

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

AUGUST 29, 2017

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: CHILDREN'S DIVISION AND CONTRACTED STAFF

FROM: TIM DECKER, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FOR CHILD VISITATION AND CHILD WELFARE PRACTITIONERS

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update regarding child welfare practitioner (children service worker) considerations related to State Level Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) recommendations and the use of service workers statewide. These changes will go into effect as of September 11th, 2017.

A CQI Design Team was assembled in July 2016 with child welfare practitioner representation from all regions. The Team's focus included:

- A review of the Division's core values and guidelines specific to creating and sustaining effective and meaningful relationships with children, youth and families
- A review of data related to children's placement and distance of travel involved
- Reviewing recommendations of other child welfare practitioners statewide

This work culminated in recommendations which were presented and reviewed by the Division's Executive Team. The following recommendations represent items of resolution related to this CQI initiative:

- Remove redundancies in paperwork and administrative processes with the intended tradeoff for child welfare practitioners to have a greater proportion of time devoted to face to face, direct practice with children and families. To this end the Division issued Director Memo *TD16-08 –Introducing the Stop Doing List*. A similar concept for Supervisors was approved in March 2017.
- Enhance workforce wellbeing, including efforts to support work-family-life balance in light of the workload demands, received approval. While there are some business-related considerations that have to be taken into account (i.e.,

hotline response, attendance at court, office coverage, etc.), child welfare practitioners and field leadership are encouraged to work together to create work schedules with the intent to ensure that every child welfare practitioner has an opportunity for flexibility and balance over a given course of time. Examples of this practice include:

- Local teams planning ahead to create rotating schedules of three day weekends for all child welfare practitioners
 - All child welfare practitioners on the Career Ladder as Children's Service Worker IIIs or IVs, Specialists and Supervisors be allowed to work from home at least one day a week
 - Local teams to create on-call and intake schedules together with child welfare practitioners to resolve trade-offs in shift assignments to create space for work-family-life balance
 - All child welfare practitioners plan vacation time with supervisors months in advance while supervisors make efforts to create workplace coverage sufficient to minimize contacting child welfare practitioners on vacation
- A further recommendation from the CQI group suggested the option to request service workers in certain situations. Feedback from many child welfare practitioners statewide expressed an interest in continuing to sustain the relationships they have with the children on their caseload. In response, this memorandum serves as a clarification that child welfare practitioners will not be required to request a service worker regardless of in-state travel involved. If staff are considering whether to request a service worker, the following guidelines apply:
 - The child must be placed outside of the child welfare practitioner's circuit
 - The drive time to visit the child must be at least two hours (one way, as measured from the child welfare practitioner's base office)
 - If these two conditions are met, the worker can place the request in the placement circuit's courtesy request email inbox. Please reference [CD-14-49](#) for more information on this email inbox
 - The service worker visits child up to 50% of the months (may be flexibly organized as every other month or arranged for a set of months to cover planning for traditionally inclement weather months or other reason – the child welfare practitioner and the service worker should communicate clearly with each other to plan who will visit and when)
 - The child welfare practitioner will have monthly contact with the child in some form, such as face time, skype, or via a phone call
 - The CQI Team requested the ability to complete face-to-face contact at children's activities outside the home (e.g., school concerts, sporting events, getting siblings together for a visit in the community, etc.). As a clarification, the federal

standard for seeing children in their placement setting requires a visit occur with children, face-to-face (i.e., in person) the majority of the time in their placement setting, a minimum of once per month. This is defined as at least 51% of the visits that occur while the child is in care must occur monthly in the placement setting (i.e., if the child has been in care 5 months during the federal fiscal year, 3 of the visits need to have occurred in the placement setting). Please refer to the related practice alert on this matter ([PP17-FC-01](#)).

Staff are to inform outside circuits when they place a child within a different circuit. This can be done via email to the circuit's courtesy request email inbox.

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 Jason Kearbey Jason.L.Kearbey@dss.mo.gov Workforce Recruitment & Retention Specialist Scott Montgomery Scott.B.Montgomery@dss.mo.gov	MANAGER CONTACT Ivy Doxley Ivy.Doxley@dss.mo.gov
CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS	
Section 4 Chapter 6.1	Out-of-Home Placement Support Activities
Section 4 Chapter 7.1	Activities in the first 24 to 72 hours
Section 4 Chapter 7.3.2	Meeting/Working with the Child
Section 4 Chapter 7.3.4	Meeting/Working with the Resource Provider
Section 4 Chapter 8 attachment A	Service and Host Worker Duties
Section 4 Chapter 8.2	Family/Child Moves from County
FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS	
N/A	
REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES	
Practice Point PP17-FC-01	
COA Standard PA-CFS15	
RELATED STATUTE	
N/A	