DATE: March 1, 2013

POLICY#: SSA #13-15

TO: Directors, Local Departments of Social Services
    Assistant Directors, Services

FROM: Carnitra D. White, Executive Director
      Social Services Administration

RE: MANDATORY DETERMINATION AND
    DOCUMENTATION OF CANDIDACY FOR FOSTER
    CARE

PROGRAM AFFECTED: Child Protective Services and In-Home Family Services

ORIGINATION OFFICE: Child Welfare Practice and Policy

ACTION REQUIRED OF: All In-Home Services staff and supervisors

REQUIRED ACTION: Proper statewide process for workers to determine and
document candidacy for foster care for all In-Home cases.

ACTION DUE DATE: Immediately

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PURPOSE:
The purpose of this policy directive is to establish mandated practice for all local
departments of social services in meeting Federal guidelines for the determination and
documentation of candidacy for foster care for children receiving In Home Services. A
"Candidate for Foster Care" is a child at imminent risk of removal and absent these
preventive services, placement in Out of Home Placement is the plan for this child. This
policy clarifies the process of determining and documenting children who are eligible to
claim candidacy for foster care and documenting services to prevent placement.

BACKGROUND:
The Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) is responsible for administering
and monitoring policies related to Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Programs.
Federal financial participation for administrative costs may be claimed by the State when
a case plan indicates that, without preventive services, foster care is the planned living
arrangement for the child. For In Home Services, the case plan includes the Service Plan
and Progress Review. Changes were made to both documents to allow Maryland to
document the candidacy determination as well as the preventative services provided to
the child and family. Under federal law, states are permitted to draw down IV-E
administrative funds to support programming aimed at preventing candidates from
entering care. MD CHESSIE was updated to incorporate these changes on February 20,
2013.

DETERMINATION OF CANDIDACY FOR FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT:
A child is considered an eligible candidate for foster care when their In-Home worker
determines that:

1) The child is at imminent risk of removal from the home AND
2) Absent effective preventive services, foster care is planned arrangement for
the child.

It is the responsibility of all In-Home Family Services staff to determine if there are
children on their caseload, who are eligible candidates for out of home placement.
Preventive services can be actions to address specific factors placing the child in
imminent danger (actions promoting safety) or risk factors associated with more long term
concerns (actions reducing risk of maltreatment). It is determined when the worker
completes a new service plan for the family.

Workers are to consider whether the children in their caseloads are candidates for foster
care at specified times during the life of an In-Home Services case. Workers are also to
consider whether the actions of family members’ increases safety or danger influences or
risk of maltreatment concerns, to a point where preventive measures are needed to allow
the child to continue to reside safely at home. The service plan must contain specific
tasks to address the issues which make the child a candidate for out of home placement.

All In-Home Family Services workers must document in MD CHESSIE "Out-of-Home
Candidacy" information at the following points in the life of a case:
1) When developing the initial Service Plan, within the first 45 days of receiving responsibility for work with the family from Investigation or other service/agency
2) At any time the Service Plan is re-negotiated; not more than 90 days after the previous Service Plan.

The Family Service Plan allows the worker, with participation from family members, to identify the goals and objectives that the family works towards and the tasks for individual family members and the worker to complete to assist the family in accomplishing the goals and objectives. Goals focus on where the family should be functioning at the point of case closure and the objectives are measurable steps on the path to reaching the overall goals. Tasks and services are not goals or objectives. If a Service Plan lists a specific service as an objective, the worker should ask themselves and the family member what is expected to be gained from participation in the service. What is to be gained is the objective. Services are tools to help individuals or the family to reach their objectives and eventually the goal.

When the service plan is printed out, new wording appears above the signature lines that makes it very clear to the family that some of their children have been identified as out of home candidates and that absent effective work on the identified goals and objectives, the planned arrangement for the identified children is out of home placement (kinship, group home, traditional foster home, child placement agency). Individuals, by signing the document, are expressing an understanding that they understand the goals, objectives and tasks and that certain children are identified as candidates for foster care absent progress towards their goal.

**DOCUMENTATION OF SERVICES**

The purpose of the Progress Review is to document, in narrative form, the factors contributing to danger, protective factors and risk of another child maltreatment event, as well as describing the services provided to address those issues. The candidacy determination completed in the service plan feeds over to Service Plan/Eval II tab. On the Service Plan/Eval II tab, the worker must describe the services provided to prevent placement and how the services both prevented and continue to prevent placement. For all other children, workers are asked to discuss the effectiveness of services provided and planning for additional service if needed. If any of the children were placed in foster care after the service plan was completed, the worker will document that as well.

**MD CHESSIE SCREEN SHOTS:**

Service Plan: Determination of Candidate for Foster Care

- Worker picks “select” hyperlink to choose the children. In order to appear, the children must be confirmed as clients. All clients in the household who are participating as children need to have candidacy determined.
- After the children are selected, the worker utilizes the drop down to indicate “yes” or “no”. If any of the children are already in out of home placement, they are not considered candidates.
- The blue icon provides additional guidance on the determination decision.
Progress Review

Service Case

Case Head: [Redacted] Case ID: [Redacted]

Basic Info Family Summary Family Summary II Family Summary III
Service Plan/Eval I Service Plan/Eval II Service Plan/Eval III

Family Member Participation in Signed Service Candidacy Determination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>Service Plan</th>
<th>Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Was this family member offered an opportunity to participate in the planning and delivery of service? [Yes]

Explain comments

Did this member sign a Service Plan after participating in developing the plan? [Yes]

Disagreement and Resolution Area

Comments

Services Employed to Reach Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client Name</th>
<th>Service Name</th>
<th>Actual Begin Date</th>
<th>Actual End Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>09/30/2010</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational Services/Remedial/Special Ed</td>
<td>08/01/2009</td>
<td>08/31/2009</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Explain How Services Enabled Family to Meet Objectives. For children identified in Summary of Reason for Current Services as a risk of Foster Care placement, describe the services provided to prevent placement and how the services prevented and continue to prevent placement. Document that the goal for the child is foster care if the services described in the plan are not effective. For children not at risk of foster care placement describe the services provided, their effectiveness in moving toward agreed upon goals and need any need for their continuation or adjustment.

Comments

Discuss Barriers for Achievement of Goals and Objectives:

Comments

Issues Needing Further Attention:

Comments