

Lois Ann Day, Director

Authorized Signature

Number: CW-AR-12-002
Issue Date: 05/08/2012

Topic: Foster Care

Due Date: 05/08/2012

Subject: Child Support Referrals

Applies to (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All DHS employees | <input type="checkbox"/> County Mental Health Directors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area Agencies on Aging | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children, Adults and Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors and People with Disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County DD Program Managers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): DHS - Child Welfare Workers and Supervisors |

Action Required:

Child Welfare case workers will be receiving increased emails from the Division of Child Support (DCS) regarding existing foster care cases, asking the following questions:

1. Is reunification still the plan?
2. Is the parent trying to comply (engage) with the agency in order to successfully reunify?
3. Do you believe if DCS were to establish a child support order or enforce an existing order it would negatively affect the reunification plans?

Following is guidance on how "Question 3" should be answered. Based on federal regulations, Child Welfare is expected to determine when it is appropriate to refer a child welfare case to DCS to establish child support.

When answering the question, it is important that you address each parent's issues independently.

Work History: Is the parent currently working? Does the parent have prior work history? Does parent have job skills and currently seeking employment (i.e. Jobs Plus program)? Are they getting unemployment? Based on your answer to these questions, what do you think the parent's financial stability will be if they had to pay child support?

Drug & Alcohol Issues: Is the parent involved with any type of treatment (inpatient, out patient, support groups, etc.)? Are they having success? Are they actively participating? Do you see the parent successfully gaining employment and a child support order would not negatively impact stability?

Housing: Do they currently have or are they seeking stable housing? If so, think about the additional expense of rent and then the possibility of child support? Can they maintain housing?

Mental Health issues: Does the parent have a diagnosed mental health issue that does or will prevent employment?

Disability: Even if parent does not qualify for Social Security Benefits or APD services, does the parent have the capacity to maintain significant employment to where a child support order will impact stability?

If reunification is no longer the plan and you believe the parent has enough employment stability to pursue child support, it is appropriate to inform the DCS worker or central office to do so. It is important to include the approximate date when permanency will occur. This information will help DCS know whether to pursue child support. If the permanency plan will be accomplished within 6 months, it is not cost effective to pursue establishing a child support order because it takes that much time to finish the child support process.

Reason for Action:

DCS and central office Child Support Unit are in the process of changing the way DHS Child Welfare will make the referral for child support. In preparation for this change, DCS is completing some clean up of all the cases that have been referred to establish child support. In order to expedite the clean up, please answer the questions as quickly and honestly as possible. If you have any questions, please contact Dianne Olson or Ramona Kline-Mayes (contact information below).

Field/Stakeholder review: Yes No

If yes, reviewed by:

If you have any questions about this action request, contact:

Contact(s):	Dianne Olson - (503) 945-6865 Ramona Kline-Mayes - (503) 945-5661		
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