



CDSS

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

September 3, 2015

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO.I-48-15

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 ALL COUNTY CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM MANAGERS
 ALL COUNTY CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
 ALL FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY DIRECTORS
 ALL CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES ADOPTION
 REGIONAL AND FIELD OFFICES

SUBJECT: MONTHLY CASEWORKER VISITS WITH CHILDREN

REFERENCE: WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE (WIC) SECTION 16501.1(K);
 SENATE BILL (SB) 703 (CHAPTER 583, STATUTES OF 2007);
 ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 118 (CHAPTER 40, STATUTES OF 2011);
 PUBLIC LAW (PL) 112-34 AND 109-288; GOVERNMENT CODE
 SECTION 30026.5(E)(3); ALL COUNTY INFORMATION
 NOTICES (ACIN) I-43-11 AND I-34-07; ALL COUNTY LETTERS (ACL)
 09-11, 10-19, 11-18, 13-13, AND 14- 50; COUNTY FISCAL
 LETTER 08/0937; 10/11-04, AND 10/11-46

The purpose of this ACIN is to remind the county child welfare, and probation departments of the federal requirements contained in the Child and Family Services Improvement Act (the Act) of 2006 (PL 109-288 and 112-34) and implemented via SB 703 (Chapter 583, Statutes of 2007) regarding caseworker visits with children.

As a practice, the California Department of Social Services maintains that all foster children under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court be visited on a monthly basis. This ACIN specifically references the revised federal requirements for monthly caseworker visits requiring all states take necessary steps to ensure that for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015 and thereafter, the total number of monthly caseworker visits to children in foster care during a fiscal year is at least 95 percent of the total number of such visits that would occur during the year if each child were visited once a month while in care. Additionally, this ACIN will update counties on the state's performance

rates on this measure and review the penalties associated with this mandate by the reduction of the State's Title IV-B funding if goals are not met.

Background

In passing the Act, it was noted that there was a strong correlation between frequent caseworker visits with foster children and positive outcomes for these children, such as timely achievement of permanency and other indicators of child welfare. The Act appropriated nationwide, 40 million dollars of which was allocated to the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program to support monthly visits with children who are in foster care.

Federal Requirements

The Act requires that California's Title IV-B State Plan report the frequency of caseworker visits to children in foster care, with a minimum expectation that children are visited on at least a monthly basis. The Act also established enforcement standards and fiscal penalties for non-compliance that are discussed below. By FFY 2011, at least 90 percent, and by **FFY 2015 at least 95 percent** of children in foster care under the jurisdiction of the court must be visited each month the child is in foster care and a majority of these visits must occur in the child's home.

Monthly caseworker visits are counted by the number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care who are under the age of 18 and have been in foster care for at least one full calendar month. Outgoing Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children placements, trial home visits, and runaways are included when determining the population that must be visited monthly.

State Performance Progress

California has made significant progress in its goal to meet the federal monthly caseworker visits requirements that at least 95 percent of children in foster care are visited by their caseworkers each and every month.

Children in Foster Care (FC) Who Were Visited on a Monthly Basis (PL 109-288 Measure):

Description of Goals	FFY 2011 Performance	FFY 2012 Performance	FFY 2013 Performance	FFY 2014 Performance
Children in FC who were visited on a monthly basis	73.8%	88.2%	90.84%	Currently 92.3% Must be 95% for FFY 2015
Visits that took place in the residence of the foster child	74.9%	76.16%	77.27%	79.13%

Penalties

The fiscal penalties for failing to meet the minimum standards are shown below. In addition to not meeting the 95 percent requirement, fiscal penalties will also be applied for not meeting the standard of “at least 50 percent” of visits occurring in the residence of the child. States failing to meet the performance requirements in any FFY will be subject to a reduction in the rate of Federal Financial Participation (FFP) for Title IV-B, Subpart 1 with a corresponding increase in the non-federal share in the subsequent FFY. With the Child Welfare Services Realignment of 2011 these penalties may directly impact the county. Please see County Fiscal Letter No. 11/12-18 for further information on the possible fiscal impact to the counties.

If the State falls short of the target percentage by:	The FFP rate reduction of the Title IV-B, Subpart 1 will be reduced by:
Less than 10%	1%
10% or more but less than 20%	3%
20% or more	5%

Regarding future penalties, Government Code section 30026.5(e)(3) provides that any monetary penalty that results from an administrative mandate is shared equally between the counties and the state. However, if the state determines that counties failed to perform the mandated requirement, counties could pay 100 percent of the penalty. It is conceivable that counties could pay a monetary penalty of either 50 percent or 100 percent for not complying with the federal caseworker visits with children requirements.

If you have any questions or need additional information about monthly caseworker visits, please contact the Permanency Policy Bureau at (916) 657-1858 or e-mail to ConcurrentPlanningPolicyUnit@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

KAREN B. GUNDERSON, Chief
Child and Youth Permanency Branch
Children and Family Services Division