

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

October 6, 2008

**What's Inside:**

Information regarding  
the Office of Child  
Advocate for Children's  
Protection and Services

**M E M O R A N D U M**

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

FROM: JIM HARRISON, ACTING DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: OFFICE OF CHILD ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN'S  
PROTECTION AND SERVICES

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to remind Children's Division (CD) staff of the statutory role and purpose of the Office of Child Advocate for Children's Protection and Services and encourage staff to provide citizens with the information necessary to utilize the services of the Office of Child Advocate when appropriate.

The Office of Child Advocate for Children's Protection and Services (formerly the Office of the Child Welfare Ombudsman) was created by executive order of Governor Bob Holden in 2003. The Office was renamed and included in Missouri statute as part of House Bill 1453 which was signed into law on June 29, 2004.

The Office of Child Advocate is an office within the Office of Administration, independent of the Department of Social Services and other agencies, created for the purpose of assuring children receive adequate protection and care from services and programs offered by the Department of Social Services, the Department of Mental Health or the Juvenile Courts.

The Office of Child Advocate accepts and investigates complaints regarding the Department of Social Services, the Department of Mental Health or the Juvenile Courts. Complaints may include but not be limited to actions or inactions taken by the CD and/or other agencies or contractors and alleged policy and/or procedure violations. The Office may also review Child Abuse/Neglect reports concluded as "unsubstantiated" when the reporter, other than an anonymous reporter, makes a written request to the CD to forward the report to the Office of Child Advocate for review. A statement to this effect is included on the CS-24, CS-21 and CS21-B.

The Office of Child Advocate has the right to review all records kept by the Children's Division pursuant to Chapters 210 and 211 RSMo. Children's Division staff should cooperate fully with the Office of Child Advocate's requests for information. The Office of

Child Advocate's responsibilities, expectations and authorizations are more thoroughly defined in Chapter 37 RSMo. and 210.145 RSMo. Links to the applicable statutes, CD policies, and website information for the Office of Child Advocate are listed below.

While there are processes in place within the CD for citizens to file complaints and grievances, CD staff should continue to make a practice of informing consumers of the availability of the services of the Office of Child Advocate in an effort to ensure citizens are fully aware and have access to all services available to them.

<b>NECESSARY ACTION:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review this memorandum with all Children's Division staff.</li> <li>2. Review Child Welfare Manual chapters as indicated below.</li> <li>3. All questions should be cleared through normal supervisory channels and directed to:</li> </ol>	
<b>PDS CONTACT:</b> John D. Steinmeyer 573-751-8930 <a href="mailto:John.D.Steinmeyer@dss.mo.gov">John.D.Steinmeyer@dss.mo.gov</a>	<b>ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR:</b> Susan K. Savage 573-751-4319 <a href="mailto:Susan.K.Savage@dss.mo.gov">Susan.K.Savage@dss.mo.gov</a>
<b>CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS:</b> N/A	
<b>FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS:</b> N/A	
<b>REFERENCE DOCUMENTS and RESOURCES:</b> <a href="#">CWM Section 2 Chapter 4 Attachment D</a> <a href="#">CWM Section 2 Chapter 4 Attachment B</a> <a href="#">Memorandum - CD04-79</a> Office of Child Advocate website: <a href="http://www.oca.mo.gov/">http://www.oca.mo.gov/</a>	
<b>RELATED STATUTE:</b> <a href="#">RSMo. 37.700</a> , <a href="#">RSMo. 37.705</a> , <a href="#">RSMo. 37.710</a> , <a href="#">RSMo. 37.715</a> , <a href="#">RSMo. 37.725</a> , <a href="#">RSMo. 37.730</a> , <a href="#">RSMo. 210.145.15</a>	
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE RULE:</b> N/A	
<b>COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA) STANDARDS:</b> N/A	
<b>CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE REVIEW (CFSR):</b> N/A	
<b>SACWIS REQUIREMENTS:</b> N/A	

