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: **AFCARS**

DISCUSSION:

AFCARS is the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, the federal information system which collects and processes data. AFCARS was established to provide data that would assist in policy development and program management. Data can be used by policymakers at the federal, Tribal, and state levels to assess how many children are in foster care, reasons why they enter, how they exit, and to develop strategies to prevent their unnecessary placement into foster care. Specifically, the data includes information about children who enter foster care, their entries and exits, placement details, and foster/adoptive parent information, which makes it possible to identify trends.

AFCARS reporting is tied to federal funding. It is important to enter information accurately and timely in the FACES system as each piece of information has a purpose. The recording of the information helps to better support and connect appropriate resources for specific populations we serve.

The primary purpose of these changes to new or altered fields in FACES is to correct updated language and collect new information around specific populations. These changes do not alter policy, rather are focused on information gathering and accurate input into FACES.

Importance of Data Accuracy:
- Data illustrates strengths and challenges, which allows the agency to make informed decisions on programs at every level.
- If information is not gathered and accurately input into FACES, this impacts our ability to successfully meet an outcome measure. Failure to meet outcome measures has a direct impact on the children, youth and families we serve. This may impact funding for necessary services, skew decisions about how to best meet families needs and does not allow for an accurate reflection of the family in their record. FACES is an official record of the great work you do, be sure to reflect that great work accurately.
- If an agency fails to meet federal standards, penalties will occur.
  - Lack of funding can have an influence on everyone from travel reimbursement rates, payment for services and staff positions.
- Data allows the agency to view the whole picture which ensures programs and ideas are working in conjunction to serve every child, youth and family to the best of our ability and to meet the agency's mission.

Please note:

For cases <u>opened prior to October 1st, 2022</u>, workers do NOT need to enter information or make selections in new fields that will appear on several FACES screens on October 1st.

All cases <u>opened on or after October 1st</u> will require appropriate input or selection into any new fields in FACES.

As these changes will affect all currently open cases, IT is working to determine if batch clean-up or automated data entry is possible to ease the work of case managers updating all fields on all cases. A conversion plan for all cases opened prior to October 1st, 2022 will be communicated once available.

Please reference the following for additional guidance:

AFCARS training (CD000277) will be available on the ELC on October 17th, 2022. This will include a packet of information which will show screen shots of the FACES changes along with information to guide through best selection and input of information.

The AFCARS packet of information/guide referenced in the training will also be available on the FACES information page on October 17th, 2022.

[About AFCARS – The Administration for Children and Families](#)

NECESSARY ACTION
1. Review this memorandum with all Children's Division staff.
2. Review revised Child Welfare Manual chapters as indicated below.
3. All questions should be cleared through normal supervisory channels and directed to:

PDS CONTACT	**MANAGER CONTACT**
Crystal Wenger	Kate Watson
crystal.d.wenger@dss.mo.gov	kate.watson@dss.mo.gov

CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS
N/A

FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS
N/A

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES
AFCARS training (CD000277) will be available on the ELC on October 17th, 2022. This will include a packet of information which will show screen shots of the FACES changes along with information to guide through best selection and input of information.   The AFCARS packet of information/guide referenced in the training will also be available on the FACES information page on October 17th, 2022.   [About AFCARS – The Administration for Children and Families](#)

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