

Memorandum

CDP26-18

DATE: August 31, 2026

TO: Children's Division and Foster Care Case Management

FROM: Sara Smith, Children's Division Director

SUBJECT: **MO CA/N Response Policy Changes**

OVERVIEW:

This emergency memo outlines various policy changes being made September 1, 2026, to support the implementation of MO CA/N Response. Staff should refer to this memo for those changes until the policies are updated in the Child Welfare Manual (CWM).

Consultation

When policy requires consultation with a circuit manager, this will now be the responsibility of a MO CA/N Response Assistant Deputy Director (ADD), or their designee (Unit Manager or Assistant Unit Manager). Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Notification of CA/N Reports and Non-CA/N Referrals Involving Fentanyl and all consults needed throughout the CA/N response. This also includes approval of the conclusion. ([CWM 1.5.6 CA/N Reports and Non-CA/N Referrals Involving Fentanyl](#))
- Development of next steps when the juvenile officer declines a referral. ([CWM 1.9.2.2.10.1 When the Juvenile Officer Declines a Children's Division Referral](#))
- Closing CA/N reports without opening FCS when the risk level is high/very high. ([CDP26-06 Risk Assessments Scored "High" or "Very High"](#))

Approval of Case Decisions and Conclusions

When policy requires approval by a regional director, this will now be the responsibility of a MO CA/N Response Assistant Deputy Director (ADD), or their designee (Unit Manager or Assistant Unit Manager). Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Approval of diversion placements when a member of the household has been found guilty of any other crime against persons not in the disqualification list; or has a substantiated or significant CA/N history; or has been found guilty of a drug or alcohol-related offense. ([CWM 1.9.2.1.3.1 Disqualification of a Diversion Placement with a Non-Residential Parent](#) and

CWM 1.9.2.2.3.1 Disqualification of a Relative Diversion Placement)

- When 3 or more calls are received concerning the same child and two calls were screened as documented calls and one as a Non CA/N referral. (CWM 2.2.1.4.1 Three or More Documented Calls within Seventy-Two (72) Hours)
- Already investigated conclusions. (CWM 2.3.3.1 'Already Investigated' CA/N Conclusions)
- Unable to locate conclusions. (CWM 2.5.2.17 Unable to Locate)
- Inappropriate report conclusions. (CWM 2.5.2.18 Inappropriate Report Conclusion)
- CA/N present, perpetrator unidentified conclusions. (CWM 2.5.3.8.4 Child Abuse/Neglect Present, Perpetrator Unidentified)
- Juvenile Perpetrator POE conclusions. If the ADD agrees with the conclusion, these reports are still to be forwarded to the Administrative Review Program Specialist (Crystal Wilson) for final approval in FACES. (CWM 2.5.3.8.3.4 Juvenile Perpetrators)

Courtesy Requests

The MO CA/N Response team will strive to handle these internally. However, the local office will still need to monitor courtesy request inboxes to ensure all courtesy requests are routed to a MO CA/N Response Unit Manager.

Child Abuse and Neglect Review Board (CANRB) Referrals

As of September 1, 2026, the Administrative Review Team will coordinate new administrative review requests and CANRB referrals with the Investigations Assistant Deputy Director. The ADD, or their designee, will then coordinate with the Circuit Manager, as needed, to assist in completing the CANRB referral.

Critical Events

Critical event criteria are being amended to the following:

Critical events include **all** CA/N fatalities, near fatalities, and serious bodily injuries. Critical events also include all Non-CA/N fatalities, near fatalities, and serious bodily injuries that meet the following criteria:

- Victim child is in the legal custody of the Children's Division AT TIME of (not as a result of) the critical event.
- Active agency involvement AT TIME of critical event (e.g., investigation, assessment, referral, FCS/IIS).

- Prior Children’s Division involvement with the family of concern within the last 3 months.

In the majority of situations, the MO CA/N Response team will be aware of and will complete the [Critical Event Notification \(CS-23\)](#). However, for critical events falling under the prior CD involvement within the last 3 months category that do not have active CD involvement, completion of the CS-23 is the responsibility of the Circuit Manager or Foster Care Case Management (FCCM) designee associated with the recent case. Questions regarding submission of the CS-23 should be directed to the MO CA/N Response Policy team.

When sending the CS-23 to DSS.CD.CriticalEventReport@dss.mo.gov, staff should carbon copy (cc) the Circuit Manager of the household county, the Unit Manager and Assistant Unit Manager of the responding MO CA/N Response team, and the litigation attorney(s), if assigned to the circuit.

Central Consult Unit (CCU)

Effective September 1:

- CCU will consult and document exclusively on Non-Specialized Assessments.
- CCU will not consult or document on Newborn Crisis Assessments, Investigations, Chronic Neglect reports, Critical Investigation reports, Sexual Abuse reports, or Out-of-Home Investigation reports.

Specialized reports and referrals will be handled by the designated centralized units, consistent with the MO CA/N Response Team redesign. Staff working these specialized reports and referrals should direct consultation and closure requests to the MO CA/N Response supervisory team rather than CCU.

CCU will utilize a structured “Need More Information” (NMI) process requiring additional work before closure. In brief:

1. The worker assigned to the Non-Specialized Assessment will contact CCU once safety is assured for all victim children. As all cases must have a Case Consultation within 72 hours, the worker should call CCU to consult within the timeframe. If the worker is calling CCU outside of that timeframe, there must be a full Chief Investigator Consultation (CD-327a) noted in the information system (FACES) prior to contacting CCU. CCU will document all information needed for the case narrative in FACES.
2. The CCU Specialist will conduct a live consultation and review the case.
 - a. If the case meets closure criteria, the CCU Specialist documents the narrative and closes the case.
 - b. If additional in-person field work is needed, an NMI is issued for in-person work and assigned to the worker to complete. The worker assigned to the Non-Specialized Assessment will notify CCU once completed, and, if appropriate request CCU close the case.

- c. If only additional administrative work is needed (e.g., collateral contacts, uploads, verifications, etc.), an NMI is issued for that administrative work and assigned to the CCU worker to complete and, if appropriate, close the case.
- These cases remain assigned to the worker assigned to the Non-Specialized Assessment; The CCU worker is tasked to complete the administrative NMI tasks.
 - When all tasks are complete, CCU will close the case, and email the worker assigned to the Non-Specialized Assessment and their supervisor, informing them of completion and closure.
 - If additional concerns arise during the NMI process, the case may be routed back to the assigned worker and their supervisor for follow-up.
3. If CCU is unable to complete the administrative NMI tasks successfully within 5 business days, further evaluation will be needed to determine if it can be closed without that information, or if it will need to be routed back to the worker assigned to the Non-Specialized Assessment and their supervisor for additional follow-up.

For questions or concerns, please contact:

Kara Wilcox, MO CA/N Response Policy Unit Manager, at Kara.B.Wilcox@dss.mo.gov

Joanna Beckett, MO CA/N Response CCU Unit Manager, at Joanna.Beckett@dss.mo.gov

CHILD WELFARE MANUAL POLICY AND/OR COLLATERAL DOCUMENTATION:

[CWM 1.5.6 CA/N Reports and Non-CA/N Referrals Involving Fentanyl](#)

[CWM 1.9.2.1.3.1 Disqualification of a Diversion Placement with a Non-Residential Parent](#)

[CWM 1.9.2.2.3.1 Disqualification of a Relative Diversion Placement](#)

[CWM 1.9.2.2.8 Duration and Termination of the TAPA](#)

[CWM 1.9.2.2.10.1 When the Juvenile Officer Declines a Children's Division Referral](#)

[CWM 2.2.1.4.1 Three or More Documented Calls within Seventy-Two \(72\) Hours](#)

[CWM 2.3.3.1 'Already Investigated' CA/N Conclusions](#)

[CWM 2.5.2.17 Unable to Locate](#)

[CWM 2.5.2.18 Inappropriate Report Conclusion](#)

[CWM 2.5.3.8.3.4 Juvenile Perpetrators](#)

CWM 2.5.3.8.4 Child Abuse/Neglect Present, Perpetrator Unidentified

Critical Event Notification (CS-23)

CDP26-06 Risk Assessments Scored “High” or “Very High”

NECESSARY ACTION:

1. *Review this memorandum with all Children’s Division and Foster Care Case Management team members.*
2. *Review Child Welfare Manual chapters and forms as indicated above.*