

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: JOANIE ROGERS, INTERIM DIRECTOR  
SUBJECT: TEMPORARY ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT AGREEMENTS (TAPAs)

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to notify team members that policy has been developed regarding implementation of Temporary Alternative Placement Agreements (TAPAs) as a result of legislation that passed in 2020. Since that time, the Children's Division has worked to develop the regulation and policy to support implementation.

This policy will go into effect beginning August 2, 2021. Due to the extensive changes to safety planning policy as a result of this legislation, this memo is not intended to introduce staff to all of these changes, but to introduce what a TAPA is and when it is used. **Staff must review Chapter 1, Section 9.1, Outcomes of an 'Unsafe' Safety Assessment of the Child Welfare Manual in its entirety.**

**TRAINING**

Two new training classes have been created to provide staff with additional knowledge on TAPA. The first is a thirty minute e-learning titled Navigating TAPA's, ELC Course Code 000700. Navigating TAPA will be assigned to staff's learning plan around July 7th, 2021. The second training is Facilitating Team Meetings training. This is a four hour training designed to enhance facilitation skills of all staff members. Training dates have been identified as July 16, 19, 23, 26, 27, 30; August 9, 18, 27; September 10, 13, and 29, 2021. Two sessions will be run on each day with the exception of July 19 and 23 when we will have four sessions on those days. Each session will hold 25 people and participants will be divided by geographic region. Registration for this training has been communicated with the Regional Directors. Additionally, the Facilitating Team Meetings training will replace the current TDM training in our Child Welfare Practice Training (CWPT) so that new hires will immediately begin to receive this information as well.

Pursuant to Section 210.123, RSMo and 13 CSR 35-30.030, a TAPA is a voluntary agreement between the Children's Division, a relative of the child, and the parent or guardian of the child to provide a temporary, out of home placement for a child if the parent or guardian is temporarily unable to provide care or support for the child and the

child is not in imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury, or being sexually abused such that the Children's Division determines that a referral to the juvenile officer by submitting a CD-235 with a recommendation to file a petition or to remove the child is not appropriate.

The term 'non-residential' parent is used to describe a parent who does not live in the primary residence of the child and will be utilized as a diversion placement resource to protect the child from the identified safety threat(s).

Pursuant to Section 210.565 and 13 CSR 35-30.020, the term 'relative' shall mean a grandparent or any other person related to another by blood or affinity or a person who is not so related to the child but has a close relationship with the child or the child's family. The status of grandparent shall not be affected by the death or dissolution of the marriage of a son or daughter.

In the course of an investigation or assessment of child abuse and neglect, if a child is determined to be unsafe, there may be times when they can be temporarily placed outside of the home with a non-residential parent or relative caregiver to allow for time to reduce or eliminate the safety threat to the child and to attempt to prevent the child from being involuntarily removed from their parent/caregiver. These voluntary placements are termed "diversion placements". All diversions **must** be entered into the Diversion Screen in FACES. Changes have been made to this screen to reflect policy changes as a result of TAPA.

Once staff complete their safety assessment and determines the child(ren) to be unsafe and are unable to stay in the parents' home, staff must work with the parent(s) to determine the most appropriate diversion placement for the child(ren) while the parent(s) address the safety threat(s). Preference must be given to the non-residential parent.

If a child is determined to be unsafe, but can either remain with a parent/legal guardian (i.e. if the alleged perpetrator leaves the household) **or** the parent/legal guardian agrees to place the child with a non-residential parent, staff must complete the Immediate Safety Intervention Plan (CD-263). **NOTE:** Staff must begin using the revised CD-263 with the release of this policy. The CD-263 has been revised to incorporate the Framework for Safety as this was a recommendation from the CA/N Workgroup of the MO Practice Model.

If the child cannot be placed with a parent, staff should work with the parent to identify an appropriate relative. If the child(ren) is placed with a relative, staff must complete the TAPA form (CD-295). The CD-295 should be completed as soon as possible, but no later than three (3) business days from the date the diversion placement was made and shall be signed by the parent/guardian, the relative, and appropriate Children's Division staff. Staff must begin the CD-295 at the time of the diversion placement, but do not have to have the CD-295 finalized at that time.

A TAPA requires the agreement and signature of the parent/guardian, relative caregiver, and the Children's Division. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement regarding the terms of the TAPA, staff should make a referral to the juvenile officer by submitting a CD-235 as soon as possible, but no later than three (3) business days from the date of the diversion placement.

When there is a TAPA, the following must occur:

- A Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting is required to be held within ten (10) days of the execution of a TAPA;
- A Family Centered Services (FCS) case must be opened within ten (10) days of the execution of the TAPA and the case must remain open during the duration of the agreement.
- Staff must have personal contact with all the children on the TAPA as appropriate to ensure that the TAPA is being safely implemented but no less than two (2) times per month. One (1) contact with each child must be face-to-face observation of the child in child's relative diversion placement. Additional contacts with the child may occur virtually or in the community.
- At least one face-to-face home visit per month must be completed on all FCS cases with the parents involved in the TAPA.
- A Team Decision Making (TDM) Meeting must meet at least once every month thereafter for the duration of the TAPA.

<p><b>NECESSARY ACTION</b></p> <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>	
<p><b>PDS CONTACT</b>  Cari Pointer  <a href="mailto:Cari.A.Pointer@dss.mo.gov">Cari.A.Pointer@dss.mo.gov</a></p> <p>Crystal Wilson  <a href="mailto:Crystal.L.Wilson@dss.mo.gov">Crystal.L.Wilson@dss.mo.gov</a></p>	<p><b>MANAGER CONTACT</b>  Kara Wilcox  <a href="mailto:Kara.B.Wilcox-Bauer@dss.mo.gov">Kara.B.Wilcox-Bauer@dss.mo.gov</a></p>
<p><b>CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS</b>  Section 1, Chapter 9.1, <a href="#">Outcomes of an 'Unsafe' Safety Assessment\</a>  Section 2, Chapter 6.4, <a href="#">Masters Level Consultation</a>  Section 3, Chapter 3.1, <a href="#">Case Open Reasons</a></p>	
<p><b>FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS</b>  Immediate Safety Intervention Plan (CD-263)  Diversion Home and Safety Checklist (CD-293)  Official Notice of Temporary Placement (CD-294)  Temporary Alternative Placement Agreement (CD-295)  Notification of TAPA Termination (CD-298)  MSW Consult Template</p>	
<p><b>REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES</b>  TAPA One Page Guide</p>	

**RELATED STATUTE**

Section 210.123, RSMo

13 CSR 35-30.020 Immediate Safety Plan

13 CSR 35-30.030 Temporary Alternative Placement Agreements (TAPA)