

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



April 19, 2006

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO.: 06-07

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHILD WELFARE SERVICES
PROGRAM MANAGERS
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

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

SUBJECT: **ASSEMBLY BILL 2795: CHANGE IN TIME PERIOD FOR COMPLETION OF A CASE PLAN**

REFERENCE: ASSEMBLY BILL 2795, CHAPTER 332, STATUTES OF 2004; FEDERAL 45 CODE OF REGULATIONS SECTION 1356.21(G), ALL COUNTY LETTER 5-07; ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE 1-64-03 (FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN CASE PLANNING); CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (DIV 31) Division 31-206.4, DIVISION 31-210, 31-215, 31-235; AND WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE (W&IC) 16501.1(D).

The purpose of this All County Letter is to inform county child welfare agencies and probation departments that, pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 2795, Chapter 332, Statutes of 2004, **effective 90 days from the date of this letter**, the maximum time available for completing a written case plan may be extended to 60 days. The application of the 60 day case plan extension is left to the discretion of each county. Therefore, social workers/probation officers are reminded to consult county policy on this issue prior to extending the case plan time frame beyond 30 days. **Please note that although AB 2795 states that the case plan must be completed* 60 days from the date of placement, other sections of the bill and federal 45 Code of Regulations Section 1356.21(g) require that a case plan be developed no later than 60 days from a child's removal.** In order to assure federal financial participation for federally eligible foster care cases, the federal regulations must be followed. Appropriate changes to Division 31 and Division 45 regulations are being addressed at this time.

AB 2795 specifically states that the intent of the Legislature was to allow the social worker additional time to fully engage the family in the case plan process, soliciting input from the child, the child's family, as well as input from relatives and other interested parties. It is widely recognized that engagement of the family in the case planning process plays an integral part in ensuring positive outcomes for the family. Please refer to All County Information Notice I-64-03, for an in-depth discussion of family engagement.

Although the maximum time frame for completing the case plan has been extended to up to 60 days to allow adequate time to properly engage families, social

* Division 31-206.4 states that the case plan shall be considered complete only if all elements specified in Section 31-206 have been documented and the social worker/probation officer's supervisor has signed and dated the case plan.

workers/probation officers are encouraged to complete the case plan as expeditiously as possible. **Please note that if the social worker/probation officer requires more than 30 days for completion of the case plan, the social worker/probation officer must visit each child at least once in the period subsequent to the initial 30 days and prior to completion of that plan (MPP 31-320.3 and 31-320.41).** Supervisors are encouraged to ensure that social workers/probation officers document all activities involving the parent's and child's participation in the development of the case plan, and in particular to document such activities for case plan extensions beyond 30 days in order to meet the intent of the new law.

Child Welfare Services/Case Management Services (CWS/CMS) Application

AB 2795 permits a delay in the implementation of its provisions until modifications are made to the CWS/CMS application. However, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) deems that the planned modifications are not necessary for the implementation of this change.

When a worker opens a case, the current CWS/CMS design reminds users immediately that a Case Plan is due 30 days from the "Case Start Date." Completion of the Case Plan satisfies a software business rule and discontinues the message which is found in the Reminder Notebook. This 30 day reminder continues until the next major group of changes to CWS/CMS (Release 6.1) occurs. Tentatively, this Release may occur in the Fall of 2006. At that time the reminder will be changed to reflect the new extended 60 day timeframe. Users will continue to view the message in the Reminder Notebook until the Case Plan is completed. **Users should note that the CWS/CMS Reminder notices temporarily will not reflect the new maximum time frames as outlined in this letter.**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact Teresa Contreras, Chief, of the Child Welfare Policy and Program Development Bureau or Nancy Goodman, Manager, Policy Development and Support Unit at (916) 651-6160. Any questions or problems related to CWS/CMS should be directed to Glenn Jue, Manager, Program Policy Unit of the CMS Support Branch, at (916) 651-7884.

Sincerely,

MARY L. AULT
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division