

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

May 12, 2010

<p><u>What's Inside:</u> FCS cases and contact with the non-custodial or non-resident parent</p>

M E M O R A N D U M

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

FROM: PAULA NEESE, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: FCS CASES AND CONTACT WITH THE NON-CUSTODIAL OR NON-RESIDENT PARENT

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide clarification to staff about the importance of working with families as part of an open Family-Centered Services (FCS) case to encourage involvement of the non-resident or non-custodial parent in case planning and services. Engagement and relationship building is of central importance in gathering meaningful information from families, children, and youth regarding their needs and strengths and essential for achieving safety, permanence and well-being for children. Staff are to encourage and work with parents to be cooperative and engaging of the non-resident or non-custodial parent as appropriate in preserving the best interest and safety of their child/ren.

Why Involve a Non-Custodial or Non-Resident Parent?

- A child's identity is strongly influenced by his or her family. Encouraging the engagement of a non-custodial or non-resident parent may introduce a child to members of his or her family previously unknown or uninvolved;
- A non-custodial or non-resident parent may provide valuable family history or health information;
- Essential family information can be gathered should the need for future alternative care placement arise;
- The non-custodial or non-resident parent may have relatives who are willing to be involved in a supportive role to the family as part of the FCS case; and
- Children may benefit from their parent's social security benefits or inheritance.

Confidentiality

In FCS cases, services are provided to prevent or remedy child abuse or neglect. The client must voluntarily seek or accept services in FCS cases. Children's Division staff

have the responsibility to preserve confidentiality in these voluntary cases; however, for successful treatment services, families are to be encouraged to engage the non-custodial or non-resident parent as appropriate in preserving the best interest and safety of their child/ren. The client with the open FCS case should be reminded that any biological parent of child/ren involved in the FCS treatment case has the right to access the case record, provided they only receive information regarding the child.

Suggestions for Encouraging a Parent to Engage a Non-Custodial or Non-Resident Parent

- During the initial FCS assessment start the engagement process by asking about the non-custodial or non-resident parent and their involvement with the family;
- While completing the genogram and eco-map, ask about and document the non-custodial or non-resident parents and their family information as well as the relationships within the family;
- During each home visit discuss with the parent the importance of involving the non-custodial or non-resident parent in their child's life; and
- Provide information and guidance to the parent about how to engage the non-custodial or non-resident parent during interactions with the family.

The Child Welfare Manual has been updated to reflect the information outlined in this memorandum.

NECESSARY ACTION	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Crystal Wilson 573-751-1354 Crystal.L.Wilson@dss.mo.gov	PROGRAM MANAGER Amy Martin 573-751-3171 Amy.L.Martin@dss.mo.gov
CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS Section 3 Chapter 3 Subsection 2 Completion of the Family-Centered Services Assessment Process Section 3 Chapter 3 Subsection 3 Developing a Written Service Agreement Section 3 Chapter 3 Subsection 6 Completion of the Family-Centered Services Family Support Team Meetings for Intact Families Section 3 Chapter 4 Subsection 1 Providing Services	
FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS N/A	

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES N/A
RELATED STATUTE N/A
ADMINISTRATIVE RULE N/A
COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA) STANDARDS N/A
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW (CFSR) CFSR, Item 18, Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning
<u>PROTECTIVE FACTORS</u> Parental Resilience Social Connections Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development Concrete Support in Times of Need Social and Emotional Competence of Children
FACES REQUIREMENTS N/A