



Department of Children and Family Services Policy and Procedure Guide

Division No: 3–Child Welfare

Effective Date:
September 21, 2007

Chapter No: 3–Initial Response/Detention

Item No: 30–Emergency Response to a Referral Regarding Non-Dependent
Children with Dependent Siblings

Policy: To ensure a uniform and standardized method for investigating referrals of abuse and neglect, as it relates to non-dependent children with siblings that are current/former dependents.

Purpose: To inform staff of DCFS policies, procedures and general requirements for thorough assessments of risks and strengths in the course of investigating reports of child abuse or neglect, as it relates to non-dependent siblings of dependent children.

Reference: [The California Structured Decision Making System Policy and procedure Manual, California Dept. of Social Services Division 31 Regulations, DCFS PPG Division 3, Chapter 3, Item 8](#)

Procedure:

I. ONGOING SOCIAL WORKER (SW) RESPONSIBILITY:

- A. When an assigned SW of a dependent child is aware that the parent has given birth to a child they must complete a written referral. The blank form is available in the Care Line.
- B. Once the SW has completed the written form, the SW will immediately, by fax or by hand delivery, forward the form directly to the Care Line located at 1404 “L” Street, Fresno, CA 93721. The Care Line SW will complete a SDM decision tree and make it a crisis referral with an immediate response. If it is determined that the child will NOT be released from the hospital immediately, the SWS may consult with the PM to downgrade the referral.

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|--|---|----------------------------|---|----------------|
| Submitting Party Division/Program Manager/ Deputy Director Approval | – | <u>Danny Morris</u> | – | <u>6/1/07</u> |
| | | Name | – | Date |
| Assistant Director’s Approval | – | <u>Andrea Sobrado</u> | – | <u>9/18/07</u> |
| | | Name | – | Date |
| Director’s Approval | – | <u>Catherine A. Huerta</u> | – | <u>9/18/07</u> |
| | | Name | – | Date |

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II. CHECK CMS TO DETERMINE:

- A. The names and ages of the dependent children and the current DCFS program in which the children are assigned. Review reason for removal, the latest court report as well as the most current court orders

III. CONTACT THE CURRENT CASE MANAGER(S).

- A. Verify the information reviewed on CMS and determine if more current information exists. Inquire about each parent's compliance with the current court orders: visits, services, housing, etc. as well as each parent's stability and any barriers to their ability to parent. Determine whether the dependent siblings are in out-of-home care or residing with a parent. Inquire about the anticipated recommendation for the next court hearing.
- B. If a parent has failed to successfully re-unify with any child, inquire about the reasons that led to termination of FR services. Determine when FR was terminated for each parent. Ask the current case manager whether either parent has taken steps to address the issues that led to the termination of services.
- C. Inquire about any special physical, behavioral or mental health needs of all dependent siblings. To what extent have these needs affected current visit orders and/or the parents' success with FR services? Determine if these needs affected the outcome of FR.

IV. WHEN RESPONDING TO THE HOSPITAL

- A. Meet with hospital staff and gather the newborn's birth information (full term or premature, apgar scores, weight, all pre-natal information gathered by medical staff, and all updated information). Request copies of all chart information and the Discharge Plan.
- B. Determine whether the newborn has medical needs or conditions that would require special care, multiple medical appt. or require that the parent(s) receive training prior to taking the child home.
- C. If special needs are an issue, immediately request the assistance of a PHN upon return to the office.

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- D. Meet with the mother. Assess her level of functioning and inquire about her wishes regarding parenting the newborn. (Don't assume she wants to take the baby home). Observe her with the newborn. Assess the mother's ability to meet any special needs the child may have and /or to complete training. Does she understand and accept that her child has special needs? If the father is present, assess him in the same manner.
- V. WHEN THE REFERRAL IS RECEIVED LATE AND THE CHILD IS ALREADY HOME
- A. Assess the home and child's care: Determine what supplies the custodial parent has. Determine whether the parent has obtained a pediatrician for the child and what appointments have occurred. Request to view where the baby sleeps. Observe the child: does child appear alert, clean and healthy? Observe the parent's interaction with the child. Thoroughly assess the parent's housing and inquire about who resides in the home. Determine whether the parent has a positive, reliable support system.
 - B. Conduct all assessments as outlined above.
- VI. ASSESS THE PARENT'S CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES
- A. Determine if either parent has addressed the issues that led to removal (and the termination of services, if this is the case). Ask for documentation of any completed services or recent drug tests. If no documentation available, ask for service program contact information and follow through with contact upon return to the office.
 - B. If a parent is on probation or parole, check with the PO and inquires about the terms & conditions (including restrictions). Inquire about the parent's reported parole address, compliance in programs & with drug tests.
 - C. Determine whether the parents are living together. If not, is either of them involved in a current relationship? Inquire about DV and any other issues that may negatively affect a newborn's safety at home (drug involvement, MH issues, history of violence, gang involvement, etc).
 - D. Inquire about the parents' living situation: Where will they live? Is this situation stable (i.e., eviction pending?). Who lives in the home? Complete clearances on all persons 18 yrs. and over, including the parents and significant others. VISIT THE HOME and complete a visual inspection of the entire residence, inside and out.

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- E. Consider the parents' ages and their maturity level.
- F. If either parent has a substance abuse history or if there is reason to believe this is a current issue, ask the parent to drug test.
- G. If relatives step forward inquire about their view of the parents' ability to parent. Ask about concerns as well as strengths. Determine if they are interested in placement of the child if the child can't go home.
- H. If any community agencies are currently involved with the parents contact the involved staff person to inquire about his/her observations and professional opinion of the parents' ability to care for the newborn.
- I. Identify the parents' support system. Are these individuals who will provide positive support and be good role models for the parents or do they have personal issues that indicate they may have a negative influence on the parents?
- J. SDM MUST be done on all cases and presented at the TDM.
- K. ER social worker will do an Imminent Risk TDM. The SWS maybe consult with if a TDM is deemed not needed.

VII. IF A HOLD IS OBTAINED

- A. Narrate all information in CMS upon return to the office
- B. Schedule a staffing or TDM according to current policy
- C. Invite to TDM all necessary service providers, current DCFS case manager and their SWS.
- D. Gather necessary information and request clearances on relatives who are interested in placement (all persons in the home who are 18 yrs. and over). Meet with the relative and conduct a visual assessment of the entire home prior to the decision to place the child in the home.
- E. Discuss your observations and assessments of the parents and any relatives with your supervisor prior to the staffing or TDM. Clarify any questions.

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- F. If an arraignment is considered a possibility, discuss this with the Court Specialist supervisor prior to the TDM. (Any parent considered must be in attendance at the TDM)
- G. Be prepared to discuss and explain your assessment at the TDM

VIII. COURT REQUESTS

- A. The assigned court case manager shall provide any investigation information that the court requests on non-dependent children on the related case to the family. This includes, but is not limited to, SDM, narratives and discovery to all attorneys' on case, and any requested/required court reports for dependent and non-dependent related minors.