

Memorandum

CDP26-05

DATE: April 15, 2026

TO: Children's Division and Foster Care Case Management

FROM: Sara Smith, Children's Division Director

SUBJECT: **Verification of Child Safety**

OVERVIEW:

The purpose of this Policy Memo is to ensure workers are making exhaustive efforts to locate children and families, as well as to remind staff of the crucial requirement of verifying the safety of every child associated with a family's composition.

Prior to responding to a hotline, **all prior family history must be reviewed**, as directed in [CWM 2.5.2 General Procedures for Completing a CA/N Report](#).

Workers should evaluate the current concerns in the context of:

- **Prior History:** Previous safety threats and risk factors.
- **Protective Capacities:** Knowledge, ability, and/or willingness of individuals in the household to protect the child.
- **Child Vulnerabilities:** Conditions that may impact the child's susceptibility and ability to protect themselves.
- **Out-of-State Records:** Workers must request out-of-state CA/N checks for each household member 18 years of age and older who has resided in any other state within the past five (5) years. This must be done for each state in which the person has resided within the past five (5) years. Please refer to [CWM 6.19.5.2 Child Abuse and Neglect Registry Out-of-State](#) for further information on completing CA/N checks in other states.

When reviewing the family's prior history, workers should outline all parents and children who live or have lived in the household. This includes stepsiblings, half-siblings, and children in shared parenting arrangements who reside or resided with the family. Workers may find a genogram helpful for identifying all children, parents, and household members.

For any child still under age eighteen (18)- **including those who no longer reside with the family**- all efforts must be made to locate the children and verify safety and must be clearly documented in the information system (FACES) within 72 hours of the call time to CANHU. A supervisor must review these efforts and

approve. The verification of child safety may be facilitated by a Children's Division team member or multi-disciplinary team member. When safe and appropriate to do so, workers should contact all parents of all the children to verify the family and household composition. When interviewing the children, workers should ask about the names and location of their siblings and household members.

All identified children must be added as a participant on the CA/N report in FACES, if not provided by CANHU.

Examples:

There is a report regarding two children living with dad in Missouri; a review of the prior history shows dad has two additional children. Dad states that those children live out of state with mom. In addition to contacting mom, Children's Division should contact CPS, Law Enforcement, or a school official in the other state to ensure the children are there and safe.

There is a report regarding a child living with mom in Missouri; a review of the prior history shows mom has another child. Mom states the child has been living with grandma in another county. In addition to contacting grandma, Children's Division should contact CD, Law Enforcement, or a school official in the other county to ensure the child is there and safe.

This Policy Memo remains effective until the following policy sections have been revised:

- CWM 2.5.2.1 Reviewing the Initial CA/N-1
- CWM 2.5.2.2 Reviewing Prior History
- CWM 2.5.2.5.2 Interviewing the Child
- CWM 2.5.2.6 Contact with Non-Victim Children and Other Household Members
- CWM 2.5.2.7 Involving the Non-Custodial, Non-Resident, and/or Non-Offending Parent

For questions or concerns, please contact:

Kara Wilcox, Safety Unit Manager, at Kara.B.Wilcox@dss.mo.gov

Marcia Hazelhorst, Deputy Director, at Marcia.Hazelhorst@dss.mo.gov

CHILD WELFARE MANUAL POLICY AND COLLATERAL DOCUMENTATION:

[CWM 2.5.2 General Procedures for Completing a CA/N Report](#)

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.