

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

July 11, 2012

MEMORANDUM**What's Inside:**Incarcerated
Parents

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

FROM: CANDACE A. SHIVELY, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: WORKING WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce enhanced policy for working with incarcerated parents. These changes come as a result of the Program Improvement Plan to enhance case management practice, specifically family engagement with incarcerated parents. A workgroup composed of contracted and CD staff from each of the regions made recommendations for changes resulting in the following new policy which:

- Provides clear expectations about the service worker's responsibilities and guidelines for requesting a service worker
- Establishes an identified CD staff person for counties with prisons to serve as a liaison between the agency and the prison
- Provides information on the importance of working with incarcerated parents through training opportunities

Service Worker Requests

Engaging parents in case planning is essential. Staff should provide updates and status reports to incarcerated parents per policy. Sometimes it is difficult to make and maintain contact with incarcerated parents due to facility rules and other challenges. However, the benefits of maintaining connections with the incarcerated parent are many. Staff should make arrangements to meet with the parent(s) of a child in alternative care at least one time per month and should invite the parent to participate in Family Support Team meetings via phone. Visits between the child and parent should be arranged as often as possible when it is considered to be in the best interest of the child. When visitation between the child and the parent is considered to be detrimental, face to face contact between the worker and the parent is not necessary. Specific examples are when:

- The parent is not allowed to have visits because of his or her behavior within the correctional facility
- The parent is not allowed to have visits per court order. Some courts have a standing order that disallows visitation if a parent is incarcerated. Circuits are encouraged to work with their local juvenile office to establish child-specific criteria for visits instead of utilizing standing orders for no visitation when possible
- The parent requests no involvement
- Visitation is not in the best interest of the child
- The parent poses a safety risk
- The parent is incarcerated with a child endangerment charge and is not allowed to visit with their children in the facility
- The parent is in the assessment phase of their sentence and is not allowed visitation

Evidence to support the exclusionary examples listed above must be documented in the monthly summaries in FACES. When a service worker request is appropriate, the case manager needs to be clear by specifying what services are to be provided.

Liaisons

Each county with a prison will identify a staff person who will serve as the liaison between the agency and the prison. This person should also be assigned as the service worker for the parents who are in the facility. Children’s Division Liaisons need to be familiar with the visitation guidelines and services offered in the prison. Visitation requirements vary per facility. The liaison should call the Warden’s office at the prison and find out what documentation is required prior to visitation.

Training

There are two training options to enhance case management practice with incarcerated parents. [Breaking Through the Bars: The Incarcerated Parent](#), from the Legal Aspects DVD Series, describes laws applicable to incarcerated parents and how these laws/ policy affect case management practice throughout the life of a case. A second option, [Working with Incarcerated Parents](#) was developed by staff from St. Louis City to provide additional guidance when determining services for incarcerated parents. These training resources should be reviewed during a monthly meeting or supervisory consultation to ensure staff understand the importance of working with incarcerated parents.

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: Christy Collins (573) 751-9603 Christy.Collins@dss.mo.gov	PROGRAM MANAGER: Dena Driver (573) 751-3171 Dena.Driver@dss.mo.gov

<p>CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS: Section 4 Chapter 7 Att. B Serving the Incarcerated Parent</p>
<p>FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS N/A</p>
<p>REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES N/A</p>
<p>RELATED STATUTE N/A</p>
<p>ADMINISTRATIVE RULE N/A</p>
<p>COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA) STANDARDS COA Standard PA-FC 3 COA Standard PA-FC 7 COA Standard PA-FC 8 COA Standard PA-FC 12</p>
<p>CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW (CFSR) CFSR, Item 13, Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care CFSR, Item 14, Preserving connections CFSR, Item 16, Relationship of child in care with parents CFSR, Item 17, Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents CFSR, Item 20, Caseworker visits with parents</p>
<p><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</p>
<p>FACES REQUIREMENTS N/A</p>