

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

## CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

APRIL 13, 2006

M E M O R A N D U M**What's Inside:**

- Preserving Family and Community Connections

TO: REGIONAL EXECUTIVE STAFF, CIRCUIT MANAGERS, AND CHILDREN'S DIVISION STAFF

FROM: PAULA NEESE, INTERIM DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: PRESERVING CONNECTIONS

REFERENCE: CHILDREN'S DIVISION

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce policy enhancements to the Child Welfare Manual that address the Children's Division (CD) philosophical base regarding the preservation of family and community connections.

The preservation of family and community ties is essential to the safety, well-being and permanency for a child. CD recognizes and supports the preservation of family and community connections. Children's Service Workers shall strive to preserve and maintain family and community connections for all children and families served by the Children's Division. For children in out-of-home care, diligent efforts shall be made to place the child and/or sibling group with other relatives or the same placement provider, and maintain the child and/or sibling group in their own schools and communities. It is our belief that families can best be supported by one another and their own communities, when preserving connections efforts are made to:

- Connect a child to his/her heritage, tribe and community;
- Maintain a child in his/her own home;
- Ensure close proximity to his/her parents;
- Ensure sibling groups are placed together;
- Pursue placement of a child and/or sibling group with relatives or with the same placement provider;
- Allows for frequent visitation;
- Maintain a child in his/her current school;
- Pursue recruitment of community families to provide a foster placement for children in out-of-home care; and
- Involve communities in assuring the safety, well-being and permanency of children in their own communities.

The preservation of family and community connections can have a positive impact on keeping a child safe, placement stability, assuring well-being for the child, and timely reunification or another concurrent plan for the child. Again, we are committed to preserving a child's connection to his/her heritage, tribe, and community. These policy changes meet Program Improvement Plan requirements and are consistent with standards set forth by the Council of Accreditation.

<b>NECESSARY ACTION:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review this memorandum with all Children's Division staff.</li> <li>2. Review revised Child Welfare Manual chapters as indicated below.</li> <li>3. All questions should be cleared through normal supervisory channels and directed to:</li> </ol>	
<b>PDS CONTACT:</b> Alicia Jenkins, PDS 573-751-0311 <a href="mailto:Alicia.Jenkins@dss.mo.gov">Alicia.Jenkins@dss.mo.gov</a>	<b>PROGRAM MANAGER:</b> Kathryn Sapp 573-522-5062 <a href="mailto:Kathryn.Sapp@dss.mo.gov">Kathryn.Sapp@dss.mo.gov</a>
<b>CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS:</b> <a href="#">PHILOSOPHICAL BASE OF CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE</a>	
<b>FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS:</b> N/A	
<b>REFERENCE DOCUMENTS and RESOURCES:</b> N/A	
<b>RELATED STATUTE:</b> N/A	
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE RULE:</b> N/A	
<b>COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA) STANDARDS:</b> N/A	
<b>PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP):</b> P2.14.1d	
<b>SACWIS REQUIREMENTS:</b> N/A	

PN/AJ