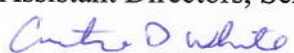


**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
311 WEST SARATOGA STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201**

DATE: March 1, 2013

POLICY#: SSA #13-15

TO: Directors, Local Departments of Social Services
Assistant Directors, Services

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

RE: MANDATORY DETERMINATION AND
DOCUMENTATION OF CANDIDACY FOR FOSTER
CARE

PROGRAM AFFECTED: Child Protective Services and In-Home Family Services

ORIGINATION OFFICE: Child Welfare Practice and Policy

ACTION REQUIRED OF: All In-Home Services staff and supervisors

REQUIRED ACTION: Proper statewide process for workers to determine and document candidacy for foster care for all In-Home cases.

ACTION DUE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: Deborah Ramelmeier, JD, LCSW-C
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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy directive is to establish mandated practice for all local departments of social services in meeting Federal guidelines for the determination and documentation of candidacy for foster care for children receiving In Home Services. A "Candidate for Foster Care" is a child at imminent risk of removal and absent these preventive services, placement in Out of Home Placement is the plan for this child. This policy clarifies the process of determining and documenting children who are eligible to claim candidacy for foster care and documenting services to prevent placement.

BACKGROUND:

The Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) is responsible for administering and monitoring policies related to Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Programs. Federal financial participation for administrative costs may be claimed by the State when a case plan indicates that, without preventive services, foster care is the planned living arrangement for the child. For In Home Services, the case plan includes the Service Plan and Progress Review. Changes were made to both documents to allow Maryland to document the candidacy determination as well as the preventative services provided to the child and family. Under federal law, states are permitted to draw down IV-E administrative funds to support programming aimed at preventing candidates from entering care. MD CHESSIE was updated to incorporate these changes on February 20, 2013.

DETERMINATION OF CANDIDACY FOR FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT:

A child is considered an eligible candidate for foster care when their In-Home worker determines that:

- 1) The child is at imminent risk of removal from the home **AND**
- 2) Absent effective preventive services, foster care is planned arrangement for the child.

It is the responsibility of all In-Home Family Services staff to determine if there are children on their caseload, who are eligible candidates for out of home placement. Preventive services can be actions to address specific factors placing the child in imminent danger (action promoting safety) or risk factors associated with more long term concerns (actions reducing risk of maltreatment). It is determined when the worker completes a new service plan for the family.

Workers are to consider whether the children in their caseloads are candidates for foster care at specified times during the life of an In-Home Services case. Workers are also to consider whether the actions of family members' increases safety or danger influences or risk of maltreatment concerns, to a point where preventive measures are needed to allow the child to continue to reside safely at home. The service plan must contain specific tasks to address the issues which make the child a candidate for out of home placement.

All In-Home Family Services workers must document in MD CHESSIE "Out-of-Home Candidacy" information at the following points in the life of a case:

- 1) When developing the initial Service Plan, within the first 45 days of receiving responsibility for work with the family from Investigation or other service/agency
- 2) At any time the Service Plan is re-negotiated; not more than 90 days after the previous Service Plan.

The Family Service Plan allows the worker, with participation from family members, to identify the goals and objectives that the family works towards and the tasks for individual family members and the worker to complete to assist the family in accomplishing the goals and objectives. Goals focus on where the family should be functioning at the point of case closure and the objectives are measurable steps on the path to reaching the overall goals. Tasks and services are not goals or objectives. If a Service Plan lists a specific service as an objective, the worker should ask themselves and the family member what is expected to be gained from participation in the service. What is to be gained is the objective. Services are tools to help individuals or the family to reach their objectives and eventually the goal.

When the service plan is printed out, new wording appears above the signature lines that makes it very clear to the family that some of their children have been identified as out of home candidates and that absent effective work on the identified goals and objectives, the planned arrangement for the identified children is out of home placement (kinship, group home, traditional foster home, child placement agency). Individuals, by signing the document, are expressing an understanding that they understand the goals, objectives and tasks and that certain children are identified as candidates for foster care absent progress towards their goal.

DCOUMENTATION OF SERVICES

The purpose of the Progress Review is to document, in narrative form, the factors contributing to danger, protective factors and risk of another child maltreatment event, as well as describing the services provided to address those issues. The candidacy determination completed in the service plan feeds over to Service Plan/Eval II tab. On the Service Plan/Eval II tab, the worker must describe the services provided to prevent placement and how the services both prevented and continue to prevent placement. For all other children, workers are asked to discuss the effectiveness of services provided and planning for additional service if needed. If any of the children were placed in foster care after the service plan was completed, the worker will document that as well.

MD CHESSIE SCREEN SHOTS:

Service Plan: Determination of Candidate for Foster Care


- Worker picks “select” hyperlink to choose the children. In order to appear, the children must be confirmed as clients. All clients in the household who are participating as children need to have candidacy determined.
- After the children are selected, the worker utilizes the drop down to indicate “yes” or “no”. If any of the children are already in out of home placement, they are not considered candidates.

- The blue icon provides additional guidance on the determination decision.

Service Cases > [redacted] > Planning > In-Home Tools >
Service Plan > 01/24/2013

Case Head: [redacted] Case ID: [redacted]
Date of Plan: 01/24/2013 Associated Risk Assessment Date: 09/08/2009
Service Plan Goal: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect

Determination of Candidate for Foster Care Select

Client ID	Client Name	CIS Client ID	Candidacy Determination
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Yes 

Objectives Select

Objective	Date of Review	Date Achieved
counseling	01/24/2013	00/00/0000

Task - Family Members Select

Task	Family Member	Evaluation Date
To attend drug and alcohol treatment and anger manage	[redacted]	01/24/2013

Task - In Home Family Services Select

Task	Worker	Evaluation Date
To ensure that clients are attending treatment programs a	[redacted]	01/24/2013

Agreement Signed by: [redacted] Select Refused to Sign: [redacted] Select Date Signed: 01/24/2013
Family Emergency Phone: [redacted]

*Worker Name: [redacted] Search Reset Associate Name: [redacted] Search Reset
Supervisor Name: [redacted] Search Reset

Approval Service Plan

MD CHESSIE HELP


Contents Search Glossary

Service Plan-Assessment Association-Objective CM6700C
Service Cases->Case Name-> Planning-> In-Home Tools->Service Plan-> Date

The purpose of the Service Plan screen is to capture information about the service plan. Determination of Candidate for Foster Care, objectives, and/or tasks identified in the plan for family members and for service workers. Associate a risk assessment to the service plan, if needed. When a family member refuses to sign the agreement you can select the person's name from the Refused to Sign choices. You must enter the Date of Plan and then Save to activate the [Select](#) hyperlinks for remainder of the screen.

Determination of Candidate for Foster Care box can be completed by clicking on the [Select](#) hyperlink and choosing a child in the family that has a Program Assignment of In-Home Family Services. Once that client appears in the Text box the user will click on the [Candidacy Determination](#) dropdown and Select Yes or No. Click [New](#) if additional clients need to be added.

Note: The system shall permit only clients participating as a child and under 18 years of age to be added by the user to Determination of Candidate for Foster Care. At least one child must be listed in the section in order to obtain approval unless there is no one participating as a child in the case.

 **Candidacy Determination: Yes** indicates the child in the row is at imminent risk of removal from home and absent effective prevention services, foster care (e.g., kinship, foster home, child placement agency, group home, etc.) is the planned living arrangement for the child. That action (prevention service) should be listed in Section III, Objectives followed by the phrase "Preventing Placement" and similarly in Sections IV, Task:Family Members and for V, In-Home Family Services when appropriate. Placement prevention services can address either safety or risk issues. For example, if the father's drug use is the concern, the desired goal should be described in Section III and the tasks towards that goal and person(s) responsible listed in sections IV and V. For every Service Plan with a child identified as a candidate for foster care placement there MUST be an objective in section III or V, identified as "Preventing Placement".

Progress Review

Service Cases > [redacted] > Planning > In-Home Tools >
Progress Review > 01/24/2013

Case Head: [redacted] Case ID: [redacted]

Basic Info | Family Summary I | Family Summary II | Family Summary III
Service Plan/Eval I | **Service Plan/Eval II** | Service Plan/Eval III | Service Status Decision

Family Member	Participation in Service Plan	Signed Service Plan	Candidacy Determination
[redacted]	Yes	Yes	
[redacted]	Yes	Yes	

Family Member: [redacted]

Was this family member offered an opportunity to participate in the planning and delivery of service?: Yes

Explain:
comments [Edit](#)

Did this member sign a Service Plan after participating in developing the plan?: Yes

Disagreement and Resolution Area:
comments [Edit](#)

Service Cases > [redacted] > Planning > In-Home Tools >
Progress Review > 01/24/2013

Case Head: [redacted] Case ID: [redacted]

Basic Info | Family Summary I | Family Summary II | Family Summary III
Service Plan/Eval I | Service Plan/Eval II | **Service Plan/Eval III** | Service Status Decision

Services Employed to Reach Objectives [Service Log Selection](#)

Client Name	Service Name	Actual Begin Date	Actual End Date
[redacted]	Housing Assistance/Emergency Shelter (P)	09/29/2010	09/30/2010
[redacted]	Educational Services/Remedial/Special E	08/01/2009	08/31/2009

Explain How Services Enabled Family to Meet Objectives. For children identified in Summary of Reason for Current Services as a risk of Foster Care placement, describe the services provided to prevent placement and how the services prevented and continue to prevent placement. Document that the goal for the child is foster care if the services described in the plan are not effective. For children not at risk of foster care placement describe the services provided, their effectiveness in moving toward agreed upon goals and need any need for their continuation or adjustment: [Edit](#)

comments

Discuss Barriers for Achievement of Goals and Objectives: [Edit](#)

comments

Issues Needing Further Attention: [Edit](#)

comments