



Practice Points

Obtaining a Release of Information When Referring to First Steps

The purpose of this Practice Point is to remind staff of the need to make every effort to obtain a release of information from biological parents when referring a family to the First Steps program. As pointed out in [Section 2 Chapter 4.1.12 Determining the Level of Intervention](#), “Staff should be sure to complete form SS-6, Release of Information, as required, in order to continue communications with the First Steps provider. If the parent/legal guardian refuses to sign the release, the CSW should document the refusal in the case record. If the worker is subsequently contacted by First Steps, the worker shall inform the First Steps staff person that an authorized release was not obtained, and discontinue any further communication.”

A signed release of information is not required in situations involving a child that has been placed under the legal custody of the Children’s Division. However, staff should provide verification of the child’s custody status to First Steps in these circumstances in order to maintain open communication regarding the child and family’s status.

Children’s Division staff may continue to use the CS-30 Medical/Professional Information Request form during the completion of a Child Abuse/Neglect Investigation or Family Assessment for situations in which families refuse to consent to a release of information with First Steps. In these circumstances, such requests should be used only on an as needed basis in order to obtain relevant information pertaining to children’s safety and/or well-being. The CS-30 may not be used during the provision of case management services.