

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P.O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

June 21, 2006

MEMORANDUM**WHAT'S INSIDE:**

- Documentation of Email Correspondence
- Set up and Maintenance of Provider Records
- Role of Worker in Licensing and License Maintenance

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

FROM: PAULA NEESE, INTERIM DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: DOCUMENTATION OF EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE, SET UP AND MAINTENANCE OF PROVIDER RECORDS, AND ROLE OF WORKER IN RESOURCE PROVIDER LICENSING AND LICENSE MAINTENANCE

REFERENCE: CHILDREN'S DIVISION

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce changes in policy related to the documentation of email correspondence in all case types, the set up and maintenance of provider records, and the role of the worker in resource provider licensing and license maintenance. These changes are contained in the Child Welfare Manual, Section 5, Chapter 1; and Section 6, Chapter 3, Attachment M. Attachment M is a new addition to the manual.

DOCUMENTATION OF EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Email has become a typical form of communication for our staff. We utilize this form of communication to relay information regarding cases to other Division staff, Juvenile Court personnel, placement providers, and attorneys. While we are using this form of communication more often, it still tends to be less formal in nature. The informality associated with this form of communication can create problems when staff are trying to adequately document case activity. Therefore, guidelines for the recording and documentation of email correspondence is being added to the Child Welfare Manual, Section 5, Chapter 1.

Email correspondence pertaining to a case must be included in recording and documentation. The email message shall be printed and included in the correspondence section of the case file. Staff should also note in the narrative section that contact was made with an individual through email in the narrative section but the content of the message does not need to be included. Since email correspondence

shall be included in the case file, staff should give the same consideration to the content as they would for letters and other forms of correspondence. Only information pertaining to the case should be included in the message and discussion of topics unrelated to the case should not be contained within the message.

Staff are reminded that this form of correspondence is open to release when a request is made for a file. Since email may be released with the rest of the file, it is important that staff are careful to only include necessary and pertinent information.

Personal information and commentary regarding case members or others involved in the case is not appropriate for this type of correspondence and should be left out. It is also important for best practice that only one case be discussed in each email. This means when consulting with a supervisor, Juvenile Officer or attorney regarding multiple cases, multiple emails should be sent. If email is received from another party discussing numerous cases, a copy of the correspondence should be placed in each case file with the names and information regarding the other cases redacted from the copy. Notation should be made in the narrative as to why there is information redacted from the correspondence.

SET UP AND MAINTENANCE OF PROVIDER RECORDS

Guidelines have now been established for the set up and maintenance of provider records. These guidelines are contained in Section 5, Chapter 1, of the Child Welfare Manual. Case recording for resource provider records should be completed quarterly and signed by the Children's Services Worker responsible for licensing of the family. Documentation should include, at a minimum, the dates of quarterly home visits and who was seen at the visit, current number and type of placements, changes in household composition, licensing concerns, and progress on the Professional Family Development Plan. Quarterly home visits must be conducted by the licensing worker or another approved staff member and should not be conducted by the Children's Services Workers for the foster children in the household. Quarterly documentation should also address any identified safety issues. The case narrative and documentation should be reviewed and signed quarterly by the supervisor for the worker responsible for licensing the home.

ROLE OF THE WORKER

The role of the Children's Services Worker responsible for licensing resource providers is to coordinate the licensing and maintenance of all foster, relative and kinship care homes. This coordination includes recruitment, training, and support of foster, relative and kinship care providers. It also includes addressing any concerns (i.e. licensing violations or failing to meet the competencies) with the providers and assuring the home continues to meet licensing standards. A list of job duties related to resource provider licensing are contained in Section 6, Chapter 3, Attachment M, of the Child Welfare Manual.

Changes have also been made to Section 6 Chapter 3.1 in order to comply with [Council on Accreditation standard S21.10.05](#). The changes made to this section were addressed in memorandum [CD06-49](#), and require the assessment (home study) to be updated within two weeks when significant changes within the foster, relative or kinship home are brought to staff's attention.

NECESSARY ACTION:

1. Review this memorandum with all Children’s Division staff.
2. Review revised Child Welfare Manual chapters as indicated below.
3. All questions should be cleared through normal supervisory channels and directed to:

PDS CONTACT:

Stefanie Wickers
573-751-1354
Stefanie.D.Wickers@dss.mo.gov

PROGRAM MANAGER:

Cindy Wilkinson
573-751-3171
Cindy.R.Wilkinson@dss.mo.gov

CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS:

[Section 5 Chapter 1](#)
[Section 6 Chapter 3](#)
[Section 6 Chapter 3 Attachment M](#) (new)
[Table of Contents](#)

FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS:

N/A

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS and RESOURCES:

[Memorandum CD06-49](#)

RELATED STATUTE:

N/A

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE:

N/A

COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA) STANDARDS: (Employee Access Only)

[S21.10.05](#)

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP):

N/A

SACWIS REQUIREMENTS:

N/A