Administrative Policies and Procedures: 14.29

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<th>Subject:</th>
<th>Family Support Services Worker (FSSW) Responsibilities</th>
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<td>Standards:</td>
<td>DCS Practice Model Standards: 12-300; 12-301</td>
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<td>Application:</td>
<td>To All Department of Children's Services Family Support Service Workers</td>
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Policy Statement:

The Tennessee Department of Children’s Services provides Family Support Services (FSS) to families with children who have been referred to the department to reduce the likelihood of child abuse/neglect, repeat maltreatment, or entry into foster care.

Purpose:

To establish a process for referring and transitioning Child Protective Services (CPS) cases, court referrals or custodial cases to Family Support Services (FSS). FSS case workers provide support through direct service provision and referral to community-based and private services, with a goal of preventing harm or abuse while strengthening the ability of families to parent their children effectively.

Procedures:

A. Referrals and Transitions to FSS

1. Transitioning a Case from CPS Investigation/Assessment Track

   a) For cases in need of services beyond forty-five (45) calendar days for investigations or seventy-five (75) calendar days for assessments, a transition to FSS is appropriate. Cases may be transitioned earlier if deemed appropriate by the FSS Team Leader (TL) and Child Protective Services (CPS) TL/Lead Investigator (LI). These cases include those having the following:

   ♦ Court involvement and court request for continued DCS oversight and/or;
   ♦ Service needs beyond thirty (30) days after the CPS case is closed and/or;
   ♦ Continued concerns regarding the child(ren)’s safety or the present risk of harm;
   ♦ Case Service in place to provide services that have no other source for payment coverage other than DCS.

   b) The CPS worker and/or CPS TL/LI prepares a closing summary and schedules a pre-conference with the FSS TL to discuss the following:
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The reason for continued involvement;
- Current services being provided and estimated timeframes for completion;
- Existing permanency plan
- Results of any interventions provided and attempted;
- The level of cooperation from the child and family;
- The results of the FAST and any additional formal and informal assessments administered to the child/family;
- Efforts made toward completing the requirements on forms CS-1031, Case Referral/Transition Checklist are also discussed; and
- Date for the Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM) to transition the case.

2. Transitioning a Case from Custody

a) For cases in need of services beyond the child’s stay in custody, a transition to FSS is appropriate. These cases include those that have the following:
   - Court involvement and a court request for continued DCS oversight;
   - Service needs that will not be resolved within thirty (30) days post custody;
   - Concerns for the child(ren)’s risk of harm, but the circumstances do not necessitate the child remaining in custody; or
   - Case Service in place to provide services that have no other source for payment coverage other than DCS.

b) The FSSW and/or their TL prepares a closing summary and schedules a preconference with the FSS TL to discuss the following:
   - The reason for continued involvement;
   - Current services being provided and estimated timeframes for completion;
   - Existing Permanency Plan;
   - Results of any interventions provided and attempted;
   - The level of cooperation from the child and family;
   - The results of any formal and informal assessments;
   - Efforts made toward completing the requirements on CS-1031, Case Referral/Transition Checklist; and
   - Date for the Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM) to transition the case.
### 3. Referrals for Juvenile Court staff and Court Liaisons

a) For cases that the Court deems in need of services and assistance beyond work that can be rendered by Juvenile Court staff or the DCS court liaison, a transition to FSS may be appropriate.

b) If the case meets criteria for FSS, the Court liaison or the DCS court representative completes form **CS-1031, Case Referral/Transition Checklist**, and schedules a pre-conference with the FSS TL to coordinate the following:

- The reason for the referral;
- Household composition;
- Family history, to include:
  - Results of any previous formal and/or informal assessments;
  - Any interventions provided and/or attempted and the results; and
  - The level of cooperation from the child and family.

**NOTE:** Any disagreement regarding the appropriateness of a referral to FSS escalates to the FSS Coordinator and CPS or Custodial Coordinator to seek resolution.

### B. Transition or Referral to FSS

1. The transitioning or referring division enters the following in TFACTS before transitioning the case to FSS:
   
   a) A completed **CS-1031, Case Referral/Transition Checklist**;
   
   b) All previous and active Family Permanency Plans (FPP);
   
   c) An Updated FAST within the past thirty (30) days (applicable to transitions from CPS);
   
   d) Any case service for identified or continuation of services that will not expire prior to transfer.

2. If the case is transitioned from CPS or Custody to FSS, a CFTM with the family and the FSW is scheduled and held prior to the transition. Also invited to the CFTM should be any providers working with the family and any support persons identified by the family. The responsible case worker, prior to transition, is responsible for scheduling the CFTM and inviting participants.

3. Families and agency partners should be given adequate notice of meetings, no less than ten (10) calendar days in advance, if notified in writing, or seven (7) calendar days if notified by telephone, e-mail or face-to-face. Method of notification requests and invitees contacted is documented in TFACTS.

4. During the CFTM, the FFP is reviewed by the team and the FSSW makes any updates or revisions. Both supervisors (CPS or Custody and FSS) are encouraged to attend but at least one is present at this CFTM. The FFP is entered by the FSSW on the appropriate screens in TFACTS within five (5)
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C. Contact with child(ren), family and service providers

1. If the case is transitioned from CPS or custody, the FSSW conducts a minimum of one (1) face-to-face contact monthly with the child and parents/caretaker for the life of the case, with the initial contact occurring within the first thirty (30) days. An assessment of safety and progress on the FPP is to occur during the contacts. Increased monthly contact with the child or family can occur based upon:
   a) Outcomes of assessment; or
   b) Supervisory recommendations.

2. If the child(ren) is in an out of home placement, monthly home visits occur where the child is placed. For children temporarily placed with the goal of “reunification with parent”, monthly contact occurs with the parent(s) seeking reunification and a home visit must be conducted prior to reunification.

3. If the case is referred by the court, a minimum of two (2) face-to-face contacts are made within the first thirty (30) days, with the initial contact occurring within five (5) business days from receipt of the referral. A monthly face-to-face contact occurs with the child and parent/caretaker for the life of the case.

4. If the child(ren) and their parent/caretaker attend the transfer CFTM in person or were contacted face-to-face while at court, this contact may count as one (1) of the contacts within the first thirty (30) days.

5. If the hospital requests assistance regarding a child on an open FSS case, the FSSW will contact the hospital within twenty-four (24) hours of notification (refer to the Protocol for Working with Hospitals).

6. There is a minimum of one (1) contact monthly with each provider (paid or unpaid, contract or community) that is working with the family. This contact may be by telephone, e-mail, or face-to-face and with the purpose of addressing the family’s progress on the FPP and any identified concerns or additional needs. Information obtained may result in a revision to the FPP, while other information and outcomes of the contact(s) are entered into TFACTS case recordings.

D. FSS Casework Steps

1. If at any time the FSSW feels the child(ren) is at risk of harm, the FSS TL must be consulted immediately to determine:
   a) If the increased risk can be addressed by the current FSSW; or
   b) If a CPS referral is necessary.

2. If there is an imminent risk of a child(ren) being removed from the care of their parent/caretaker, an Emergency CFTM with a skilled facilitator must be convened to explore all alternatives to placing the child(ren) in DCS custody. Team Coordinators (TC) and legal counsel must approve the decision to petition for custody.
3. When an emergency removal takes place before a CFTM can be convened, the CFTM occurs prior to the preliminary hearing. In any event, a CFTM occurs no later than seven (7) days after the date of custody. The FSS TL attends this CFTM. Refer to DCS Policy 31.7 Child and Family Team Meeting Process.

4. Each region establishes a local protocol to consult with an individual with a Masters in Social Work (MSW) in relation to trauma reduction surrounding the removal process. When possible, this occurs prior to the physical removal of the child(ren).

5. A CFTM is held every ninety (90) days from the initial CFTM or the transition CFTM. During the CFTM, the FPP is reviewed and the plan is updated to reflect any progress updates and/or revisions/editions.

6. **Family Advocacy and Support Tool (FAST)** must be updated quarterly throughout the life of the case. Refer to **Family Advocacy and Support Tool Manual 2.0** for more information.

7. If there is a reason to believe that a child or family is of Native American Heritage and there is no verification to support that the inquiry occurred, the FSSW verifies the child/family’s status through the Bureau of Indian Affairs and affiliated tribe. Use applicable Confirmation of Native American Heritage, Determination of Tribal Affiliation letters or form CS-0050, Case Intake Packet Documents Verification. Refer to DCS Policy 16.24, Children of Native American Heritage.

8. If there is no documentation to support that the family has been informed of their rights and responsibilities, the FSSW notifies the family of their rights and responsibilities and provides them with a copy of the DCS Clients Rights Handbook. The family signs form CS-0050, Case Intake Packet Documents Verification and other required information.

9. If, at any time during the life of the case, the family refuses services or the continuation of services and there is no court intervention, the FSSW and FSS TL confers to discuss formal and informal assessment outcomes to determine if the risk to the child and family is such that court-ordered services are needed.
   a) If YES, the FSSW pursues legal action to request court-ordered services.
   b) If NO, the FSSW closes the case and documents the refusal of services.

10. If any services are court ordered, the FSSW informs the court prior to closure.

11. For court referred cases or cases with a court order for services, the FSSW consults with their TL and DCS Regional Legal Counsel to discuss progress and plans, to request the court relieve the Department of continued involvement/monitoring if the child(ren) is placed outside the care of their parents/caretakers and it has been determined that the family can continue progress without the Department’s continued involvement.

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**E. CPS Referrals on open FSS cases**

1. When there is an open FSS case and additional abuse or neglect allegations are reported to the Child Abuse Hotline (CAH), the CPS and the FSSW supervisors discuss the allegations and jointly decide if it is appropriate for the
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<td>open FSS case to absorb/address the allegations in the referral or if two (2) separate cases (CPS and FSS) are to be opened on the family.</td>
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<td>2. If supervisors agree on combining the cases, the CPS supervisor notifies the CAH to screen-out the new case so that the allegations can be addressed in the already open FSS case. The request states that the FSS supervisor, including their name, is in agreement with the request, in accordance with <strong>Work Aid 8, Child Protective Services Requests for Reconsiderations</strong>.</td>
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<td>3. The FSW supervisor documents the new information and recommended priority responses in an Administrative Review detailing any additional tasks and next steps needed to address the concerns.</td>
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<td>4. To aid in safety and well-being of the child and family, the FSSW conducts a face-to-face with the alleged child victim (ACV) and parent/caretaker, within the recommended priority response timeframe.</td>
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<td>5. If the decision results in an open CPS case, the CPS TL/IL and FSS TL may decide to allow the FSSW to continue work on the open FSS case while CPS conducts investigative or assessment tasks and activities, collaborating to determine the scope of continued services and level of involvement. If the FSS case remains open when services are initiated by CPS, the FSSW follows-up with any additional identified services.</td>
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**NOTE:** Severe abuse allegations will not be combined with existing FSS cases.

### F. Case Closure for Non-Custodial cases

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<td>1. If the case needs to stay open longer than ninety (90) days, due to exigent circumstances, the FSS TL gives consent for the case to remain open and reviews the progress every thirty (30) days until closure. The FSS TL’s consent and review is documented in the Case Conference section in TFACTS.</td>
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<td>2. A reassessment FAST is completed prior to case closure, unless the previous FAST was completed within the last thirty (30) days. The FAST results are used to determine if the safety and risk factors identified for the child and family have been reduced to safely close the case.</td>
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<td>3. For cases with court oversight, the FSSW submits a request FSSW relief, which includes the following elements:</td>
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<td>a) Interventions or services engaged or received(for both the removal home and relative/kin);</td>
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<td>b) The success or lack of success of those services;</td>
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<td>c) Specific reasonable efforts activities completed with the parent/caretaker;</td>
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<td>d) Contacts or attempts with both parties (removal home and relative/kin) with narrative documentation describing those contacts;</td>
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<td>e) Statement of stability and safety with the relative/kin as evidenced by an updated assessment.</td>
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**NOTE:** If services are court ordered, the case must return to court before case closure.
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<th>G. Independent/Transitional Living services</th>
<th>Youth receiving non-custodial services may be eligible for Transitional Living services if they were previously in the custody of DCS. Refer to DCS Policy [16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services].</th>
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<td>H. Data system documentation</td>
<td>Case recordings must be documented in <strong>TFACTS</strong> within thirty (30) days from the date of the contact or occurrence.</td>
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**Forms:**

- [CS-0050, Case Intake Packet Documents Documentation](#)
- [CS-0559, Authorization for Release of Information of HIPAA Protected Health Information TO and FROM the Department of Children’s Services and Notification of Release](#)
- [CS-0725, Family Case File Organization Checklist](#)
- [CS-1031, Child Protective Services Case Transition Checklist](#)

**Collateral Documents:**

- [A Case Worker’s Guide to Opening and Transitioning Cases](#)
- [Case Closure Protocol](#)
- [Clients Rights Handbook](#)
- [Family Support Services Practice Guide](#)
- [Confirmation of Native American Heritage](#)
- [Determination of Tribal Affiliation](#)
- [Family Advocacy and Support Tool Manual 2.0](#)
- [Visitation Protocol](#)
- [Family Permanency Plan – in TFACTS](#)
- [Protocol for Non-Custodial Child and Family Team Meeting](#)
- [Work Aid 8, Child Protective Services Requests for Reconsiderations](#)
- DCS Policy [16.24, Children of Native American Heritage](#)
- DCS Policy [31.3 Case Transfer Guidelines Between Regions, Agencies and Facilities](#)
- DCS Policy [31.7 Child and Family Team Meeting Process](#)
- [Protocol for Working with Hospitals](#)