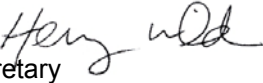


STATE OF WISCONSIN
Department of Children and Families
Division of Safety and Permanence

DSP Memo Series 2008 - 01
July 15, 2008
Re: Caseworker Contact
Requirement for Children and
Juveniles in Out-of-Home Care

To: Area Administrators/ Human Services Area Coordinators
Bureau Directors
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Developmental Disabilities
Services Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Indian Child Welfare Directors
Licensing Chiefs/Section Chiefs
Tribal Chairpersons/Human Services Facilitators/Indian Child Welfare Directors

From: Henry Wilde 
Deputy Secretary

The federal Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 requires that caseworkers have contact with children and juveniles placed in out-of-home care who are under the placement and care responsibility of the State each and every full calendar month they are placed in out-of-home care. This memo issues the policy requiring monthly caseworker face-to-face contact with children and juveniles in out-of-home care and describes data reporting requirements and related changes to eWiSACWIS. The Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) developed this policy in collaboration with county, tribal, and private agency stakeholders. There are no exceptions to the requirements in this policy since they are established by federal law.

Policy Requirements for Caseworker Contacts

The policy attached to this memo defines who constitutes a child's or juvenile's caseworker, establishes the requirement for caseworkers to conduct monthly face-to-face contacts with all children and juveniles in out-of-home care, identifies what placements the caseworker contact requirement applies, outlines the topics that should be addressed in a face-to-face contact, and describes the information that must be documented in eWiSACWIS. The policy requirements apply to all children and juveniles in out-of-home care settings, including those placed by a CHIPS, JIPS, or delinquency order and through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children or the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Juveniles.

For the purposes of this policy, "caseworker" is defined broadly to include a social worker or other professional staff who has involvement with child removal or placement decisions or case management responsibility for a child. A caseworker could include a private agency caseworker, tribal caseworker, out-of-state caseworker, facility caseworker, or contracted staff person. For situations in which a caseworker outside of a county agency is conducting the face-to-face contacts for a county agency, the county agency and private agency, tribal, or contracted caseworker should establish expectations for how and when information regarding the contacts will be shared for entering into eWiSACWIS.

Data Requirements and Reports

In addition to practice requirements, the federal law established the following specific benchmark goals and data reporting requirements:

Document Summary

This memo includes the policy requiring monthly caseworker contacts with children and juveniles in out-of-home care and describes data reporting requirements and related changes to eWiSACWIS.

- At least 51% of the contacts with a child or juvenile must occur in the child's or juvenile's out-of-home placement.
- All states, by October 1, 2011, must demonstrate that at least 90% of their children and juveniles placed in out-of-home care were contacted by their caseworkers each and every full calendar month they were placed in out-of-home care.
- States are required to collect data demonstrating that the contacts occurred and to submit that data to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) each federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30).

States were required to submit their standards regarding caseworker contact and the procedures to track caseworker contacts by June 30, 2007. By October 31, 2007, states were required to submit their baseline data showing the percentage of children and juveniles who were visited each and every month they were placed in out-of-home care and the percentage of those contacts that took place in the child's or juvenile's out-of-home placement.

Attachment 1 to this memo includes Wisconsin's baseline data, which was submitted to ACF on October 30, 2007. Wisconsin reported baseline performance of 27% of children and juveniles who were visited by their caseworkers each and every full calendar month they were in out-of-home care and 67% of those visits were in the child's or juvenile's out-of-home placement. The data submitted to ACF was statewide data, not county-specific information.

DSP has released a new eWreport, "cm06 Caseworker Contacts," to assist counties in monitoring their performance related to this requirement. The "cm06 Caseworker Contacts" report allows counties to identify their missing caseworker contacts and assess their county's performance on a month-by-month and cumulative basis.

Benchmark Goals

The ACF has established two benchmarks that all states must meet regarding caseworker contacts. As stated above, by October 1, 2011, Wisconsin must be able to demonstrate to ACF that 90% of children and juveniles in out-of-home care placements are visited by a caseworker at least once each and every month and that 51% of the visits that occurred at least once each and every month occurred in the child's or juvenile's out-of-home placement. States must establish interim benchmarks for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2008, 2009, and 2010. The benchmarks reported to ACF are statewide.

Wisconsin has proposed the following benchmarks. The benchmarks may change as a result of consultation with ACF, but the DSP does not anticipate significant change.

Proposed Benchmarks

Year	Percent of Children Visited	Visits in Child's Out-of-Home Placement
2007 (reported to ACF)	27%	67%
2008	32%	≥51%
2009	55%	≥51%
2010	75%	≥51%
2011 (federal requirement)	90%	≥51%

In setting the proposed benchmarks for the percent of children and juveniles visited in each and every month of the federal fiscal year, the DSP anticipates there will be little improvement in FFY 2008 because the knowledge and tools to achieve this goal have not been provided to agencies. However, it is likely that documentation by caseworkers for children and juveniles placed in the county will improve rapidly once policy, administrative reports, and e-WISACWIS system changes are complete. It is likely that compliance by county caseworkers for children placed outside of the county will improve more slowly.

Visits in the child's or juvenile's out-of-home placement are set to the federal requirement of a minimum of 51% because children and juveniles need the opportunity to communicate with their caseworkers in private and that is more likely to occur in a setting outside of the home or facility where the child or juvenile is living. In addition, varying the location of contacts allows the caseworker to assess the child's or juvenile's safety and functioning in the community. Therefore, the DSP is requiring that a majority of caseworker contacts occur in the child or juvenile's out-of-home placement but is leaving the location of additional contacts to the discretion of the agency and caseworker.

eWiSACWIS Changes

DSP made changes to eWiSACWIS to make it easier and more accurate for caseworkers to document the requirements for caseworker contacts. These changes were implemented on June 23, 2008.

The Quick Reference Guide that provides direction about how to enter a case note to meet the federal mandate can be accessed electronically at the following link:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/WiSACWIS/knowledge_web/training/quick-ref-guides/quick-reference-guides.htm

Specific information about caseworker contact documentation is found under the Documenting Monthly Caseworker Contacts link in the Narrative Section.

As explained above, the definition of "caseworker" is broad and may include contract agency staff who will need to transmit information about the visit to the county caseworker for documentation in eWiSACWIS. Attached to this memo is a voluntary tool, CFS-2427 "Caseworker Face-to-Face Contact with Child," that county and private, or tribal agencies if applicable, can use to communicate information about contacts with a child. The tool has been designed to capture all information required for documentation of the face-to-face contact standard for children or juveniles in out-of-home care in eWiSACWIS.

Funding for Purchase of Mobile Equipment

DSP has limited funding available to support the purchase of mobile equipment, such as laptop or tablet computers, to assist caseworkers in documenting face-to-face contacts with children in out-of-home care. Please refer to Attachment 2 at the end of this memo for more information about the parameters and mechanisms for county agencies to access this funding.

Child Protective Services (CPS) Face-to-Face Contact Policy

Please note that DCFS Memo Series 2005-10 "Caseworker-Parent/Family Face-to-Face Contact for Child Protective Services Cases" remains effective; however there are three changes implemented with the issuance of this memo. First, due to the federal reporting requirements, agencies are now required to document case notes specific to caseworker contacts in eWiSACWIS. Second, as outlined above, part of the federal law requires that the majority of the contacts with a child occur in the child's or juvenile's out-of-home placement, which is different than the existing requirements for CPS cases. Third, the CPS policy requires visits with the family, whereas the federal requirements outlined in this memo focus solely on the child or juvenile in his or her out-of-home placement. Caseworkers should refer to DCFS Memo Series 2005-10 for additional requirements for CPS cases. The Face-to-Face Contact policy will be updated to include the federal requirement and upon incorporated into the revisions of the Ongoing Standards.

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Attachments: [Attachment 1 - Data Reporting: Caseworker Contacts with Children in Out-of-home Care](#)
 [Attachment 2 - Caseworker Contact Incentive Funding for the Purchase of Mobile](#)
 [Equipment](#)
 ["Caseworker Face-To-Face Contact Requirements for Children and Juveniles in Out-of-](#)
 [Home Care" Policy](#)
 [CFS 2427 "Caseworker Face-to-Face Contact with Child" \(PDF\)](#)
 [CFS 2427 "Caseworker Face-to-Face Contact with Child" \(WORD\)](#)

MEMO WEB SITE: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/>

#memo/DSP/ Caseworker contact require children juveniles in OHC.doc