

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P.O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

April 29, 2013

What's Inside:
Removal of the Z Code in
Child Abuse/Neglect
Reports

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: CANDACE A. SHIVELY, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: REMOVAL OF THE Z CODE IN CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT
REPORTS

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform staff the reporter description Z code will no longer be used in Child Abuse/Neglect (CA/N) Investigation or Family Assessment reports. The purpose of removing the reporter description Z code is to ensure staff are able to investigate allegations which clearly connect to the legal elements of child abuse or neglect. In addition, FACES will no longer allow a conclusion of Preponderance of Evidence to be entered for an investigation with a Z code as this code lacks the specificity required by law to reach a finding of abuse or neglect. Revisions have been made to the Child Welfare Manual and FACES as outlined below.

Removal of the Z Code

Z Codes have been used by the Division to classify hotline reports which allege serious concerns to children's safety without known physical injury, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect in situations such as:

- threats to kill
- threats to cause serious physical injury
- other serious threats/actions with no known maladaptive behavior associated with the alleged threats

The Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline Unit (CANHU) will continue to receive hotline reports which allege serious concerns as outlined above, and will classify each concern within the scope of child abuse and/or neglect.

Effective immediately:

- CANHU will no longer assign reports utilizing Z Codes

- FACES will no longer allow preponderance of evidence findings for open CA/N Investigations with Z Codes

Open CA/N Investigations which include Z Codes should be reviewed to determine if there is evidence to support a finding of child abuse and/or neglect by a preponderance of evidence. If so, staff should consider a finding code which best matches the preliminary findings of abuse or neglect.

Face to Face Safety Assurance

Revisions have been made to [Section 2 Chapter 4.1.3 Face to Face Safety Assurance of Victim](#) to clarify steps which must be taken by Division staff to ensure children’s safety remains paramount in situations outlined above. CA/N Investigations which involve a child fatality or serious physical injury to a child constitute the potential for serious concerns related to parent/caretaker protective capacities, child specific vulnerabilities, present or impending danger, and safety threshold criteria for all household children. Therefore, **all** household children involved in such cases must be seen face to face by the Children’s Service Worker or multidisciplinary team member within **three (3) hours** from the date and time of the report. There may be times when staff will need to rely on multidisciplinary team members in order to initially verify children’s safety within the assigned response priority level timeframes. When children’s safety is initially assured by a multidisciplinary team member, staff must complete direct face to face contact with the child within seventy-two (72) hours from the date and time of the reported concern.

These changes will be effective on tomorrow’s date.

NECESSARY ACTION	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Scott B. Montgomery, MSW 573-526-5408 Scott.B.Montgomery@dss.mo.gov	UNIT MANAGER Christy Collins, MS 573-751-9603 Christy.Collins@dss.mo.gov
CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS Section 2 Chapter 4.1.3 Face to Face Safety Assurance of Victim	
FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS N/A	
REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES N/A	
RELATED STATUTE: N/A	
ADMINISTRATIVE RULE N/A	

COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA) STANDARDS N/A
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW (CFSR) N/A
PROTECTIVE FACTORS 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 As noted in the memorandum.