



CDSS

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ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE (ACIN) NO. I-40-14

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order (Please check a box)
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL TITLE IV-E TRIBES

SUBJECT: CHILD WELFARE SERVICES (CWS) REVIEWS

REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) No. 04-05

The purpose of this ACIN is to disseminate information to counties about the benefits of conducting qualitative reviews of programs across the entire continuum of child and family services.

The purpose of the California-Child and Family Service Reviews (C-CFSR) is to significantly strengthen the accountability system used in California to monitor and assess the quality of services provided throughout the child welfare continuum of care, including prevention and early intervention. As such, the C-CFSR operates on a philosophy of continuous quality improvement, interagency partnerships, community involvement and public reporting of program outcomes. The C-CFSR is comprised of county child welfare system reviews and maximizes compliance with federal regulations for the receipt of federal Title IV-E and Title IV-B funds.

In 2012, several entities convened and collaborated on the redesign the C-CFSR process. Feedback was received from representatives of the CDSS' Children's Services Outcomes and Accountability Bureau, the Office of Child Abuse Prevention, the County Welfare Directors Association, the Chief Probation Officers of California, the Center for Social Services Research at UC Berkeley, and several California county child welfare and probation agencies. The main objective of the redesign was to ensure consistency with recommendations for improvement provided by the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators and American Public Health Association to the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in 2011 regarding the federal CFSR processes.

The Children's Bureau (CB) of ACF continues to consider improvements to the CFSR review process to monitor state title IV-B and IV-E Programs. On August 27, 2012, the ACF issued Information Memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-12-07 (<http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/res/pdf/PIP/InfoMemo1207.pdf>), with the goal of strengthening the state's quality assurance (QA) processes through the model of continuous quality improvement (CQI). The CQI differs from QA in that it is a way of working - it is a philosophy that focuses on continual improvement; whereas QA is an evaluation of past performance. The CQI is the complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and challenges and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions. In addition, ACF issued CFSR Technical Bulletin #7 (<http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/res/pdf/PIP/TechnicalBulletin7.pdf>), providing instructions and guidance regarding the expectation that states conduct case file reviews as a part of their QA process.

The integration of qualitative analysis with the statistical outcomes will allow counties the opportunity to strengthen their programs in a holistic manner. The qualitative approach will allow for an in depth review of the continuum of Child Welfare services that span from Emergency Response intake to permanency, the practice habits in each of the task areas within the continuum of CWS, documentation efforts and impact on outcome measurements, application and accuracy of assessment tools (i.e. *Structured Decision Making [SDM]* and *Comprehensive Assessment Tools [CAT]*) utilized, and the inclusion of collaborative work with service providers and the community.

Counties are encouraged to designate staff members responsible for the QA process, specifically including qualitative case reviews, to improve practice and programs via policy and procedure development and trend analysis. In order to maintain integrity of the QA process, the ideal reviewers of the information would not be responsible for services or decision making for the case/referral being reviewed.

Conducting qualitative case reviews provide counties a number of benefits, including, but not limited to:

- Ensure conformity with Title IV-B and IV-E child welfare requirements using a framework focused on safety, permanency, and well-being;
- Determine what is happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services;
- Collecting specific case-level data that provides context and addresses agency performance;

- Detecting the quality of services for the children and families served and therefore focus on the assessment and monitoring of how child and family functioning is progressing in relation to the services provided;
- Case reviews include the completion of interviews specific to each case, such as the child/youth, birth parent, caregiver, caseworker or supervisor, and as indicated, health, mental health and other service providers, educators, and guardian ad litem (or child's attorney);
- Assist in identification of policy and procedures that require updating;
- Help guide targeted training topics for specific staff members; and
- Lead to focused supervision and developing practice habits to align with best practice and outcome measurements.

California remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that children have safety, permanency and well-being in their living situations and in ensuring action steps taken lead to improved outcomes for children and families.

Questions regarding qualitative case reviews should be directed to the county CFSR program consultant.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

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