


**Department of Human Resources  
Social Services Administration  
311 West Saratoga Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201**

**DATE:** December 22, 2009

**POLICY #:** SSA # 10-21

**TO:** Local Department of Social Services, Directors,  
Assistant Directors, and Out of Home Placement  
Supervisors

**FROM:** Carnitra D. White, Executive Director  
  
Social Services Administration

**RE:** Caseplan Documentation Clarification

**PROGRAM AFFECTED:** Out of Home Placement Services

**ORIGINATION OFFICE:** Child Welfare Practice and Policy

**BACKGROUND:** Supplements State of Maryland Caseplan for  
Children in Out of Home Placement

**ACTION REQUIRED OF:** All Child Welfare Services Staff

**REQUIRED ACTION:** Documentation on Caseplan

**ACTION DUE DATE:** Immediately

**CONTACT PERSON:** Deborah Ramelmeier, Director  
Office of Child Welfare Practice and Policy  
Social Services Administration  
(410) 767-7506

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide directions and clarification on certain portions of the OHPS Caseplan. The sections affected require a narrative input by the caseworker. This policy directive will explain the major points of discussion of the highlighted narratives.

**Background**

Caseplan was expanded in 2006 to include more precise information regarding the child, family and services. Some of the information entry fields allow the caseworker to choose an available option. Other areas direct the caseworker to discuss or explain certain points. The narratives provide an opportunity for full explanations crucial not only to the assessment/reassessment of the child and family's service needs, but also how those needs are being met. In addition it allows an opportunity to place in the record and assessment of the effectiveness of services rendered.

**I. Health**

Caseplan 2 sides 2, 3 and 4 require the detailed documentation of not only the child's health needs or condition (both somatic health and mental health), but also what services the child is receiving, medications prescribed, immunizations and any needs that remain unmet (and why). In addition to completing the health section the caseworker shall also discuss any other relevant health needs information concerning the child determined to be appropriate. This discussion shall be documented on Caseplan 2 Side 13 as part of Section II Services to Child, Item 13 "Discuss how the worker is addressing the child's needs." The discussion shall include an explanation of any relevant health need not discussed in the Health sections (Caseplan 2, Sides 2, 3 and 4) and how these needs are being met.

**II. Education**

Caseplan 2 sides 5, 6 and 7 are dedicated to the child's education. Here the caseworker shall not only document educational needs, but also school enrollment, proximity to removal home, names and addresses of the educational providers, grade level, adjustment and performance from the child's school record.

Caseplan 2 side 5 specifically discusses the child's educational placement. In the first section, in addition to documenting 5 day enrollment and the address and phone number of the educational placement, the caseworkers shall discuss in the comments section educational stability of the child while in foster care, which shall include assurances that the placement of the child in foster care takes into account the appropriateness of the current educational setting, including discussion on whether the child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement; or if remaining in such school is not in the best interests of the child, how the local department has coordinated with appropriate local educational agencies to provide immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school, with all of the educational records of the child provided to the school.

If the child is enrolled in a different school from the school attended prior to placement, the caseworker shall check the “No” box on the proximity question on Caseplan 2 Side 5 and then provide an explanation. The explanation should include not only why the child is not placed in close proximity, but also the appropriateness of the educational placement.

When a child has been determined to be incapable of attending school on a full-time basis due to the medical condition of the child, and is receiving home and hospital services from the local school system, the caseworker shall document the home and hospital services on Caseplan 2 Side 5 by checking the “other” box in the “What Educational Services is the Child Receiving” section and providing the required explanation. The explanation shall include an explanation of the child’s incapability, the date the services began, the projected end date of the services and the assigned hours of instruction.

Any other relevant education information concerning the child determined to be appropriate shall be discussed and explained on Caseplan 2 Side 6 in the section “Describe the child’s strengths and needs”. The discussion shall detail any relevant educational need and how the need is being met.

### **III. Safety**

While the SAFE-C and the SAFE-C Group are the tools for safety assessment documentation, there shall also be included on the Caseplan specific discussion of safety of the child in an out-of-home placement.

Item 3 on Caseplan 2 Side 12 Section I – Placement Services, requires a discussion of how the caregiver is meeting the safety needs of the child and the appropriateness of the placement. The caseworker shall detail in this discussion the safety and appropriateness of the placement as well as how the safety needs of the child are being met in the placement.

Whenever the permanency plan for the child is return home, Item 20 on Caseplan 2 Side 13 Section III – Services to Parents, shall include a discussion or explanation of a plan to provide that the child receives safe and proper care upon the return home, and that services are provided to the parent(s), child and foster parents in order to improve the conditions in the parents' home to facilitate the child's return to his/her own safe home or the permanent placement of the child.

### **IV. Relative placement**

When addressing child whose permanency plan of relative placement with custody and guardianship to the relative or a kinship guardianship assistance arrangement, Caseplan 2 Side 13 Section II Services to Child, Item 14, shall include in the discussion of promoting permanency a description of the steps that the agency has taken to determine that it is not appropriate for the child to be returned home or adopted; the reasons for any separation of siblings during placement; and the reasons why a permanent placement with a fit and willing

relative through a kinship guardianship assistance arrangement is in the child's best interests

V. **Visitation**

Caseplan 3 Side 1 requires the caseworker to detail the visitation plans for the child with each parent and with siblings. Visitation requirements between the worker and the child are detailed in SSA Policy Directive #09-09. The details of the visitation shall be documented on the Contact Sheet. However, the Caseplan shall also discuss visitation between the caseworker and the child. A short discussion and reference to the Contact Sheet shall be included in Item 13 on Caseplan 2 Side 13 Section II – Services to Child. If the child is placed out-of-state, the local department shall document in this section assurances that an agency caseworker on the staff of the state agency of the state or service area in which the home of the parents of the child is located, of the state or service area in which the child has been placed, or of a private agency under contract with such state, visits the child in such foster home or institution no less frequently than every 6 months and submits a report on the visit to the Maryland local department of social services. The date of the most recent report received shall also be documented in the section.