

Memorandum

CDP26-11

DATE: June 15, 2026

TO: Children's Division and Foster Care Case Management

FROM: Sara Smith, Children's Division Director

SUBJECT: **Policy Updates for Newborn Crisis Assessments, Siblings in Alternative Care and Expectant Parents**

OVERVIEW:

This new policy requires a Newborn Crisis Assessment (NCA) for all newborns with a sibling in Alternative Care (AC). The new AC policy describes the actions to be taken prior to and after the birth, and until the infant turns one year of age. These new policies enhance collaboration and communication between the AC worker and the worker assigned the NCA to prioritize the newborn's safety and wellbeing.

Staff must review [CWM 2.4.4.4 Newborns with a Sibling in the Custody of the Children's Division](#) and [CWM 4.6.6 Assessing Expectant Parents and the Safety of Infants on Open Cases](#) in entirety.

CWM 2.4.4.4

NCA's received concerning newborns with a sibling in the custody of the Children's Division are completed following the NCA process outlined in the policy along with additional requirements. The policy details the actions that should be taken upon receiving an NCA.

CWM 4.6.6

The Assessing Expectant Parents and Safety of Infants on Open Cases policy provides direction for thorough assessment when working with expecting parents, once the child is born, and throughout the first year of the child's life when the child remains in the home with the parent.

The policy also reminds staff of applicable HIPAA requirements related to obtaining and releasing Protected Health Information (PHI) when working with these families. The Division of Legal Services should be contacted anytime additional guidance regarding HIPAA related matters is needed.

Increased visitation is necessary to ensure the infant's safety. The policy provides a detailed description of the frequency in which workers should complete home visits with the members of the infant's household and observe the infant and their sleep environment.

For general questions or concerns, please contact:

Misty Allen, Program Development Specialist, at Misty.M.Allen@dss.mo.gov

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

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

For Alternative Care questions or concerns, please contact:

Desiree Gardner, Program Development Specialist, at Desiree.Gardner@dss.mo.gov

Heather Ford, Assistant Deputy Director, at Heather.D.Ford@dss.mo.gov

Kate Watson, Deputy Director, at Kate.Watson@dss.mo.gov

CHILD WELFARE MANUAL POLICY AND/OR COLLATERAL DOCUMENTATION:

[CWM 2.4.4.4 Newborns with a Sibling in the Custody of the Children's Division](#)

[CWM 4.6.6 Assessing Expectant Parents and the Safety of Infants on Open Cases](#)

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.*