

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

September 19, 2011

M E M O R A N D U M

What's Inside: The Importance of Father Engagement

TO: REGIONAL EXECUTIVE STAFF, CIRCUIT MANAGERS, AND
CHILDREN'S DIVISION STAFF

FROM: CANDACE A. SHIVELY, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: THE IMPORTANCE OF FATHER ENGAGEMENT

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to remind workers of the importance of Father Engagement, and to notify staff of minor modifications to the Child Welfare Manual (CWM) that emphasize the involvement of *both* parents when working with a family.

Children who live absent their biological fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior than their peers who live with their married, biological (or adoptive) parents (2010 National Fatherhood Initiative.)

The added language supports the importance of involving the non-resident or non-custodial parent in case planning and services, including a Child Abuse and Neglect Investigation and/or Assessment or a Family-Centered Services (FCS) case, as discussed in [CD10-53](#).

Responsibilities of staff when engaging fathers:

- Encourage custodial parents to be cooperative when it comes to involving the non-resident or non-custodial parent as appropriate in preserving the safety and best interest of their children;
- Encourage mothers to identify fathers early in the case;
- Complete a diligent search process as outlined in [Section 4 Chapter 4 Attachment A](#), of the CWM;
- Maintain regular contact with all team members including the custodial, incarcerated, non-resident or non-custodial parent according to the case plan, informing them of significant changes in status of the case;

- Ensure that the child has planned regular contact with his/her father. Fathers need to see their children on a regular basis. At times the presence of one or more family members can make a difference in visitation because they can share the child with the father, bring more excitement and energy to the visit, as well as point out family resemblances to him;
- Provide services directed to removal or reduction of any barriers to visitation;
- Assist in the connection of fathers and their children;
- Offer support or coaching before or during visits. This can be done by the worker or a parent aide and is especially important to those fathers who are incarcerated;
- Encourage incarcerated fathers to participate in services such as: Inside-Out Dads, Parents As Teachers, Story Link, Building Strong Relationships, or Parent Link;
- Fathers are to be encouraged to write letters, send pictures, cards, make phone calls and give the worker details of how to visit them if appropriate;
- Staff should be in close communication with the Institutional Activity Coordinator or the incarcerated father's case manager at the facility. Refer to [Section 4 Chapter 7 Attachment B](#), for more information;
- Staff should utilize the CS-2A, Incarcerated Parent's Child Status Report.

NECESSARY ACTION

1. Review this memorandum with all Children's Division staff.
2. Review revised Child Welfare Manual chapters as indicated below.
3. All questions should be cleared through normal supervisory channels and directed to:

PDS CONTACT

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PROGRAM MANAGER

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CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS

[Section 2 Chapter 4 Subsection 1](#), Investigation Response
[Section 2 Chapter 5 Subsection 3](#), Conducting a Family Assessment
[Section 4 Chapter 3 Subsection 1](#), Initial Parental Involvement First 24 hours
[Section 4 Chapter 4 Attachment A](#), Locating the Non-Custodial Parent or Relative
[Section 4 Chapter 4 Subsection 2](#), Guidelines for Initial Placement Resource Selection
[Section 4 Chapter 7 Attachment A](#), Visitation
[Section 4 Chapter 7 Subsection 1](#), Activities in the First 24-72 hours
[Section 4 Chapter 7 Subsection 2](#), Family Support Team Meeting
[Section 4 Chapter 7 Subsection 3.1](#), Meeting/Working with the Family
[Section 4 Chapter 7 Subsection 3.3](#), Visitation Between the Parents/Child/Sibling
[Section 4 Chapter 7 Subsection 3.6](#), Completion of Professional Assessment

[Section 4 Chapter 8 Subsection 1](#), Services for Family Centered Out of Home Care
[Section 4 Chapter 9 Subsection 2](#), Administrative Review Process/Permanency Planning Review
[Section 4 Chapter 9 Subsection 6](#), Operation of the FST/PPRT Meeting
[Section 4 Chapter 9 Subsection 8.3](#), Components of Effective Concurrent Permanency Planning
[Section 4 Chapter 9 Subsection 8.5](#), Family Involvement in Concurrent Permanency Planning

FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

N/A

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES

<http://www.fatherhood.org>, 2010 National Fatherhood Initiative
<http://www.fatherhoodqic.org/chapter5.pdf>, Engaging Fathers in the Child Protection Process: The Judicial Role-By Judge Leonard Edwards (ret.)

RELATED STATUTE

N/A

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE

N/A

COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA) STANDARDS

[PA-FC 3](#)
[PA-KC 3](#)

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW (CFSR)

Relates to CFSR Items [1-23](#)

PROTECTIVE FACTORS (Link applicable factors and enter N/A if not applicable.)

Parental Resilience N/A
Social Connections N/A
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development N/A
Concrete Support in Times of Need N/A
Social and Emotional Competence of Children N/A

FACES REQUIREMENTS

N/A