

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



April 27, 1982

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-45-82

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY WELFARE STAFF DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY PROBATION STAFF DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS
ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ADOPTION AGENCY DIRECTORS
ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ADOPTION AGENCY STAFF DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS
ALL REGIONAL CENTERS' DIRECTORS
ALL REGIONAL CENTERS' STAFF DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH STAFF DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS
ALL LOCAL AGENCY FCIS LIAISONS

SUBJECT: FOSTER CARE INFORMATION SYSTEM TRAINING FOLLOW-UP

Attached are the questions which were most frequently raised in the Foster Care Information System (FCIS) training sessions in March. For the sake of brevity in preparing responses, some questions were consolidated and/or restated. The questions and responses have been organized into the following sections:

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Hopefully you and your staff will find the package helpful in clarifying questions which are raised as you begin submitting FCIS Phase II documents.

By this time local agencies should have received an initial supply of all FCIS documents: Foster Child's Data Record (FCDR) (SOC 158A); FCDR Supplemental Input (SOC 158B); FCDR Batch Transmittal Form (SOC 158C); FCDR County Batch

Control Log (SOC 158D); and the FCDR Request for Information (SOC 158E). These documents have been mailed directly to each local agency.

Your agency also should have received by this time, the preprinted turnaround (SOC 158) documents reflecting the data submitted for Phase I (November 1, 1981 through March 31, 1982). These documents have been mailed to the county welfare departments for distribution to non-county welfare agencies.

The Department of Social Services, Family and Children's Services Systems Bureau (FCSSB) and Statistical Services Branch (SSB) will be available as ongoing resources during the implementation of Phase II of the FCIS (April 1, 1982 through September 31, 1982). FCSSB and SSB will provide consultation and assistance in their designated areas of responsibility (as outlined in Section 26-552.03 of the FCIS Phase II Instructions Manual) via telephone or correspondence.

Please contact the Family and Children's Services Systems Bureau at (916) 323-2923, ATSS 473-2923, or the Statistical Services Branch at (916) 322-5462, ATSS 492-5462, for assistance or additional clarification.


CLAUDE E. FINN
Deputy Director

Attachment

cc: County Welfare Directors Association
California Probation Officers Association
Antonio Amador, Director, California Youth Authority
Ruth Kranovich, Deputy Director, California Youth Authority, Parole
Services Branch
James C. Barnett, Deputy Director, California Youth Authority, Prevention
and Community Corrections Branch
Kenneth J. Wagstaff, Director, Department of Mental Health
David E. Loberg, Director, Department of Developmental Services
Rita Evans RN., Deputy Director, Department of Developmental Services,
Community Services Division

POPULATION

During the course of the training, many questions regarding the population were raised. There was concern that because the FCIS does not collect information on every child in out-of-home care, the information collected would not accurately reflect the true foster care picture. While it is true that the FCIS will not capture every child in an out-of-home situation, it does provide an accurate picture of those children receiving AFDC-FC monies and those with open foster care services cases in County Welfare Departments (CWD). This population falls within the administrative responsibilities of the State Department of Social Services and satisfies the minimum federal requirements. In the future, this population may be expanded.

There was also some confusion as to just which children would actually be a part of the FCIS population. To determine whether a child is a part of the FCIS population, ask this question: "Is the child receiving AFDC-FC payments?" If the answer is "yes", the child is to be reported.

If the answer is "no" and the agency involved is a nonwelfare agency, the child is not reported.

If the answer is "no" and the agency involved is a county welfare department, ask a second question: "Is the child receiving foster care services eligible for Title XX or Title IV-B funding?"

If the child is receiving county welfare department foster care services eligible for funding by Title XX or Title IV-B, the child will be reported. If the child is not receiving foster care services eligible for Title XX or Title IV-B funding, the child will not be reported.

PRIMARY CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

1. What specifically is meant by "primary case management responsibility?"

Answer: The primary case manager has the responsibility for ensuring that the services are being provided. Primary case management responsibility lies with the agency which has: a) been assigned care, custody and control by the court; or b) entered into a placement agreement with the child, parent(s) or guardian(s); or c) has been assigned custody and control of a child freed from parental control.

2. Which agency is responsible for document submission?

Answer: The agency with primary case management responsibility is responsible for submitting the documents. In cases of equally shared responsibility where primary case management is not clear, the involved agencies should negotiate the issue and come to a mutually agreeable decision.

3. Who submits the documents for the following situations?

- a. The CWD has care, custody and control but primary case management is the responsibility of another local agency.

Answer: The agency which the court holds accountable for the child submits the documents.

- b. Care, custody and control and primary case management responsibilities are shared between two or more agencies.

Answer: Whichever agency prepares the court reports submits the documents.

- c. There is a placement under the Interstate Compact of a child placed into California from another state. The sending state is providing the AFDC-FC payment.

Answer: If the child's case is supervised by a California county welfare department which is providing out-of-home care services funded by Title XX or Title IVB, the county welfare department will submit the documents. (This will be considered a foster care services only case because the California county welfare department is not making payments.) If a nonwelfare agency is responsible for the case or county welfare department services are funded by other than Title XX or Title IV-B, the child is not to be reported to the FCIS.

- d. A Phase II record has already been established based on the child being declared a dependent under WIC 300 and later the child is adjudicated a WIC 601 or 602.

Answer: The agency to which the court has assigned care, custody and control shall complete the FCIS documents. If this agency is Probation, the child must be receiving AFDC-FC to continue to be included in the FCIS.

DATA ELEMENTS

1. When does an entry begin on the left hand side and when does it begin on the right?

Answer: All entries except amounts and monetary figures begin in the left-most position. In the FCIS, only Number of Placements this Case Opening (H12), AFDC-FC Ongoing Payment (L3) and County Approved Facility Rate (L4) begin in the right-most position.

2. What will occur if some data items do not have an entry?

Answer: If one of the three mandatory data items is left blank, a critical error will result and no information will be entered. Any other item which is applicable and does not have an entry will receive an error or reminder message but will not prevent the rest of the information from being entered on the computer file.

3. Will the computer accept Transaction Code 02 for cases opened during Phase I?

Answer: For those local agencies which are not sure whether a case has been established on the FCIS during Phase I, information may be submitted using Transaction Code 02 for a limited period beginning April 1, 1982 through September 30, 1982. If the caseworker is certain that the case has been established, the worker is encouraged to submit case information on the SOC 158A using the preferred Transaction Code 04.

4. How are multiple middle names and/or junior or numerical identifiers (II, III, IV, etc.) listed? Does the inclusion of more than needed information for any transaction cause any particular problem?

Answer: Numerical identifiers and/or junior may be entered after a comma in the "Child's Last Name". Multiple middle names may be listed in "Child's First Name" as space permits. Example: John Paul Craig Reed, Jr. should be entered as R e e d , J r _ _ _ _ _ / J o h n P a u l _ _ _ _ _ / C.

The inclusion of more than the needed information will not cause a problem; however, it will not be entered onto the child's computer case record.

5. What happens if an incorrect Social Security Number is entered?

Answer: The Social Security Number should be corrected on the turnaround document as soon as the worker identifies the error or the computer edits recognize an error. If the error is not corrected, it will affect the accuracy of comparisons to past and future records.

6. Nonlegal alien children who receive county general fund board and care payments because of alien status, and also foster care services, do not have birth dates. What is entered in these cases?

Answer: If you do not have a birth date, enter 9's in Birthdate (C-5).

7. If the child is repeatedly removed from and returned to parents, does the "Reason For Removal" (D-4) change?

Answer: The reason for removal from the home is listed only for the first time in this case opening the child is removed from the home. If the case is repeatedly opened and closed, the reason for removal might change. If the case remains continuously open, the entry would not be changed.

8. When the child has more than one AKA, how can they all be entered? How many AKAs can be retained in the history file?

Answer: Only one AKA can be entered on a document. It is recommended that as updates and/or corrections are needed, enter an additional AKA on each document until all AKAs have been submitted. The FCIS will retain all AKAs that are reported.

9. If the child is placed out-of-state, is it necessary to fill in the "county" number?

Answer: No.

10. What date is completed when the child's address changes?

Answer: It is assumed that the address change will be submitted within three working days of the change. Therefore, the Date Of Submittal will be linked to the address change. Do not complete items F-2 and F-3 if it is an address change but not a placement change.

11. If the foster parent remains the same but his/her name changes, (i.e., through marriage), should this be reported?

Answer: Yes, unless the facility name or name the facility is licensed under remains the same.

12. What facility name is entered for a home certified by a licensed home finding agency?

Answer: The actual name of the facility should be used, not the name of the umbrella agency which certified the facility.

13. What date is entered in Initial Placement Date This Case Opening (F-4)?

- a. For a foster care case that has been continuously open for a period of time?

Answer: The date the child was initially placed into foster care during this case opening.

- b. For a reopened foster care case?

Answer: The date the child was initially placed after this foster care case was reopened.

- c. When a child is initially placed in emergency shelter?

Answer: The date the child is placed in the emergency shelter.

14. If a child is being detained pending adjudication under WIC 300, would Legal Authority For Placement (H-2 through 11) be entered as "300" or "Other"?

Answer: Caseworker should enter "detained" under Item H-11, Legal Authority For Placement "Other" (specify). Do not enter "300", "601", or "602" until the child has been adjudicated.

15. Is line "J", Date Current Reassessment Completed and Services Provided Since Last Reassessment, preprinted or is it used only to report services provided?

Answer: Services marked on line "J" will be accumulated and printed back until the next reassessment occurs, as indicated by a new date in Date Current Reassessment Completed, (J-1). On the subsequent turnaround document information on line "J" will be moved to line "K" and "J" will be blank.

16. In some cases, counties provide a special allowance in addition to the AFDC-FC rate. Is the full amount entered?

Answer: The caseworker should enter in AFDC-FC Ongoing Payment (L-3) the actual amount paid, even though it is different from L-4, the County-Approved Facility Rate. See Instructions Manual, page 7-17.

17. Does the case number change when the payment case closes?

Answer: Yes, see Instructions Manual, page 7-3, Item B-3, New Case Number Unique I.D.

PROBATION

1. Probation departments often have responsibility for a child who was removed from home for a reason other than those listed. What should be entered?

Answer: Enter the reason "Other" Code 99 and as applicable, specify the penal code number (such as 459 PC). If the child was removed for several offenses, enter the most serious.

2. Can a probation officer change a record without the social worker's awareness when the social worker is responsible for the case?

Answer: Only the caseworker, as defined in Section 26-552.06 (page 4-2) of the Instructions Manual, acting under the direction of the "Agency Responsible for Case Supervision" can submit updates to the foster child's computer case record. The FCIS internal departmental audits and computer edits process will not allow unauthorized transmission of data onto a computer case record.

3. If a WIC 602 placement is interrupted and funds are withheld, but the AFDC-FC income maintenance case is still open, is the case terminated from the FCIS?

Answer: The case should not be terminated from the FCIS for placement changes unless the AFDC-FC payment case is terminated.

SERVICES ONLY CASE

1. What is reported when an AFDC-FC payment case is closed before the foster care services case?

Answer: When a county welfare department is reporting an AFDC-FC payment case closure but the foster care services case remains open:

- a) The caseworker may delete Eligibility Worker I.D. (B-4).
- b) The caseworker must submit the New Case Number/Unique I.D. (B-3).
- c) The caseworker must enter date in AFDC-FC Termination Date (L-2).

If an AFDC-FC payment case closes and the supervising agency is not the county welfare department, the entire case would be closed because the child would no longer be in the FCIS population.

REASSESSMENT

1. How often is a reassessment done? What date is entered in Date Current Reassessment Completed (J-1)?

Answer: A reassessment shall be completed no less frequently than every six months, but may occur more often as county policy dictates or court order mandates.

The Current Reassessment Date (J1) is only to be completed at reassessment and is the date "this", not the previous reassessment, is completed. The Reassessment Due Date (K1) is only completed if a review of the child's case is scheduled for less than six months from the Reassessment Completed Date (J1).

EMERGENCY SHELTER CARE

1. Is a case reported to the FCIS for a child who is not yet adjudicated, but has been placed in emergency shelter care funded by AFDC-FC?

Answer: If the child's placement is funded by AFDC-FC, he/she must be reported to FCIS.

2. Are children placed in receiving homes part of the foster care population which must be reported to FCIS?

Answer: Yes, provided that (1) the receiving home in which the child is placed is receiving AFDC-FC for that child's placement; or (2) the county welfare department is providing out-of-home care services funded by Title XX or Title IV-B, regardless of how the placement is funded.

If the child has been removed from a foster facility, placed in a receiving home pending placement in a foster facility, and the child's case is active on the FCIS, the receiving home placement must be reported as an address change. However, Number of Placements This Case Opening (H-12) would not be changed.

3. Is a change reported to the FCIS when the child has been removed from a foster home to an emergency shelter care placement?

Answer: Yes, it must be reported if the move lasts at least three days. However, DSS recommends, but does not require, that shorter stays also be reported.

4. Do you report to FCIS interim group home placements paid for by AFDC-FC funding?

Answer: Yes.

5. Is the placement section of the document completed each time a child is removed from a foster home and placed in emergency shelter care?

Answer: Yes, entries must be made in that section but only to those items that change.

6. In situations where a child remains in emergency shelter care for several months and AFDC-FC began in the third week of placement, what date is entered in item F-4, Initial Placement Date?

Answer: Enter the date the child enters the emergency shelter placement in Initial Placement Date (F-4). It should be noted that AFDC-FC Beginning Date (L-1) will allow us to differentiate the time the child began receiving AFDC-FC payments from the initial date of placement.

INTERCOUNTY MOVEMENT

1. How is an intercounty transfer reported when a child's foster care status does not change?

Answer: Refer to the Instructions Manual, pages 5-5 and 7-18. The sending agency submits a services case termination and both sending and receiving agencies will receive turnaround documents. However, if the turnaround document contains a noncritical error, only the sending agency will receive a turnaround document on which to immediately make the correction. Once corrected, the receiving agency will receive a turnaround document with the same information as the sending agency. The receiving agency must immediately report the new case number and update any items as necessary. The sending agency is not to report the AFDC-FC income maintenance case closure, as it is actually transferred from one county to another and not closed and reopened.

2. Can FCIS provide the receiving agency with the child's previous foster care information? How?

Answer: Yes, once the receiving agency has submitted the turnaround document changing the case number. The receiving agency can contact Statistical Services Branch to request a copy of the Foster Child's Data Record Summary report. Additionally, that report is automatically provided one month prior to the date of the next reassessment.

3. When a county submits a "new" case and FCIS records show a closed case from another county, will the county submitting the "new" case be sent existing historical information automatically?

Answer: No, historical information is not automatically sent to the new county. When a case is opened, a comparison of that child's data is made to all FCIS records, both active and closed. If another child's name, is similar or if the SSN is an exact match, a Suspected Duplicate Cases for the Same Child report is returned to the agency with the turnaround document. The caseworker then reviews the report and can request the Foster Child's Data Record Summary report for one of the children listed if it appears that the child has been in foster care before.

UPDATES/CORRECTIONS

1. Can more than one item be updated on the same turnaround document?

Answer: Yes, see Instructions Manual, pages 5-3 and 7-2.

2. Can an update and a correction be made to the same item on the same turnaround document?

Answer: No. The correction must be made immediately on the turnaround document showing that day's date as Date of Submittal. The update is then made on a nonpreprinted document with the Date of Submittal reflecting the following day's date. Submission of two separate documents with different Dates of Submittal will ensure sequential processing of the correction and update.

3. How can one item be updated and another corrected on the same document?

Answer: To either update or correct an item, enter the new information in the shaded area of the item. For a correction, also enter a "C" in the "Corr" box if one precedes the item. A change to an item without a "Corr" box is assumed to be a correction.

4. How is the FCIS record updated when a child is moved to two or three homes in one week? Can three moves be reported on one date?

Answer: DSS is encouraging local agencies to report each address or placement change that occurs. The caseworker has three working days after becoming aware of a child's movement to report it. If more than one move occurs within those three days, the caseworker must report the most recent placement, but should submit all changes. Submission of all moves will protect the integrity of the system and provide a more accurate picture of the child's placement history.

Whether a child is moved two or three times in a week or in a day, each movement that is reported must be submitted on a separate document using different Dates of Submittal (A-1). Enter consecutive Dates of Submittal to ensure proper processing of the updates.

5. When a child runs away must that be reported as an address change? Must the entire form be filled out?

Answer: When a child runs away from placement, enter the mandatory Items (A1, A2, B1) and "RUNAWAY" in the address (E1).

6. Does every change in a child's case require an update? Which updates must be made within three days?

Answer: Every change that affects data collected by the FCIS requires update. However, not every item requires update within three working days. Refer to your Instructions Manual, pages 6-1, for those items that do. Every error that needs correction, however, must be corrected within three working days.

7. How are corrections made to items in history? Must all items being corrected on the Supplemental Input Form (SOC 158B) have the same history linkage date?

Answer: A correction to the history computer case record must be made on Supplemental Input Document (SOC 158B). See Instructions Manual, pages 9-2 and 9-3, for specific directions. All items being corrected on a Supplemental Input Document must have the same history linkage date. If the items have different history linkage dates, separate SOC 158Bs must be submitted.

8. What happens when the state receives documents with the Dates of Submittal (Al) out of sequential order?

Answer: If documents are received out of date order, the document with the most recent Date of Submittal will be applied to the child's current computer case record. Documents with earlier Dates of Submittal will be applied directly to history.

9. How will the state handle massive statewide changes, such as a change in AFDC-FC rates? Will those be taken care of automatically?

Answer: Alternatives are being examined. You will be advised when final procedures are developed.

DOCUMENT SUBMISSION/TURNAROUND TIME

1. What document is completed if the turnaround document is not available for a case that is reopening?

Answer: Call Statistical Services Branch and request a turnaround document (SOC 158), or complete all items on a nonpreprinted document (SOC 158A).

2. What is the state's turnaround time on documents submitted for initial processing or update?

Answer: The Department's turnaround time is anticipated to be 24 to 72 hours. However, from the time that the document leaves the caseworker until a turnaround document is returned to that caseworker is expected to be 10-14 working days. This takes into account batch control mailing point processing time in the local agency, U.S. Postal Service handling, DSS computer processing time, and each local agency's internal mail processing time.

3. If more than one input document is submitted, how many turnaround documents will be returned from the system?

Answer: A turnaround document is returned for every input document submitted.

4. How does a caseworker keep track of what has been submitted if several documents have been sent prior to receiving a preprinted turnaround document?

Answer: The yellow copy of each document submitted is retained by the worker to verify what has been sent to DSS. These must be filed chronologically, according to Date of Submittal (A-1), in the services case folder.

BATCH CONTROL

1. Is it really necessary to mail a Batch Control Log to Statistical Services Branch every Monday?

Answer: Yes. This is one of several critical document control procedures to monitor the mailing process to the DSS and to be able to initiate corrective action in the event of any mail loss. It is not feasible for DSS to make regular telephone contact to agencies which do not submit batches of documents in any given week.

2. Must each local agency in a county have a different batch control mailing point even if their offices are in the same building?

Answer: Yes, the Batch Control Mailing Point Code (BCMPC) should be unique for each agency to facilitate sorting and batching, and reduce turnaround time. If more than one agency were to use the same BCMPC, system control reports would intersperse case control information for each agency, making interpretation and sorting difficult.

PHASE I

1. How do you correct errors that were made during Phase I?

Answer: If an error was made on a case reported to Phase I, it should be corrected on the preprinted turnaround document. The correction can be submitted when reporting a Phase I address change or at reassessment, whichever occurs first. Make the correction according to specific instructions in the Instructions Manual, pages 7-1 and 7-2.

2. For Phase I cases which were closed and reported to the FCIS before April 1, 1982, must a fully completed document be submitted?

Answer: No. Phase II documents are not to be completed for a case closed prior to April 1, 1982 unless it has reopened.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. What steps are being taken to protect confidentiality?

Answer: DSS program and legal staff are developing criteria and establishing procedures which will reflect both DSS policy and the law governing the release of confidential data.

2. Once a child reaches the age of 18, will information still be retained on the FCIS file?

Answer: Information will be retained on the active file for three years. Release of this information will be restricted according to DSS policy and confidentiality laws.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Are local agencies required to pay for FCIS materials and reports?

Answer: Initial supplies of the nonpreprinted document (SOC 158A), Supplemental Input (SOC 158B), and other forms (SOC 158C, D, and E) have been sent at no cost to local agencies. Once exhausted, additional supplies will need to be ordered through the normal process. The cost should be minimal as most forms will be computer generated. All computer generated forms (SOC 158 turnaround documents) and reports, including both those routinely produced and those requested, unless extremely complex, will be produced at no cost to the local agencies.

2. How should the documents be completed for a child with no name or identifying information, such as an abandoned newborn?

Answer: Enter all mandatory items (A1, A2, B1), the name that has been assigned to the child (e.g., John Doe), sex, ethnicity and 9's for the month, day and year of birth. For all other items, refer to the Instructions Manual, pages 7-1 through 7-19, for specific instructions.

3. How long will the child's information be stored after the case is closed?

Answer: The child's case will remain accessible in the FCIS for three years after case closure.

4. What forms will be eliminated by using the SOC 158 or 158A? Can the FC-5 be eliminated?

Answer: While the SOC 158/158A does not directly replace any currently required forms, one of the reports that will be produced by the FCIS, Foster Child's Data Record Summary, will replace the SOC 153, Placement History.

After careful examination, it was determined that the FC-5 cannot be eliminated at this time because it serves a different function. The FC-5 is primarily a certification document which verifies for the eligibility worker that certain eligibility requirements have been met. It was not designed to collect and transmit data to DSS.

5. Once information has been sealed, can it be retrieved at a later time?

Answer: No. Once sealed, information is completely eliminated from the system.

6. How will interagency transfers be reported and by whom? Does the receiving agency open a new case?

Answer: When the responsibility for supervision of the foster care services case is transferred from one agency to another, and the AFDC-FC aid payment will continue with the same county welfare department, the receiving agency does not open a new FCIS case. Specific procedures are being developed for interagency transfers. Once established, all agencies will receive these as an update to the Instructions Manual. Until procedures have been established, the caseworker should use the same procedure as is used for an intercounty transfer (See Instruction Manual p. 5-5). Use code 11 "Transfer to Another Agency."