

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: DARRELL MISSEY, DIRECTOR  
SUBJECT: ADDITION OF THE SDM SAFETY ASSESSMENT TO JUVENILE ASSESSMENTS AND REVISIONS TO THE SCREENING QUESTIONS ON THE SDM SAFETY ASSESSMENT IN FACES

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memo is to alert staff that Juvenile Assessment reports will now require a SDM Safety Assessment. In addition, the screening questions located on the SDM Safety Assessment in FACES have been updated.

FACES previously did not require staff to complete a SDM Safety Assessment for Juvenile Assessment. However, to be in compliance with the statute, a SDM Safety Assessment will now be required on all Juvenile Assessments. When completing the SDM Safety Assessment on a Juvenile Assessment, staff will answer "Yes" on the first screening question asking if the report is a Juvenile Assessment. The rest of the SDM Safety Assessment tool will then not be required. All alerts and edits have been added to the Juvenile Assessments as they are with other Assessments, Investigations, and Newborn Crisis Assessments.

Additional screening criteria has also been added to the SDM Safety Assessment on all reports.

On screening question 2A, the following bullets have been added:

- This report is a Newborn Crisis Assessment.
- Any Unknown Perpetrator that based on the information available, this person could meet the Care, Custody and Control (CCC) guidelines mentioned above.

The additional bullet is meant to clarify that a SDM Safety Assessment is required on all Newborn Crisis Assessments.

On screening question 2B, the following bullets have been added:

- Any Unknown Perpetrator that does not meet the CCC guidelines mentioned above.
- Any parent or legal guardian of a child who is currently in Alternative Care.

New criteria will not require staff to complete the SDM Safety Assessment, but will continue with completing the Investigation, Assessment, or Newborn Crisis Assessment. Staff will complete the SDM Safety Assessment on any child that has been in Alternative Care and is now on a trial home placement.

A third screening question has been added:

- 3) Is this a Fatality report where the victim child(ren) is deceased and there are no other children in the home?

If a Fatality report is received and the victim child is the only child in the home, staff will not be required to complete the SDM Safety Assessment.

Assessment Screening Questions ×

The SDM Safety Assessment research base is on caregivers with an allegation of abuse and neglect. The following questions have been developed to assist staff in determining if they should use a SDM Safety Assessment in their reports or if they should use best practices and their clinical judgment to determine safety.

1) Is this a juvenile assessment?  
 If yes **Stop Assessment activities: consult with your supervisor**  If no then continue to next question

2) Does the report meet the care, custody and control laws of Missouri?  
 **Yes** - continue  **No** - Stop Assessment Activities

2A) If yes, and the allegation is against:  

- A parent or legal guardian; or,
- This report is a Newborn Crisis Assessment
- Another member of the child's household
- Any adult person who has access to the child based on relationships to the child's parents or members of the child's household or family. However, this must be someone whom the legal parents has allowed authority in parenting and child caregiving decisions
- Any unknown perpetrator that based on the information available, this person could meet the CCC guidelines mentioned above

 **Yes** - Complete the SDM Safety Assessment on the household of the person with the allegation

2B) If yes and the allegations is against:  

- School Personnel
- Any other person who takes control of a child by deception, force, or coercion
- Any other adult person who has access to the child based on relationships to the child's parents or members of the child's parents or members of the child's household or family whom the legal parent has NOT allowed authority in parenting and child caregiving decisions or
- Any unknown perpetrator that does not meet the CCC guidelines mentioned above.
- Any parent or legal guardian of a child who is currently in Alternative Care

 Continue with the investigation, assessment, or Newborn Crisis Assessment but **Do not complete the SDM Safety Assessment.**

3) Is this a Fatality report where the victim child(ren) is deceased and there are no other children in the home?  
 Continue with the investigation, assessment, or Newborn Crisis Assessment but **Do not complete the SDM Safety Assessment.**

<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> Cari Pointer <a href="mailto:Cari.A.Pointer@dss.mo.gov">Cari.A.Pointer@dss.mo.gov</a>	<b>MANAGER CONTACT</b> <u>Kara Wilcox</u> <a href="mailto:Kara.B.Wilcox-Bauer@dss.mo.gov">Kara.B.Wilcox-Bauer@dss.mo.gov</a>
<b>POLICY:</b> <a href="https://dssmanuals.mo.gov/child-welfare-manual/section-1-chapter-5-understanding-and-assessing-child-safety/">https://dssmanuals.mo.gov/child-welfare-manual/section-1-chapter-5-understanding-and-assessing-child-safety/</a>	
<b>FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS</b>	
<b>REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES</b>	
<b>RELATED STATUTE</b>	