *Overtime*

In order to meet the demands of work, employees may be required to work in excess of their usual work day or on a holiday. Only those employees in a fixed work week (35 or 40 hours) are eligible for paid overtime which is given at a rate of 1½ times the individual's hourly rate.

Approved overtime will accrue for credit only after one continuous

hour has been worked over and above the hours normally worked daily. Thereafter, it will continue to accrue in units of one-half hour for the balance of the overtime.

Overtime checks are distributed every other Friday on the alternate weeks between regular paydays.

### *Emergency Closing*

If offices of the Division are closed due to an emergency, announcements will be made over local radio stations.

### *Accidents*

A First Aid Kit is available in each office. If an employee is injured on the job, it must be reported immediately to their supervisor. A Personnel Injury Report (L&I-1) must be completed and sent to the Personnel Office. Failure to complete this form promptly may cause a loss in benefits.

### *Telephone*

The telephone is one of the most important and useful tools in the operation of the Division. In order to maintain good service, personal calls — incoming or outgoing — are prohibited on office telephones except in emergency situations.

## **III. BENEFITS**

### *Holidays*

Officially designated holidays for permanent and provisional employees are:

NEW YEAR'S DAY	LABOR DAY
LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY	COLUMBUS DAY
WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY	GENERAL ELECTION DAY
GOOD FRIDAY	VETERAN'S DAY
MEMORIAL DAY	THANKSGIVING DAY
INDEPENDENCE DAY	CHRISTMAS DAY

Holidays falling on Sunday are observed on the following Monday. Saturday holidays: Employees in seven day coverage positions, whose regular day off falls on a Saturday, will have their regular day changed to another day in that work week. All other employees do not receive credit for a Saturday holiday unless otherwise proclaimed by the Governor.

Employees who are in pay status, either the day before or the day after the holiday, will be compensated for the holiday. However, holidays will not be credited if:

- a) Employment begins the day after the holiday.
- b) Leave without pay terminates the day before a holiday.
- c) Employment is terminated the day preceding the holiday.

If an employee works on a holiday, they will receive overtime (time and one-half), in addition to the normal credit due.

If the employee is in the seven day coverage title category and the holiday falls on a scheduled day off, they will be granted another day off during that same week. If granting another day off is not possible, they will receive overtime (time and one half) for the extra day worked.

Provisional and permanent part-time employees receive pay credit for the holiday on a proportionate basis provided their work schedule would have included work time on that holiday. "Special Services" employees (those who are short term and/or part-time employees such as Teaching Services) do not receive holiday credit.

### *Vacation Leave*

Full-time employees, whether permanent or provisional, will receive vacation credit in the following manner:

- a) One working day of vacation for each calendar month of employment during the first calendar year of service.
- b) After one year of service and through five years — 12 working days of vacation.
- c) After five years of service and through 12 years — 15 working days of vacation.
- d) After 12 years of service and through 20 years — 20 working days of vacation.
- e) Over 20 years of service — 25 working days of vacation.

Vacation leave credits do not accrue while an employee is on leave without pay except military leave. Permanent and provisional part-time and hourly employees earn vacation credit based upon percent of time worked. "Special Services" employees (those who are short term and/or part time employees such as Youth Worker Services) do not earn vacation credit.

Vacation must be taken during the calendar year in which it is earned unless prevented by work requirements. Unused vacation is accumulated and carried through, but not beyond the following calendar year. In other words, employees may carry a maximum of one year's vacation days to the following year with their supervisor's approval. Employees who resign and have used unearned vacation days will be required to restore those days.

### *Sick Leave*

- a) Personal illness, accident or exposure to contagious disease.
- b) Emergency attendance upon a member of the immediate family or death in the immediate family. Immediate family is defined as mother, father, spouse, child, foster child, brother or sister or relative of the employee residing in the employee's household.

Permanent and provisional full-time employees earn sick leave with pay at the rate of one day per month during the first calendar year of employment and 15 days each year thereafter. Permanent and provisional part-time employees earn sick leave based upon percentage of time worked. Sick leave credits do not accrue while an employee is on any leave without pay except military leave. Unused sick leave accumulates indefinitely. "Special Services" employees are not entitled to sick leave with pay.

Employees must notify their supervisor as early as possible BEFORE their shift begins if they cannot report to work. Failure to call in promptly or abuse of sick leave may be cause for disciplinary action. Absence of five consecutive days or more without notification is considered a resignation not in good standing. A doctor's certificate may be required by the supervisor whenever abuse is suspected. An employee absent on sick leave for five or more consecutive days is required to submit a doctor's certificate to their immediate supervisor.

SEE PENSION SECTION FOR LUMP SUM REIMBURSEMENT OF SICK LEAVE (page 11).

### *Administrative Leave*

All full-time employees in the classified service are entitled to three days administrative leave in each calendar year to be used for personal business including religious observances. Permanent and provisional part-time employees are granted administrative leave on a proportionate basis. New employees earn one-half day after each full month of employment to a maximum of three days per calendar year. This leave is not cumulative. It may be attached to vacation leave with the supervisor's approval.

### *Maternity Leave*

An employee may work as long as her doctor says she is able. A doctor's certificate with the request for a leave of absence must be submitted during the third month of pregnancy to the immediate

supervisor. Employees may request that accrued sick leave be granted during the time prior to the expected day of confinement (delivery) and for one month thereafter. Permanent employees who have completed their working test period may be granted further leave not to exceed six months upon presentation of a doctor's certificate setting forth the necessity thereof.

If additional leave is required, an extension for not more than six months will be considered. Provisional employees shall not be granted a leave exceeding 60 days.

#### *Military Leave*

An employee will not be compensated for the initial period of service which is required upon entrance into the National Guard or United States Reserve. Permanent employees or provisional employees employed one year or longer, who are members of the National Guard or Reserve components, are entitled to leave with pay for the annual training period.

#### *Disability Leave — Sick Leave Injury*

Any employee who is disabled because of *occupational* injury or disease may, upon the recommendation of the appointing authority and the approval of the Department of Civil Service, be granted a leave of absence with full pay, with reduced pay or with full pay for a certain period and with reduced pay thereafter, contingent upon the availability of funds legally usable for this purpose. Any amount of salary or wages paid or payable to an employee for disability leave shall be reduced by the amount of workmen's compensation award under the New Jersey Workmen's Compensation Act for temporary disability.

Such leave shall not be granted beyond one year from the date of injury or illness.

At this time, temporary Disability Insurance is not available to State employees.

#### *Jury Duty*

Any employee called for jury duty may serve with full salary. However, a New Jersey Statute exempts some employees of the Division. Contact the Office of Personnel Services for further information.

#### *Other Leave*

For valid reason, established by Civil Service regulation, a leave of absence with or without pay may be granted a permanent employee (after probationary period) for a maximum of one year. A provisional employee may be granted a maximum of 60 days.

Examples of such leave are educational, extended illness or as a representative to certain conventions.

#### *Health Benefits*

*Blue Cross—Blue Shield (series 750), Rider J and Major Medical* benefits are provided free of charge to all full-time employees and their dependents through the New Jersey State Health Benefits Program. Enrollment is optional (but recommended) and requires a registration form. Coverage becomes effective when the employee has completed two months of continuous service. Check with the payroll section for the exact date of coverage.

Blue Cross—Blue Shield is the basic hospital—medical—surgical plan. Rider J provides payment for diagnostic services such as X-rays, laboratory work, surgery outside the hospital, physical therapy and radiation therapy. Major Medical Insurance supplements the basic plan. Once an employee or a covered dependent have individually and separately satisfied a \$100 deductible, it pays 80% of all eligible expenses that individual incurs up to \$2,000 and 100% of expenses thereafter for the balance of the year.

Employees residing in certain areas may elect to replace the usual coverage with that provided by a *Health Maintenance Organization*. The fundamental objective of HMO is to provide and maintain good

health by emphasizing preventive medicine. A team of physicians of various specialities, along with other health professionals, provide a broad range of health services for members. HMO guarantees access to medical care either through the facility or affiliated emergency centers 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The State will pay the same amount as it would for the usual coverage. Any additional costs will be paid by the employee through payroll deductions.

### *Termination of Health Benefits Coverage*

Health benefits coverage will be terminated automatically for any employee who goes on leave without pay (or who receives no pay during a pay period) unless the employee contacts the Office of Personnel Services before leave begins to make arrangements to prepay premiums for a maximum of six pay periods.

If the employee goes on authorized sick leave without pay, the State will assume the payment of the health benefits premium for six payroll periods. The employee is entitled to prepay the benefits for six additional pay periods.

### *Prescription Drug Plan*

The State has inaugurated a prescription drug program available to employees in eligible titles after two months of continuous service. Check with the payroll section for exact date of coverage. Those employees have prescription drugs reduced to \$1.25 per prescription.

### *Pension (Public Employees' Retirement System - PERS)*

The Public Employees' Retirement System provides benefits for retirement, death and disability. Membership in this system is required for all permanent classified and unclassified employees within four months of their regular appointment date. New members

can buy back credit for temporary employment and/or prior membership. Up to ten years of public employment outside New Jersey may also be purchased, provided the employee is not entitled to receive a pension based on this service. The amount of individual contributions is determined by age and sex upon enrollment.

Retirement benefits are available to a member of the pension system after age 60 - no minimum number of years of service required. A member who has credit for 25 years or more before age 60 can retire regardless of age. Between the ages of 55 and 60, a member will receive a full retirement without reduction. Under age 55, the allowance is reduced for each month under 55.

Veterans with 20 years pension credit may retire at one-half pay at age 62 (60 for those with membership before January 1, 1955.)

Employees with 15 years or more of service may apply for deferred retirement, whereby they discontinue active service, leave the contributions in the system and are eligible for full retirement at age 60 based on years of service.

Pension members who leave State service may request the return of their contributions. They also may remain members for two years by leaving in their contribution in anticipation of possible return to State service.

### *Lump Sum Reimbursement*

Effective July 1, 1973, most pensioned employees of the State are eligible for lump sum monetary compensation of one-half of the earned and unused sick leave credited to them at the date of their retirement. It is based upon the average annual compensation received during the last full year of employment. No lump sum payment shall exceed \$12,000.

### *Disability Retirement*

Under ordinary disability retirement, benefits are paid to an

employee with a non-service connected disability who is under age 60 and incapacitated for further duties, provided they have been a member of the retirement system ten years immediately preceding the effective date of retirement. In accidental disability retirement, benefits are paid to employee pension members with a service connected disability who have become permanently disabled as the result of an accident which occurred while in the performance of duty.

### ***Loans***

After three years of membership, an employee may borrow up to one-half of their total contributions at an interest rate of 4%. No more than two loans can be made in one calendar year. Payments are deducted from the borrower's bi-weekly salary and cannot exceed 25% of the salary. All loans must be repaid before a retirement application can be approved.

### ***Group Life Insurance***

In order to be covered by group life insurance, an employee must be a member of the pension system. During the first year, they are covered by both contributory and non-contributory insurance which pays death benefits totaling three times the annual salary. The cost of contributory insurance is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of 1% of employee's salary. Thereafter, an employee can cancel the contributory coverage by filing a notice of withdrawal. Once contributory coverage is cancelled, it cannot be reinstated. The employee is then covered by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times their annual salary.

### ***Supplemental Annuity Program***

Active members of the retirement system may make contributions to buy retirement annuities which increase and supplement the benefits provided by the retirement system. Employees may contribute from one percent to ten percent of their pay through payroll deduc-

tions and may increase, decrease or discontinue the contributions. However, they may not be withdrawn until retirement or until State employment is terminated. Employees may make a lump sum contribution to the program by direct payment in amounts of not less than \$50. Members may contribute no more than ten percent of their salaries in any one year.

### ***Sickness and Accident Insurance***

A Sickness and Accident Insurance Plan (loss of income protection), plus optional Hospital Expense Coverage, is available to employees. Contact the Office of Personnel Services for further information.

### ***Unemployment Insurance***

Under the special Unemployment Assistance Program, eligible State employees who are totally or partially unemployed may receive benefits up to \$90 per week for a maximum of 26 weeks. Check with the Office of Personnel Services to determine whether the benefits amount is still current. Further information is available at the nearest Unemployment Office.

### ***Social Security***

All employees on the payroll are covered by Social Security (FICA). Retirement benefits are paid at age 65 with reduced benefits payable at age 62. Contact the nearest Social Security Office for further information.

### ***United States Savings Bonds***

Series E Savings Bonds, having a current interest rate of six percent compounded semi-annually, may be purchased through payroll deductions for as little as 50¢ per pay. Forms and additional information are available through the Office of Personnel Services.

## *Awards Program*

### *Suggestion Awards*

If an employee has an idea which would improve operating efficiency or reduce the cost of a specific procedure, they should submit it on the Suggestion Form or on a memo to the Department of Civil Service. Cash awards, from \$10.00 to a maximum of \$5,000, are made on the basis of both tangible and intangible savings.

### *Service Awards*

Awards for service are given to employees who have completed at least five years of State service and at five year intervals thereafter. Beginning with the ten year award, an employee may choose one of several items of jewelry with the service emblem attached. At retirement, each employee is presented with a "Certificate of Appreciation" and a retirement recognition award.

### *Other Awards*

Awards are also given for heroism and for professional accomplishment.

## *Blood Bank*

The Division of Youth and Family Services Blood Bank is affiliated with the Mercer County Blood Center, but donations can be made in all counties. Members and their families are able to receive an immediate, unlimited supply of blood whenever and wherever needed (within the continental United States). Call the Bureau of Management Services for further information.

## *Staff Development and Training*

Various educational and training programs are available through the Office of Human Development Services. Staff training requests are to be reviewed by the immediate supervisor and the employee and forwarded to the above office in the form of a memorandum. Tuition reimbursement for work related courses at various colleges and

universities are also available. Contact the Office of Human Development Services for further information.

## **IV. PERSONNEL ACTIONS**

### *Appointments*

- A. **Permanent** – Appointments to competitive positions are by means of:
1. Open competitive examinations;
  2. Promotional examinations;
  3. Re-employment list;
  4. Special re-employment list.
- B. **Provisional** – If no appropriate lists exist or there is an insufficient number of interested, eligible persons on a list (less than three), the appointing authority may fill a position on a temporary basis until such time that a list of eligible persons is established. The provisional employee has no promotional rights or job security and is, therefore, encouraged to make application when the Civil Service examination for his title is announced.

### *Open Competitive Examinations*

Open competitive examinations are conducted by the Department of Civil Service. To be eligible, an individual must meet New Jersey residency requirements (if specified), education, experience and licensing requirements as noted in the Civil Service "Job Opportunities Bulletin," published monthly.

The names of persons who pass such tests are placed on lists and appointed in the following order, regardless of score. (With each category, candidates are listed in score order.)

- a) Disabled Veterans;
- b) Veterans;
- c) Non-Veterans.

### Promotional Examinations

Promotional examinations are announced and conducted by Civil Service at the request of the Division. To qualify for a promotional examination, an employee must meet the necessary qualifications and experience found in the specific scope of eligibility for the title announced. These requirements are specified on the posted notice of promotional examinations. The Department of Civil Service prepares promotional employment lists by listing all eligibles in order of their final rating and making note of applicable veterans status. No distinction is made between disabled veterans and veterans in promotional examinations.

### Veterans Preference

To qualify as a veteran for Civil Service examinations, an individual must possess a discharge other than dishonorable with active war or emergency service as follows:

- a) World War I — from April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918;
- b) World War II — at least 90 days active service between September 16, 1940 and December 1, 1945;
- c) at least 90 days active service after December 31, 1960 and before August 1, 1974. Reserve training does not qualify.

A disabled veteran must have received at least 10% compensable injury during one of the covered periods.

### Probationary Period

The probationary period for all regular appointments is normally four months, but may be extended to six months by the supervisor. A report on work progress is given to the employee at the end of the second and third months and, if extended, at the end of the fifth month. If the probationary period is satisfactorily completed, the employee receives permanent Civil Service status in a particular title as of the date the probationary period began. If performance is unsatisfactory, employment in that title will be terminated.

### Increments

The employee's transfer request will be kept on file and circulated to the employee's supervisor and the Civil Service Division. Salary is based upon a title classification established by Civil Service. Each title has a specified eight-step range. Increases, called annual increments, are provided annually (subject to budgetary approval) at the beginning of the quarter following the date of appointment. Anniversary dates are January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1.

### Disciplinary Actions

Example: If the employee starts June 15, 1976, the quarter following is July, so that July 1, 1977 they would receive an increment (provided their performance at their job was at least satisfactory) of an employee's Personnel and Civil Service records. Permanent classified employees have the right to appeal to the Civil Service Commission with disciplinary actions or.

### Performance Evaluation (PEPEIS)

Employee Performance Evaluation and Improvement System (PEPEIS) is designed to help employees improve their performance. The employee and supervisor will mutually develop a written job description and standards of performance for the job.

During the year, the employee's progress is reviewed quarterly. Sixty days before the anniversary date (increment date), they will receive a written evaluation of unsatisfactory, satisfactory or outstanding. Any employee who receives an unsatisfactory performance rating will not receive an increment during the next annual evaluation period, unless performance improves to a level which warrants the granting of a normal increment.

An employee may submit a grievance within ten working days after receiving the unsatisfactory rating if they feel it is unwarranted.

### Transfers

Transfers may be made within the Division by sending a memorandum to the Office of Personnel Services requesting a particular section and/or location. Personnel forwards a memorandum to the supervisor notifying them of the request. If the supervisor is interested, they will contact the employee for an interview.

An employee who desires to transfer to another State agency must complete a Department of Civil Service Request to Transfer form.

The employee's transfer request will be kept on file and circulated by the Department of Civil Service for six months from the day of filing. When an employee transfers to another State agency, it is their responsibility to secure release from this Division.

### *Disciplinary Actions*

The Division may, for cause, issue a written reprimand, suspend, fine, demote or remove an employee. All official actions will become part of an employee's Personnel and Civil Service records. Permanent classified employees have the right to appeal to the Civil Service Commission within 20 days of notification of disciplinary actions or, depending on the bargaining unit, to disciplinary arbitration within 15 days involving:

- a) Suspension of more than five days at one time;
- b) Suspension more than three times in one calendar year which total more than 15 days;
- c) Demotion;
- d) Removal.

All other disciplinary actions may be grieved. Since union contracts differ, refer to the contract negotiated by your bargaining unit.

### *Grievance Procedure*

A grievance is:

- 1) a claimed breach, misinterpretation or improper application of a contract (contractual).
- 2) a claimed violation, misinterpretation or misapplication of rules or regulations, existing policy or orders, applicable to the Department of Institutions and Agencies, Division of Youth and Family Services which affect the terms of employment (non-contractual).

Employees must personally initiate grievances within 15 calendar days of the incident giving rise to the grievance (18 calendar days for

some union members). *Exception* — unsatisfactory performance rating. Grievance forms and further information regarding time limitations are provided by supervisors and the Office of Personnel Services.

### *Resignations*

A notice of resignation should be in writing and submitted to the supervisor. It should state the reason for leaving and the effective date. A minimum of two weeks notice is required for a resignation to be in good standing.

Permanent employees who resign in good standing may request that their names be placed on the regular re-employment list provided approval is given by the Division and the Department of Civil Service. This request must be made within two years from the effective date of resignation. The name is retained on the list from the date the request is received until the expiration of the two years.

### *Office of Personnel and Human Development Services*

The Office of Personnel and Human Development Services is here to serve you. Personnel is located at One South Montgomery Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08625 (Broad Street Bank Building, Eighth Floor) and Human Development is at 111 Franklin Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08611. Please feel free to contact these offices with any questions or inquiries.

