

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

August 8, 2018

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: CHILDREN'S DIVISION AND CONTRACTED STAFF

FROM: JULIE LESTER, INTERIM DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE ASSESSMENTS

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce new Differential Response Assessment requirements in the Child Welfare Manual.

Differential Response Assessments are assessments that have been determined by the family, worker, and supervisor as needing more intensive work with the family and traditionally go beyond the 45 day completion requirement. The purpose of determining a Differential Response Assessment is to provide the family with the needed resources, support, and services to further promote safety and well-being within the family during the assessment period.

Requirements to identify assessments as Differential Response Assessments include:

- Differential Response Assessments will require a consultation between the worker and a supervisor that the family is in need of services that will continue past the 45 day completion requirement. These consultations shall be prior to the 45 day completion requirement. Conversations should include what services the family is in need of, how Children's Division can support, and resources that can be provided. Supervisor consults should be more frequent in a Differential Response Assessment to continually assess the family throughout the report period. All supervisor consults shall be documented in FACES. The supervisor consult between the worker and the supervisor that an assessment is going to be track changed to a Differential Response Assessment shall occur and be documented in FACES by the 45<sup>th</sup> day.
- Supervisory level or higher shall go to the Priority Response/Track Assignment Override screen in FACES and track change the report from "Assessment" to "Differential Response".
- If throughout the Differential Response Assessment process the allegations have been determined to be more severe, the report may be track changed to an

Investigation. Supervisory level or higher may go to the Priority Response/Track Assignment Override screen in FACES and track change the report from “Differential Response” to “Investigation”.

#### Worker Expectations:

Workers are expected to thoroughly document the on-going assessment of the family, safety, risk, services provided, and case consultations in FACES. Workers may use a running narrative to complete assessment. Supervisor discretion should be used to determine the number of home visits that are needed for each Differential Response Assessment. The number should be based on the needs of the family. This may be one home visit per week or weekly contact with the family through in-person, phone, or contact with members of their safety network. The family’s safety network should be meaningful to the family’s situation. Proper releases are to be used and workers shall tell parents that someone will be contacting members of their safety network to obtain additional information as needed.

#### Suggested tools could include:

- My Safety House (CD-216)
- Three Houses Tool (CD-217)
- Case Mapping Tool (CD-218)
- Fairy Tool (CD-227)
- Wizard Tool (CD-228)
- Timelines
- Genogram
- Eco-Map
- Culturagram
- Web-based resources

Differential Response Assessments shall be completed within 90 days of the original report date. If more intense services are needed within the 45 day timeframe or after, the case should be referred to Family Centered Services as soon as the need is identified.

#### What should be included in a Differential Response Assessment Conclusion:

- Original Concern
- Reason the report was identified as a Differential Response Assessment
- Services and support provided to the family throughout the assessment period.
- Safety concerns
- Risk reduction
- Resolution of the report due to working as a Differential Response Assessment
- Whether a Family Centered Services Case should or should not be opened
- Conclusion for closing is “Agency Responded-Services provided”

**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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**CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS**

Title: Child Welfare Manual  
Section 2: Intake  
Chapter 5: Family Assessment Response  
Sub-section 6: Differential Response Assessments

**FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS**

NA

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES**

NA

**RELATED STATUTE**

NA