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## Worker-Child Visits with Children Placed in Residential Treatment and DMH Placements

The purpose of this Practice Alert is to remind Case Managers and Contracted Case Managers of their responsibility to have monthly face-to-face contact with children in residential treatment and in DMH placements. This requirement may be fulfilled by a service worker in accordance with memorandum CD 22-16. If a Service Worker is completing the monthly worker-child and/or worker-placement contact, the assigned Case Manager must also have monthly contact with the child and placement provider via phone or video call. These contacts by the Case Manager will help maintain the Case Manager's relationship with the child and provider and keep them informed of the case plan.

Federal requirements outline that worker-child contacts occur, at a minimum once per month, and take place in the child's placement the majority of the time. The purpose of the worker-child visit is to ensure the child's continued health, safety, and well-being while in placement as well as ensure the services the child is receiving are consistent with the child's needs and case plan.

The visit with the child is an important time to assess:

- The child's safety in the residential placement **including viewing the child's sleeping space** (e.g., the condition and cleanliness of the facility/home)
- The child's reaction to separation from their family
- The child's perception/understanding of why they are in residential care/in the DD home
- Determine what the child would like to see happen
- The child's adjustment to residential placement and whether they have any concerns regarding their placement
- The provider's perception of the child's adjustment to placement
- The Case Manager's/Service Worker's observation of the child's adjustment to placement

**During the worker-child visit, it is important to view the child's sleeping area to ensure there is appropriate bedding, the space is clean, and that there is adequate clothing for the child to wear.** The Case Manager or Service Worker should ensure the child has appropriate hygiene items, including items that are needed for ethnic hair or skin care and ask the child if there are items that are needed that they do not have. It is also important to ask if the child is having contact with people on their contact list, so they continue to have a support system outside of the residential setting.

Anyone conducting a worker-child visit in a residential facility/DD home should also:

- Discuss with the provider or its designee how the child is doing the day of the visit. Together, assess any safety issues which impact how the visit will be conducted.
- Consider the confidentiality needs of the child you are visiting, particularly if visiting more than one child.
- Have a brief post-visit meeting with the provider or designee.

- Share any concerns that have arisen during the course of the visit with the provider or designee.
- Report any concerns related to child abuse/neglect to the Missouri Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline at 1-800-392-3738 or through the Online System for Child Abuse & Neglect (OSCR).
- Immediately contact their supervisor or manager if there are concerns for the child's safety. Do not leave the child unattended until the safety issue is resolved.

For further information please refer to the Child Welfare Manual Section 4, Subsection 1, Children in Placements. If you have questions regarding this practice alert, you may contact Kate Watson, Residential Services Program Integrity Unit at [Kate.Watson@dss.mo.gov](mailto:Kate.Watson@dss.mo.gov).