

DSS Policy and Procedure Guide

Division 03: Child Welfare

Chapter 01: Director's Policies

Item 010: Initial Case Plan Development

Suggested changes send to: [DSS PSOA Mailbox](#)

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Replaces Issue:

References: California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Division 31, Chapter 31-206.351 (a)-(d), Chapter 31-200. Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 16010 (a), 16501,1(a), 16501.1 (c)(1), 16501,1(e)m 16501,1 (f)m 16501,1(f)(9), 16501,1 (g)(5)(b)(9).

Policy

The case plan is based on an assessment of the circumstances which required child welfare services intervention. A case plan goal is identified, objectives to be achieved, specific services to be provided as well as the case management activities to be performed. The family members are to be engaged and social workers are to encourage them to be active participants. Information shall be made available to the parent(s) in all stages of case planning.

Purpose

By acknowledging the concept of family strength two purposes are achieved. First we recognize and acknowledge the strengths of the parents and facilitates for them an opportunity to plan for their child's future and in some cases remain the child's primary caregiver, protector and teacher. Second it provides the social worker the opportunity to share the responsibility for the protection and safety of children in their care, with the family, community and service partners.

Procedure

Basic Procedure

- Complete an assessment. The initial assessment document is to be completed by the Emergency Response Area social workers.
- Determine the case plan goal, that is, remain home, return home, long term foster care with relative(s), long term foster care with non relative(s), legal guardianship, adoption with siblings or adoption without siblings.
- Develop a case plan which shall identify the following factors and document the plan as specified in Section 31-205 of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP):
 - Case plan objectives for each person named in the case plan. These objectives shall be measurable, time-limited objectives based on the problems and family strengths identified in the assessment.

- The specific services to be provided and the case management activities to be performed in order to meet the case plan objectives and goal.
- The projected date for completion of case plan objectives (the CWS/CMS system will generate this date for each service).
- The projected date for completion of child welfare services to be terminated (the CWS/CMS system will populate this date from its entry on the Case ID page). The schedule of planned social worker contacts and visits with the child(ren) and family in accordance with CDSS/MPP Sections 31-320 and 31-325.
- The schedule of planned social worker contacts and visits with the child(ren) and family in accordance with CDSS/MPP Section 31-340.
- For children receiving out-of-home care, the social worker shall also document an assessment of the child's placement needs and a determination and description of the type of home or institution that will best meet those needs.
- The schedule of planned parent(s)/guardian(s)' contacts and visits with the child, in accordance with CDSS/MPP Section 31-340.
- The schedule of planned visitation of the child by his/her grandparents as specified in Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 13507(a).
- The schedule of planned social worker contacts and visits with the child's out-of-home care provider, in accordance with CDSS/MPP Section 31-330.
- The health and education information about the child.
- For children who are of school age:
 - The case plan must contain assurances that the child's placement in foster care takes into account proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.
 - The case plan must include specified education information about the child, including names and addresses of the child's education providers, grade level performance, school record, and any other relevant education information. If any required information is not in the case plan, the case plan must document where the information is located.
- A plan which will ensure that the child will receive medical and dental care which places attention on preventive health services through the Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) program, or equivalent preventive health services in accordance with the CHDP program's schedule for periodic health assessment or yearly, whichever is more frequent.

- The case plan shall be considered complete only if all of the elements specified in CDSS/MPP Section 31-206 have been documented and the social worker's supervisor has signed and dated the case plan.
- The case plans are to be based on the founded allegations of the petition that brought the children into the Juvenile Court System as dependents of the court. They are also to be built on the assessment that was written by the Emergency Response social worker(s).

The case plan time frames and administrative requirements for children for whom a dependency petition has been filed includes:

- Within 30 calendar days of the in-person investigation, that is, the first face-to-face contact, or initial removal or by the date of the dispositional hearing, whichever comes first, the social worker shall:
 - Complete and sign the case plan as specified in CDSS/MPP Section 31-206.
 - Explain the purpose and the content of the case plan to the parent(s)/guardian(s) named in the case plan. This involvement of family members is entitled Family Engagement. Family members, including the parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the children who are able to participate, must be involved in the assessment process and the case plan development whenever possible. These participants will be asked:
 - To state the case plan goal;
 - To identify contributing factors; these factors must relate to the allegations of the petition, that is the reason(s) for detention of the child(ren);
 - To identify 3 to 5 strengths;
 - To give a statement of their perceived needs; and
 - To give a statement of their perceived needs; and
 - To discuss and identify service objectives.
 - Request the parent(s)/guardian(s) to sign the case plan as an indication of case plan approval and willingness to participate in service activities. If unable to obtain the signature of the parent(s)/guardian(s) as specified in CDSS/MPP Section 31-210.13, the Department of Children and Family Services shall nevertheless provide services, but shall document in the case plan the reason(s) for the failure to obtain the signature of the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- With supervisor approval up to 30 additional days, for a total of 60 days, is allowed if more time is needed to engage the family.