

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES

P.O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

August 27, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: AREA EXECUTIVE STAFF, COUNTY DIRECTORS AND CHILDREN SERVICES STAFF

FROM: DENISE CROSS, DIRECTOR

REFERENCE: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SUBJECTS:

- CHANGES IN POLICY AS IT RELATES TO CAREER FOSTER CARE AND BEHAVIORAL FOSTER CARE
- REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH THERAPEUTIC FOSTER FAMILY HOMES AND MISSOURI ALLIANCE HOMES
- AVAILABILITY PAYMENTS FOR CAREER FOSTER PARENTS
- IDENTIFICATION OF BEST PRACTICES FOR CHILDREN IN THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE
- CAREER PARENT EMPLOYMENT
- PERMANENCY FOR CHILDREN IN THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE
- CRITERIA FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS IN THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to make corrections to memo CS03-21 and replace it with this memo. This memo will reflect changes in policy as it relates to children in Behavioral Foster Care (BFC) and Career Foster Care (CFC), referred to as therapeutic foster care, unless otherwise specified. This memo will review best practice for this program, and the use of the Department of Mental Health (DMH) therapeutic foster homes as they continue to be valuable in providing expertise and support for children in therapeutic foster homes.

Availability payments should not occur over the 90-day transition period when the Career Foster Parent(s) are unwilling to accept children who fit the profile and are considered by the team as appropriate for placement.

Career Foster Parents will now be allowed to submit a plan to Area Office for approval to work outside the home in addition to being a CFC parent. This will be considered on a case by case basis.

Career Foster Parents, staff and other treatment team members must continue to aggressively pursue permanency and use periodic reviews as one of the tools to assure progress toward permanency is occurring.

We will no longer use IQ as a singular characteristic to rule children out of therapeutic foster care. Children with developmental delays may, or may not, be appropriate for BFC or CFC. However, an IQ score of 65 or below should not, as a singular characteristic, rule the child out for this level of care. Instead, appropriateness for therapeutic foster care should be based on the Selection/Screening Team and/or FST evaluation of all the child's clinical and behavioral characteristics, including the child's strengths and permanency goals, as well as functioning level, severity of developmental delays, type of behavioral problems, level of physical aggression, size, age, and need for supervision.

NECESSARY ACTION:

1. Review this memorandum with all Children's Services staff.
2. As this will be a change in practice for many providers, we ask that all Area and County offices notify their alternative care providers of these changes.
3. The following mentioned manual chapters for this memorandum will be made and put on the Child Welfare Manual Intranet site:

Section 4, Chapter 4 "Selection of Placement Resource and Placement Options"
Section 4, Chapter 11, Attachment A "Standard Payment Rate for Foster Family Alternative Care"

Section 4, Chapter 11, Attachment I "Availability Payments For Career Foster Parents"

Section 4, Chapter 16 "Career Foster Home /Individualized Care"

Section 4, Chapter 16, Attachment A "Identification of Best Practices"

Section 4, Chapter 16, Attachment B "Career Parent Responsibilities and Employment"

4. All comments and questions regarding this memorandum should be cleared through normal supervisory channels.

DC/SH/VES:js