

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

October 11, 2006

SPECIAL TRANSMITTAL

SUBJECT: Random Moment Time Study Requirements
Family Service Plan Documentation

TO: County Children and Youth Administrators
Chief Juvenile Probation Officers
County Children and Youth Fiscal Officers
County Random Moment Time Study Coordinators

FROM: *Nancy L. Hardy*
Nancy L. Hardy
Deputy Secretary for Children, Youth, and Families

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Special Transmittal is to provide County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) and Juvenile Probation Offices (JPOs) with an updated template for the Family Service Plan, which incorporates the required language for documentation of candidacy.

BACKGROUND:

In December of 2005, the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) released a Special Transmittal issuing a Standardized Family Service Plan. Although use of the Standardized Family Service Plan is not required, the Department recommends that counties begin to use this form.

After the issuance of the Standardized Family Service Plan, OCYF issued Bulletin 3140-06-04 entitled Random Moment Time Study (RMTS) Policy and Procedures – County Children and Youth Agencies and Bulletin 3140-06-03 entitled Random Moment Time Study Policy and Procedures – Juvenile Probation Office. In Attachment A, Random Moment Time Study – Programs, Codes and Allowable Administrative Activities, of these bulletins, page A-3 outlines the process for determining whether a child is a candidate for the Pre-Placement Program. This determination is child specific and must be made at least every six months based upon evidence that the responsible agency is pursuing the child's removal from the home or making reasonable efforts to prevent such removal.

In order for OCYF to continue providing counties with as much guidance as possible, OCYF is utilizing this Special Transmittal to reinforce to CCYAs and JPOs that

each child's candidacy for the Pre-Placement Program must be clearly established and documented on the RMTS Observation Form and on at least one of the following case documents: Family Service Plans, Rules of Probation, Conditions of Supervision, Petitions, and/or Court Orders.

DISCUSSION:

In the aforementioned bulletins and the associated training provided by OCYF, counties were informed that when using the Family Service Plan as documentation for staff selection of Code 6 (pre-placement) on the RMTS form, the Family Service Plan must contain the approved ACF language related to imminent risk of placement in foster care. As specified in the Bulletins, all existing and new Family Service Plans must include the following language where pre-placement is the selected program/activity for the individual child:

The child is at imminent risk of removal from his/her home. Absent effective preventive services, foster care is the planned placement for the child.

The following is an excerpt from the Federal Child Welfare Policy and Procedures Manual which provides further clarity on determinations related to imminent risk of removal.

Imminent Risk - A child is determined to be at imminent risk of foster care placement when the responsible agency is either pursuing or making reasonable efforts to prevent the placement. A child cannot be considered a candidate for foster care when the responsible agency has no formal involvement with the child or simply because s/he has been described as "at risk" due to circumstances such as social/interpersonal problems or a dysfunctional home environment. Imminent risk determinations are related to the current situation of the child and therefore a child may change from a candidate to a non-candidate. If a child is determined to be in candidacy status for a period longer than six months, there must be documentation justifying why the child continues to be considered at imminent risk of placement. *Federal Child Welfare Policy Manual 8.1D, question #2 and question #5*

Attached to this transmittal are the relevant pages of the Standardized Family Service Plan that have been revised to include the appropriate candidacy language. As stated above all existing and new Family Service Plans must include the specific language when pre-placement is the selected program/activity for the individual child.

Furthermore, if the candidacy documentation source is the Rules of Probation, Conditions of Supervision, Petitions, and/or Court Orders, the above appropriate language must be incorporated as well.

This additional guidance is to ensure consistency and Federal compliance with the RMTS sampling process and integrity of the federal claims ultimately generated from the RMTS results. If you have questions, please contact Ms. TaWonda Jones Williams at (717) 783-3856787-5199 or tjoneswill@state.pa.us.

Attachment

cc: Mr. James Anderson
Mr. Charles Songer, Jr.
Mr. James Rieland