

MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE
STANDARDS FOR SUPERVISING CHILDREN'S
SOCIAL WORKERS (SCSWs)

Management Directive #MD-09-11 (REV)

Date Issued: **09/28/10**

New Policy Release

Revision of Existing Management Directive 09-011, Standards for Supervising Children's Social Workers (SCSWs), dated 12/16/09.

Revision Made: **NOTE: Current Revisions are Highlighted**

This Management Directive has been revised to change the time frame for SCSWs to conduct unit meetings from weekly to monthly. In addition, the phrase "or more frequently, as needed" was added to the following statement; "Meet individually with each of their CSWs at least once every two weeks or more frequently, as needed for social work case management...."

Cancels: None

DEPARTMENTAL MISSION

The Department of Children and Family Services, with public, private and community partners, provides quality child welfare services and supports so children grow up safe, healthy, educated and with permanent families.

DEPARTMENTAL VALUES

The Department of Children and Family Services works to hold fast to a system of values that demonstrate the many ways that we value each other, our service partners, and our stakeholders.

Our continuous effort to acknowledge and accept both our personal and cultural differences will allow us to better integrate these values as we strive to live by them.

The eight values identified below represent our commitment to our children, our families, our community partners, our stakeholders, and ourselves.

1. Accountability

A well-developed sense of professional accountability leads to being answerable to the children and families being served. The Department is responsible to children and families, to its staff, and to the community.

2. Collaboration

Working together to achieve success in meeting the critical and diverse needs of children and their families is crucial. We will participate in resolving problems and obtaining resources and will build bridges with others to ensure provision of the best possible services to children and families.

3. Communication

Children and families can expect to receive accurate and timely information about departmental activities that will affect them. They can expect to participate in decisions and have their priorities and preferences solicited and honored. Information will be shared and input will be sought in major directions and decisions from other agencies and from the community. Departmental staff can expect that existing and new programs and projects will be thoroughly reviewed, effectively integrated, and efficiently communicated.

4. Integrity

Children and families, departmental staff, other agencies, and the community need to be able to depend upon the Department and its stakeholders to keep their work, to deliver on their promises, and to thoroughly explain any program or service changes. Departmental management and staff, as well as other agencies and the community, will be clear about what they need and what commitments they will and will not make.

5. Excellence

The Department will seek excellence both in our quality of work and in our outcomes. We will set high standards for our programs and our expectations in interactions with other agencies and community members.

6. Respect

The Department and our partners will enter into relationships with children and families in open, non-judgmental ways with an offer of support. The Department, our community partners, and children and their families, will listen to one another and treat one another courteously; valuing the diverse viewpoints of each person and acknowledging that these diversities will enrich the work that is being done.

7. Strength Based

When change is necessary for children and their families, or for the Department or its partners, it is most effectively accomplished when individual strengths and capabilities are identified, maximized, and relied upon.

8. Trust

It is our intention to act in a manner that recognizes that children and their families, the Department, its partners, and our communities, have integrity, are reliable, and can be trusted to perform their required tasks and duties consistently and completely.

DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

The Department of Children and Family Services continues to focus on three priority goals/outcomes. The three identified goals/outcomes are improved safety for children, improved timelines to permanency, and reducing reliance on placement to achieve safety. Timely permanence is achieved, with the first choice permanency option being reunification, followed by adoption, relative legal guardianship, and legal guardianship with an unrelated caregiver.

APPLICABLE TO

All SCSWs

OPERATIONAL IMPACT

In recognition of the fact that child welfare supervisors have an enormous impact on a Children's Social Worker (CSW), both in terms of quality of work performance and staff retention, the Department of Children and Family Services has established the following professional standards for a Supervising Children's Social Worker (SCSW). These standards outline in broad strokes the SCSW's responsibilities to the County, profession, social work staff, and most especially, the children and families served under his or her purview.

General Expectations

SCSWs are responsible for upholding the highest professional social work standards for their units. They translate the organization's vision, mission and values to frontline social work staff by:

- a) Engaging in activities that help achieve the Department's goals of improved child safety, expedited permanence, reduced reliance on out-of home care, increased child and family well-being, and enhanced organizational effectiveness;
- b) Implementing the key strategies as part of an emerging core practice model in attaining departmental goals (e.g., Structured Decision Making, Point of

Engagement, Team Decision Making, Coordinated Services Action Teams, Family Engagement, Concurrent Planning, etc.) as they apply to their work, both as key participants and as frontline leaders;

- c) Requiring CSWs to use a child-focused, family-centered, needs and strengths-based approach when conducting assessments, investigations, case planning and both oral and written descriptions and presentations;
- d) Teaching CSWs to recognize potential child safety concerns and risk factors, as well as, dangerous conditions and situations and respond appropriately;
- e) Ensuring CSWs provide culturally-competent casework services and link families with culturally competent service providers;
- f) Guiding CSWs to integrate “family engagement¹” best practices with the judicious exercise of protective authority, when necessary, to ensure children’s safety;
- g) Cultivating leadership and management skills by seeking out and participating in relevant educational and experiential activities (e.g., professional development trainings);
- h) Staying current on developments in the field of child welfare social work, as well as, related fields and current socio-economic events that affect the client’s community through continuing education, voluntary participation in work-groups, attending non-mandatory Departmental training, and appropriate use of Self-Directed funded opportunities; and,
- i) Seeking guidance and advice from their manager and other relevant departmental experts, as needed, on critical case decisions, specialized program matters, and personnel issues.

Training Requirements

State regulations require SCSWs to complete select SCSW core modules within 12 months of appointment and to have 40 hours of ongoing training every two years thereafter. The time frame for the 40 hour requirement commences the (State) fiscal year (July 1 to June 30th) following completion of Core. The Core training requirement is usually not an issue since virtually all SCSWs complete their entire core within the required time frame.

NOTE: All training counts regardless of topic including "training" taken/assigned in multiple modalities (e-learning, conferences, office-based formats, coaching sessions as well as in-class training).

Procedures

A. WHEN: OVERSEEING CASEWORK PRACTICE OF CSWS

SCSW Responsibilities

SCSWs are responsible for overseeing each of their CSW's casework. SCSWs must ensure that the CSWs in their unit use appropriate assessment, investigation, intervention and case planning techniques by:

- a) Teaching CSWs how to identify children who have been physically abused, neglected, sexually abused or emotionally maltreated;
- b) Ensuring CSWs properly investigate reports of child abuse or neglect and assess the immediate safety and future risk of abuse or neglect to children in their homes;
- c) Ensuring CSWs properly record their investigative and case management activities in a timely and accurate way in CWS/CMS, court reports, and other required documents.
- d) Training CSWs in the knowledge of the behavioral and emotional indicators of the following parental conditions and how these factors may contribute to child maltreatment:
 - Parental mental illness or mental health problems
 - Domestic violence and spousal abuse
 - Use or abuse of alcohol and/or drugs
 - Developmental delays and disabilities
 - Serious chronic illness
 - Inconsistent and disorganized parenting, inadequate attachment with children
 - Disturbances in information processing
 - History of maltreatment as a child
 - Social Isolation
- e) Guiding CSWs to utilize a functional approach² to assess a family's protective capacity when determining the risk factors of the family and that the case planning process equally consider the individual, family, environmental and community factors to child maltreatment, as well as, their strengths;
- f) Promoting the CSW's awareness and utilization of departmental resources such as Up Front Assessments, Public Health Nurses, Community Resources, and Team Decision Making (TDM) to utilize when assisting the client to effectively reinforce protective factors and ameliorating risk factors in the best interests of the child;
- g) Ensuring that CSWs plan from the initial contact with the family that children and youth attain "permanency" by being enveloped in enduring connections and relationships that provide a sense of family, stability and belonging;

- h) Ensuring that CSWs focus on the enhancement of children's overall well being by managing their screening, assessment and treatment to optimize their health status, emotional development, behavioral functioning, educational success, participation in extracurricular activities both inside and outside the school setting, and transitioning readiness of children;
- i) Ensuring that CSWs appropriately plan for transitioning youth into adulthood. CSWs need to ensure that youth will have the skills and housing and services that young adults need to ameliorate risks of homelessness or incarceration.
- j) Ensuring CSWs facilitate the building of durable informal and formal support systems around families within a community of care and familiarity so that parents and guardians have the maximum opportunity to keep their children safe and nurtured without ongoing public child welfare assistance ;
- k) Utilizing the TDM Safety/Action plans during case conferences with CSWs as a tool to track progress and increase accountability;
- l) Reviewing departmental policies on an ongoing basis with CSWs during unit meetings;
- m) Providing CSWs with the appropriate interviewing tools and reviewing how the CSW uses such tools when interviewing clients; and
- n) Ensuring CSWs continue to attend training that enhances their skills in working with children and families.

B. WHEN: PROVIDING INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP SUPERVISION

SCSW's are expected to create an inviting learning environment characterized by support and mutual trust between CSW and SCSW. Thus, SCSWs are expected to:

- a) Meet individually with each of their CSWs at least once every two weeks **or more frequently, as needed**, for social work case management³ guidance and coaching, assessing their staff for areas that need enhancing, and dealing with these needs in a positive, strength-based manner;
- b) Consult with each of their CSWs during critical case junctures (e.g., when the "Safety Plan" is being developed) and decision-making points (e.g., returning a child to his or her family of origin);
- c) Lead **monthly unit meetings** to share and explain important policy communiqués, provide training and group supervision, problem solve unit concerns, float ideas upward, and build teamwork;
- d) Ensure that CSWs are up to date with the knowledge base of the field of child welfare, community resources, as well as with policy and procedure through regular training. The SCSW should also reinforce the use of new training guides and tools in the application to their work;

- e) Oversee that CSWs participate in annual trainings that would best address the CSWs needs for strengthening his or her skills;
- f) Accompany CSWs during their investigations or home calls on a periodic basis (no less than two occasions per year/per CSW) to provide guidance and learning opportunities for the CSW in their fieldwork practice;
- g) Provide for occasions of peer learning via case planning staffings. After Action Reviews should also be utilized for this purpose, though sensitivity should always be shown to maintain the employee's self-esteem and avoid public embarrassment;
- h) Set firm and fair limits through appropriate implementation of disciplinary procedures consistent with guidance from Personnel Manual, Regional Manager(s), and Performance Management, and incorporate lessons learned throughout the year within the body of yearly Performance Evaluations that are instructive and recommendation-based.
- i) Keep their CSWs informed regarding areas of strength and needs for improvement throughout the year, not just at the time of the Performance Evaluation. In addition, review with CSWs what constitutes a "competent" evaluation vs. "very good" evaluation, so that CSWs are aware of the difference; and
- j) Create a milieu conducive to learning and interest through invitation of guest speakers, meeting in a variety of environments, incorporating creative informational delivery systems conducive with adult learning, and imbue a sense of Unit identity and cohesion.

C. WHEN: MAINTAINING QUALITY CONTROL

SCSWs are responsible for the quality, quantity and timeliness of work performance and product of all employees in their unit. As such, SCSW should:

- a) Fully utilize available and pertinent automated tracking tools and reports to assist with their supervisory responsibilities of monitoring the quality of their social workers' performance;
- b) Ensure the CSW complies with applicable statutory and policy requirements of the investigation and support the department's priorities of child safety, timely permanency and a reduction in the Department's reliance on out-of-home care to keep children safe;
- c) Ensure the CSW complies with applicable statutory and policy requirements for the completion of court reports and case plans and support the department's goals of child safety, timely permanency and a reduction in reliance on out-of-home care;
- d) Ensure that the case record is complete per policy, both in entries in the electronic case management system and the filing of required and relevant documents in the paper case file;

- e) Utilize the case review tool developed by the Quality Improvement (QI) section for regular reviews on a random sample of their CSW's cases and referral investigations; and
- f) Establish organizational control systems to ensure that work is distributed equitably and their CSWs complete their work in a timely manner.

APPROVAL LEVELS

Section	Level	Approval
A.-C	None	

LINKS

California Code <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>
Division 31 Regulations <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/ord/PG309.htm>
Title 22 Regulations <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/PG295.htm>
Social Work Practice
http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/sw_case_mgmt.asp

RELATED POLICIES

Section 0020-000 Supervision Guides

FORM(S) REQUIRED/LOCATION

HARD COPY None
LA Kids: None
CWS/CMS: None
SDM: None

NOTES

¹ Family engagement is a prerequisite for helping the family achieve its goals. Key elements include: listening to each family member, demonstrating respect and empathy for family members, developing an understanding of the family's past experiences, current situation, concerns, and strengths, responding to concrete needs quickly, establishing the purpose of involvement with the family, being aware of one's own biases and prejudices, validating the participatory role of the family, being consistent, reliable, and honest, and engaging & involving fathers and paternal family members.

² **Functional approach** - Taft and Robinson applied Rank's basic principles of individual psychology and human growth and change to a new theoretical model of social work practice. This new practice theory unfolded slowly during the early 1930's culminating in Taft's seminal statement of Functional Practice which appeared as the lead article in the first issue of The Journal of Social Work Process, published by the Pennsylvania School in 1934.

First, in considerable departure from the psychoanalytic model of the clinician as the leader of change, Taft and Robinson's model emphasized the participatory role of the client in her/his own change process. Client growth and change occurred through mutual recognition of a problem and collaborative work toward its resolution. Second, building on Rank's perception of time as a crucial variable in the growth process, the Functional Approach identified three specific time phases in the development of the helping relationship - the beginning, middle, and end. Each phase had a specific role and task in the movement toward change. Third, the Functional Approach used agency function as an organizing concept. Society, as represented by the social agency, defined the function and purpose of the social worker's task. Agency function also established for the client the kind of help that could be offered, the terms on which this help was given, and what was required of the client in return for receiving this help.

³ According to the National Association of Social Workers, "social work case management" is defined as "...a method of providing services whereby a professional social worker assesses the needs of the client and the client's family, when appropriate, and arranges, coordinates, monitors, evaluates, and advocates for a package of multiple services to meet the specific client's complex needs. A professional social worker is the primary provider of social work case management. Distinct from other forms of case management, social work case management addresses both the individual client's bio-psychosocial status as well as the state of the social system in which case management operates. Social work case management is both micro and macro in nature: intervention occurs at both the client and system levels. It requires the social worker to develop and maintain a therapeutic relationship with the client, which may include linking the client with systems that provide him or her with needed services, resources, and opportunities. Services provided under the rubric of social work case management practice may be located in a single agency or may be spread across numerous agencies or organization" The key phrase, "therapeutic relationship" requires that SCSWs be familiar with, and practice, clinical supervision techniques

REFERENCES

¹ Child Welfare Information Gateway, Family Engagement & Involvement, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/famcentered/casework/engagement.cfm> (Nov. 19, 2009).

² University of Pennsylvania, Social Policy & Practice, <http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/about/approach.html> (November 19, 2009).

³ Case Management Standards Work Group, NASW Standards for Social Work Case Management, National Association of Social Workers, http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/sw_case_mgmt.asp (June, 1992).