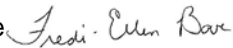


To: DCF Area Administrators
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Developmental Disabilities Services Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Group Home Providers
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors
Private Child Placing Agencies
Residential Care Center Providers
Shelter Care Providers
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Fredi-Ellen Bove 
Administrator

Re: Documentation of Eligible Children Referred to Birth-to-Three in Accordance with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

PURPOSE

This memo highlights the requirement to document Birth-to-Three referrals for eligible children. The Wisconsin Child Protective Services Access and Initial Assessment Standards require a referral and its documentation for children less than three years of age per the recommendation in the CAPTA. Historically, this has been documented in the eWiSACWIS or paper case record. This memo introduces a requirement to document the occurrence of the Birth-to-Three referral electronically. This requirement will document compliance with the CAPTA.

BACKGROUND

Children who are victims of substantiated maltreatment and less than three years of age are eligible for a referral to early intervention services under the CAPTA. States are given discretion to refer every eligible child to early intervention services, or employ a screening process to determine whether a referral is needed.

Wisconsin Child Protective Services Access and Initial Assessment Standards require all eligible children be referred to Birth-to-Three for screening and possible service provision. County agencies and Child Protective Service professionals are responsible for contacting Birth-to-Three agencies in their communities to make the referral.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE REQUIREMENTS

The Standards require a referral to Birth-to-Three when children who are victims of substantiated maltreatment are less than three years old. Presently, all activities associated with the Birth-to-Three referral must be documented in the case record; however, the form of documentation (e.g., electronic or paper) is not explicitly stated in Standards.

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-320) in section 5106a (d) (16) requires (emphasis added):

*The number of children determined to be **eligible** for referral, and the number of children **referred**, under subsection (b)(2)(B)(xxi), to agencies providing early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.).*

Current documentation requirements allow for accurate identification of eligibility for Birth-to-Three by referencing age and substantiated maltreatment; compliance with the referral to a Birth-to-Three program is difficult to ascertain. Standards allow the CPS professional to document the occurrence of a referral anywhere in the case record; therefore, related data collection efforts are laborious and possibly inaccurate. This memo introduces a uniform method of electronic documentation to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the documentation and information required by the CAPTA.

Other expectations outlined in the Wisconsin Child Protective Services Access and Initial Assessment Services Standards and Ongoing Services Standards regarding the Birth-to-Three referral will remain in effect.

eWiSACWIS DOCUMENTATION

In compliance with the CAPTA, Standards require CPS professionals document the Birth-to-Three referral in the case record. Currently, CPS professionals use their discretion to determine where in the case record the referral is documented. In an effort to capture CPS professionals' compliance with the CAPTA in a format that is standard and efficient and supports National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), an enhancement to eWiSACWIS will be made effective in October 2014. The enhancements will be experienced by the CPS professional completing an Initial Assessment, in the following way:

Once a substantiation finding is entered under the 'Allegations' tab in the Initial Assessment, the system will determine whether the child is eligible for a Birth-to-Three referral. If the child is eligible for a Birth-to-Three referral, the information will be imported to a new group box called 'Birth to Three Referral Information' located on the 'Results' tab. The screen will reflect the child's name, date of birth, and a drop down field. The drop down field will include the answer to the question of whether or not a Birth-to-Three referral has been made. The selection options will include: yes, no, and unknown. No further documentation will be required.

If the child's birthdate is not in the system when the professional enters the substantiation finding under the 'Allegations' tab in the Initial Assessment, the professional will receive an alert, requesting that the birth date be entered in eWiSACWIS on the child's 'Person Management' page. If an answer to the question under 'Birth-to-Three Referral Information,' on the 'Results' tab, has not been entered, the Initial Assessment cannot be approved and the system will indicate there is a validation error, including a prompt that instructs the worker about how to correct it.

This new functionality will go live with eWiSACWIS' October release effective Monday, October 13th, 2014. New logic on the Assessment page will only apply to newly created or pending IA at the time of go-live. Prior to the release, actions related to the Birth-to-Three referral process should be documented in the case record, as stated in Standards.

ACTION SUMMARY

Agencies are still required to comply with Standard requirements when referring children less than three years of age and victims of substantiated maltreatment to Birth-to-Three. The policy change referenced in this memo requires electronic documentation of the referrals occurrence in eWiSACWIS. The policy change is effective October 13th, 2014. CPS professionals completing Initial Assessments will be required to enter a child's date of birth into the child's 'Person Management' tab. The child's birth date can be entered prior to, or at the time the substantiation finding is entered into eWiSACWIS. Once entered, the system will determine if the child victim is eligible for a Birth-to-Three referral. Eligibility will be determined by the child's age at the time of maltreatment and the substantiation finding. If a child is

eligible, the professional will then indicate whether a referral was made by selecting 'yes, no, or unknown' on the 'Results' tab, under the 'Birth to Three Referral Information' group box.

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MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>