

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

## CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

AUGUST 30, 2006

MEMORANDUM

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| <b><u>What's Inside:</u></b><br>Procedure to<br>Substantiate on<br>Unknown<br>Perpetrators |
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TO: REGIONAL EXECUTIVE STAFF, CIRCUIT MANAGERS, AND  
CHILDREN'S DIVISION STAFF

FROM: PAULA NEESE, INTERIM DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: UNKNOWN PERPETRATORS

## DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce policy and procedure when evidence supports substantiation of child abuse or neglect of a child when the identity of the perpetrator is unknown.

When child abuse or neglect has occurred it is always preferable to conclude an investigation with a clear determination of what happened and who caused the abuse or neglect. Some investigations however, result in substantiated findings that a victim was abused or neglected, but the identity of the perpetrator can not be determined. (Example: A child has physical evidence consistent with shaken baby syndrome or physical findings consistent with sexual abuse, however the child is too young to make a statement and there is no clear evidence to single out a perpetrator.) Even though we are not always in a position to hold the perpetrator accountable, there is still the opportunity to determine a victim was abused or neglected and to determine the victims need for services.

The worker may make a substantiated finding by preponderance of evidence even when the identity of the perpetrator cannot be determined, but only after the following steps are taken:

1. Worker clearly documents the evidence that lead to the determination that the victim was abused or neglected;
2. Worker documents efforts to determine the identity of the perpetrator;
3. Worker's supervisor reviews the investigation and agrees with the substantiated finding or makes suggestions to further efforts to identify a perpetrator;
4. If the Worker's Supervisor is in agreement with the substantiated finding on an unknown perpetrator, the report is forwarded to the Field Support Manager or a Program Manager for review;

5. The Field Support Manager or a Program Manager may suggest further action to determine the identity of the perpetrator or authorize the decision to substantiate on an unknown perpetrator. No investigation may be concluded with a substantiated finding on an unknown perpetrator without authorization from a Field Support Manager or a Program Manager.
6. Worker documents authorization to substantiate on an unknown perpetrator in the CPS-1 narrative section.

Note: An “*unknown perpetrator*” can be added to the participation list if it is not currently an option. Select “institution/unknown perpetrator” to satisfy the “*perpetrator characteristics*” requirement.

**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:**

Randall McDermit, PDS  
 573-751-8932  
[Randall.D.McDermit@dss.mo.gov](mailto:Randall.D.McDermit@dss.mo.gov)

**PROGRAM MANAGER:**

Kathryn Sapp, Unit Manager  
 573-522-5062  
[Kathryn.Sapp@dss.mo.gov](mailto:Kathryn.Sapp@dss.mo.gov)

**CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS:**

[Table of Contents](#)  
[Section 2, Chapter 4.1.8.2](#) Substantiated by Preponderance Of Evidence (POE)

**FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS:**

N/A

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS and RESOURCES:**

N/A

**RELATED STATUTE:**

[Chapter 210 RSMo](#)

**ADMINISTRATIVE RULE:**

N/A

**COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA) STANDARDS:**

N/A

**PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP):**

N/A

**SACWIS REQUIREMENTS:**

N/A