

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

## CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

## M E M O R A N D U M

TO: CHILDREN'S DIVISION AND CONTRACTED STAFF

FROM: DAVID KURT, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Revisions to Section 2 of the CHILD WELFARE MANUAL

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce staff to changes to Section 2 of the Child Welfare Manual. This is part of a major reorganization of the manual that includes some policy updates, some new policy and integration of the Missouri Practice Model.

Staff are encouraged to read through all of the sections to become familiar with the organization and content. Below are some of the major highlights of Section 2 revisions:

- Re-organization. Policies that are common to Family Assessments, Investigations and Juvenile assessments have been moved to a 'General Procedures' sub-section. Policy specific to these types of reports are found under their individual sub-sections;
- A new chapter on mandated reporting has been added;
- Clarified track changing based on recent FACES changes;
- Clarified 'already investigated' conclusions;
- Clarified care, custody, and control;
- Revised policy on how to appropriately document contacts with reporters. Staff should **fully** document contact with the reporter in the report narrative, including attempts to contact the reporter. Staff may choose to add the reporter as a significant other or service provider, whichever is most appropriate, in order to document information from the reporter outside of the allegations when the reporter has an ongoing relationship or is providing treatment services to the family.
- Clarified policy regarding information sharing with reporters;
- Added information on co-investigations with law enforcement, multi-disciplinary teams, and Child Advocacy Centers (including cursory interviews);
- Added information about concluding fatality reports;
- Added information about deceased perpetrators;
- Removed policy related to safety and risk assessment, and safety planning. Policy on these topics can be found in Section 1, Missouri Practice Model.

- Policy related to Critical Events has been moved to Section 8, Administrative.

### **Cursory Physical Examinations**

Significant changes have been made to existing policy regarding staff's physical observation of children. If the allegations involve sexual abuse, staff **may not** complete a cursory physical examination. A SAFE-exam referral should be made any time documentation of injuries related to sexual abuse is necessary.

Staff may only conduct cursory physical examinations of areas of the child not readily visible with the consent of the parent/caretaker. If the injury is visible without moving clothing, staff may document their observations and do not need to obtain consent from the parent/caregiver. If the child refuses the examination, staff should not proceed, even if the parent/caregiver has consented. Staff must document that the parent/caretaker gave consent for the cursory physical examination. Staff should complete the examination in the least intrusive manner possible that is sensitive to the child's age, gender and emotional well-being.

Staff may conduct a cursory physical examination of the genital area of a child three (3) and under in the presence of the parent/caretaker. If the genital area needs to be observed and the allegations are not sexual abuse in nature, staff should refer the child for a medical examination by a physician for children over the age of three (3).

Staff should conduct all examinations in the presence of another adult, such as the parent/caregiver, law enforcement, etc.

### **Photographing Children**

Staff were previously prohibited from taking photographs of children. Staff may now take photographs of children when a parent or legal guardian of the child provides consent to the taking of the photograph. Staff should take the photograph(s) in the presence of the parent or legal guardian. If a parent or legal guardian refuses or is unable to provide consent, only law enforcement or medical personnel may take photographs. Staff should also ask the child, if age appropriate permission to take photographs. If the child refuses to be photographed, staff should not proceed, even if the parent/caregiver has consented. Staff should take photographs in the least intrusive manner possible that is sensitive to the child's age, gender, and emotional well-being. Staff shall **not** take pictures of a child's genitalia in regards to allegations of sexual abuse. This may only be done by medical personnel. Staff must document that the parent/caretaker gave consent to photography. In addition to using photographs to document injuries, staff may take photographs to show an absence of injuries. Photographs should only be taken with state-issued equipment.

### **Signs of Safety Integration**

- When interviewing children, staff should use the Three Houses Tool (CD-217), the My Safety House tool (CD-216), or a developmentally appropriate version of these tools when interviewing the child to give them an opportunity to talk about what they are worried about, what makes them happy and what they would like to see happen in their family and community to keep them safe.

- When opening an FCS case due to a CA/N report **or** when the child has been removed from the home staff should, at a minimum, complete a draft of the Family Risk Assessment Map (CD-220) prior to the case being assigned for ongoing case management. Completion of the CD-220 provides clarity for the family and the ongoing case manager as to why the FCS case is being opened or why the child was removed from the home. The scaling question will help the ongoing case manager and their supervisor determine how quickly the initial face-to-face home visit with the family will be made in the FCS case.

<b>NECESSARY ACTION</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review this memorandum with all Children’s Division staff.</li> <li>2. Review revised Child Welfare Manual chapters as indicated below.</li> <li>3. All questions should be cleared through normal supervisory channels and directed to:</li> </ol>	
<b>PDS CONTACT</b> Kara Wilcox-Bauer 573-526-9707 Kara.B.Wilcox-Bauer@dss.mo.gov	<b>MANAGER CONTACT</b> Tasha Toebben 573-526-3899 Tasha.Toebben@dss.mo.gov
<b>CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS</b>	
Section 2	
<b>FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS</b>	
N/A	
<b>REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES</b>	
N/A	
<b>RELATED STATUTE</b>	
N/A	