

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 WOOD DIRECTOR  
SUBJECT: TIMELY INITIAL CONTACT WITH VICTIM CHILD(REN)

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce new policy regarding documenting the initial contact with the victim child(ren) in FACES.

Timely Initial Contact with Victim Child(ren) is:

- The cornerstone of establishing child safety when a report is received.
- Mandated by state statute.
- The expectation that staff make all efforts to locate and ensure safety within policy time frames.
- A federal measure and monitored through the case review process.
- A benchmark of the Program Improvement Plan and must be met to avoid substantial financial penalties
- An item the Children's Division has a long term established state goal of goal of 90%. While individual circuits may reach the benchmark, the state has not reached this goal for many years.
- Part of the Children's Division dashboard focus in 2020 to improve practice. The current percentage of victim(s) seen timely is 77%. The goal is to improve practice statewide and thereby raise the state to at least 88% for calendar year 2020.

Staff must assure safety of the victim child(ren) by means of personal contact or by a multi-disciplinary team member per the Response Priority Level required timelines. For Investigations, Family Assessments, and Juvenile Assessments every child identified as an alleged victim on the CA/N-1 must be seen face to face within the Response Priority Level timeframes. The policy for seeing the infant identified on a Newborn Crisis Assessment remains three (3) hours unless it has been determined by the worker and supervisor that the infant is not going to be immediately released from the hospital as reported by the infant's healthcare professional.

Once safety of the victim child(ren) has been established, staff shall document verification of safety in the Contact Communication Log in FACES within 72 hours of the receipt of the report. Supervisors should verify that the initial contact has been documented in FACES at the 72 Hour Supervisor Consult. If the child(ren) is not found within the required timeframes, staff must document all attempts to locate the child(ren) in FACES. Staff should consult with their supervisor prior to the response time elapsing to strategize efforts that could still be completed to ensure timeframes are met. Staff are encouraged to enter all contacts into FACES as the report progresses.

<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> PDS Name: Cari Pointer PDS E-mail: <a href="mailto:Cari.A.Pointer@dss.mo.gov">Cari.A.Pointer@dss.mo.gov</a>	<b>MANAGER CONTACT</b> Manager’s Name: Kara Wilcox Manager’s E-mail: <a href="mailto:Kara.B.Wilcox-Bauer@dss.mo.gov">Kara.B.Wilcox-Bauer@dss.mo.gov</a>
<b>CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS</b> <a href="https://dssmanuals.mo.gov/child-welfare-manual/section-2-chapter-5-child-abuse-and-neglect-reports-subsection-2-general-procedures-for-completing-a-ca-n-report/#Safety">https://dssmanuals.mo.gov/child-welfare-manual/section-2-chapter-5-child-abuse-and-neglect-reports-subsection-2-general-procedures-for-completing-a-ca-n-report/#Safety</a>	
<b>FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS</b>	
<b>REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES</b> <a href="https://dssmanuals.mo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/PA20-IA-03-1.pdf">https://dssmanuals.mo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/PA20-IA-03-1.pdf</a>	
<b>RELATED STATUTE</b> NA	