



Practice Points

Falsification of Case Records

This Practice Point is being issued in response to concerns which have arisen in relation to the fact-based integrity of Children's Division records. **It is unacceptable to request or require any family member to sign an otherwise blank document such as a visitation form, safety plan, etc.** Staff should only request signatures from children and families after the staff has completed the remainder of the form and provided the family an opportunity to review and understand the entire document. To do otherwise is unethical, could be construed as coercion, and may present potentially criminal implications.

It is unacceptable to falsify a Children's Division record in any way. This could include, but is not limited to: using white out to cover information on a previously signed document, making a copy and filling in the form, then filing it as if the individual had signed the revised form; staff forging the signature of any client, rather than having the client sign their own name on the document; or staff entering narrative information which varies from their direct observations or interactions with children, families, multi-disciplinary contacts, collateral contacts, etc.

This is a very serious issue with very serious consequences, up to and including dismissal and criminal prosecution. Every effort should be made to ensure that the case record is an accurate and complete reflection of your work with children and families. As stewards of the state of Missouri, and employees of the Children's Division, nothing less should be expected and nothing less will be tolerated.