

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

September 9, 2010

M E M O R A N D U M

<p>What's Inside: Revised Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles</p>
--

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

FROM: PAULA NEESE, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: REVISED VISION, MISSION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

DISCUSSION:

This memorandum is to introduce the final revisions made to the [Missouri Children's Division Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles](#) by the Workgroup for Racial Equity in Child Welfare. Recently, you were asked to respond to a survey to provide feedback on the proposed revisions. The survey results were compiled and considered by the workgroup. Response results are explained as follows:

Out of the 2,082 total Children's Division staff across the state, 396 (19% of staff) responded to the survey. Of these 396 staff, approximately 25% made written comments and/or recommendations to the proposed revisions.

Breakdown of Responses to the 3 questions asked:

1. Do the changes capture Children's Division's goal in providing equitable services to all families? **92% yes 8% no**

2. Is this a Mission/Vision/Guiding Principles you can support? **92.9% yes 7.1% no**

3. Are you comfortable explaining the Mission/Vision/Guiding Principles to the community? **88.5% yes 11.5% no**

The workgroup met regarding the results and all comments provided on the surveys were heard and considered. Because this issue is of great importance to the Division, we want to clarify why some suggested changes were incorporated and others were not. For example, several staff expressed concern with the use of the term "Equity" when it came to describing our service to children and families. They suggested "equality" and other synonyms. According to Dictionary.com, "Equity" means:

1. The quality of being fair or impartial; fairness; impartiality;
2. Something that is fair and just.

Using this definition as a guide, the workgroup felt that this was the most powerful word that accurately reflects what the Division is trying to accomplish in our efforts to reduce disproportionality. After that discussion, the decision was made not to remove this word from our Vision statement.

A great deal of input was received about including “religion” as a protected value in our statement, along with culture, race, etc.. While the group recognizes the need to be mindful and respectful of our families’ specific beliefs, they also recognized that “religion” is more than a belief system. Those who embrace a formalized religion make it a part of their family culture. Because of this, the group determined that religion is covered when talking about respecting one’s “culture”.

Many suggestions and recommendations were incorporated into the final product in regard to grammar changes, punctuation, wording, etc.

To be fair, it must be noted that, while many staff embrace these changes, there were some who feel the changes are unnecessary. We respect and appreciate those comments and the feelings behind them. However, the decision was ultimately made to move forward with the changes, supported by the clear majority of those who returned their surveys. Concerns were expressed that respecting family culture could lead us to the point of condoning abusive behavior. Be assured, however, this effort will never take the Division to the point of compromising our ultimate mandate of protecting children from abuse and neglect. Rather, this increased emphasis on equity guides us in completing that mandate in a way that respects the child and their family.

We are in the process of having the revised Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles printed on cardstock and business cards to replace the previous version. Many people have said they like to have these nearby as a reminder of the values that guide us as we do our work. They will be distributed to your circuits when they become available.

The revised Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles have been posted to the Intranet.

NECESSARY ACTION	
1. Review this memorandum with all Children’s Division staff. 2. All questions should be cleared through normal supervisory channels and directed to:	
PDS CONTACT Melody L. Barker (573) 751 - 0311 Melody.L.Barker@dss.mo.gov	PROGRAM MANAGER Dena Driver (573) 751 - 3171 Dena.D.Driver@dss.mo.gov
CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS N/A	

FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS N/A
REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES http://dssweb/cs/index.htm
RELATED STATUTE N/A
ADMINISTRATIVE RULE N/A
COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA) STANDARDS N/A
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW (CFSR) N/A
PROTECTIVE FACTORS (Link applicable factors and enter N/A if not applicable.) Parental Resilience N/A Social Connections N/A Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development N/A Concrete Support in Times of Need N/A Social and Emotional Competence of Children N/A
FACES REQUIREMENTS N/A