

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES

P.O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

May 14, 2003

E-MAIL MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL CHILDREN'S SERVICES STAFF

FROM: DENISE CROSS, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: POLICY CHANGES AND NEW SYSTEM EDITS REGARDING
THE USE OF FOSTER CARE EMERGENCY PLACEMENTS

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide all staff with the policy changes in regard to children placed in emergency foster care placements (FHE). Currently, Children's Services policy states, in Section D-5, attachment C of the Alternative Care Manual, that a child should not be placed in an emergency foster care placement for more than 30 days. This may be extended for another 30 days, but only with approval from the Area Director. The original purpose of the emergency foster care placement was to have an immediate placement option for a child coming into DFS custody and that, within 30 days, the case would be staffed and other placement options explored. Due to the immediacy of the placement, these providers are paid at a higher rate than traditional foster care, but it is not intended to be a long term solution. The current automated system has no edit to prevent a child from remaining in an emergency foster care placement past the 60 days allowed per policy. A report was run by Research and Evaluation that shows that as of 3-31-03, over 90 children have been placed in an FHE placement for more than 45 days.

Effective June 1, 2003, a child may not remain placed in an emergency foster home for more than 60 days, with no exceptions. This includes any child, that as of June 1, 2003, has reached their 60 day maximum. New system edits have been put in place so when a child has reached their 60 day mark in an FHE placement, the system will automatically change the placement code on their SS-61 from FHE to FHO. The maintenance code will also change from a 5 to a 1 (standard maintenance).

A report will be run daily identifying children who have reached their 60 day maximum. A copy will be sent to the service worker as identified in the Alternative Care Tracking System (ACTS). The report will indicate the child's name, DCN, and any changes to the SS-61 that were made. It is the responsibility of the worker to notify the foster placement of the change and make any alternative arrangements, if necessary. Additional system

edits will also prevent a child from being placed back with the same vendor as an FHE placement, if they were previously placed there within the last 60 days.

Attached is a copy of a letter that was sent out to all providers with an active FHE contract informing them of the change in policy. Along with this letter, they were sent a new contract amendment with these changes to sign and return by June 16, 2003. As indicated in the letter, if we have not received the signed amendment by July 1, 2003, they will no longer be contracted to provide this service.

An updated list of all children who will have been placed in an FHE placement for more than 60 days as of 6-1-03 was faxed to all Area Director's on May 14, 2002. As of June 1, 2003, the new FHE edit will be updating each child's SS-61 as indicated above. Again, it is the responsibility of staff to follow up with the providers to discuss the child's change in placement status and whether or not a placement change needs to be considered.

NECESSARY ACTION:

1. Review this memorandum with all Children's Service staff.
2. All comments and questions regarding this memorandum should be cleared through normal supervisory channels.
3. Manual revisions are on the Intranet.

DC/LDL

Attachments:

FHE Provider Letter
Child Welfare Manual Section 4.11.B
Child Welfare Manual Section 4.4