

ONGOING SERVICES

Ongoing Services Overview

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Policy

If after the completion of an investigation, a determination is made that the case should be opened, the case shall be transferred to ongoing services.

The area office ongoing services staff handles:

- In-home cases
- Out of home placement cases

Case Closings

When neglect or abuse is no longer noted, the protective services intervention should cease.

Review with the family

The worker may find it helpful to review the following steps with the family when considering a case closing:

- Review the presenting problem with the parent. What were the reasons for Protective Services?;
- Evaluate with the family the progress which has been made. Review how you both worked to solve the presenting problem which brought you into the family's life;
- Look together at how the parent(s) have become responsive to the presenting problems;
- Discuss how the family can handle problems in the future;
- Encourage the family to seek help from DCF if a need should arise in the future;
- Allow for parental feelings of concern and bring these feelings out in the open and discuss them.

The case closing process must begin several weeks before the last home visit.

Considerations When Deciding to Close a Case

When deciding to close a case, the worker and supervisor shall consider if the:

- agreed-on treatment plan goals are completed;
 - family has had any new reports of abuse or neglect during the department's intervention;
 - client is functioning at an acceptably improved level and is better able to cope;
 - parents/guardian have demonstrated a willingness and an ability to use others in time of need;
 - problems and situations are resolved or under adequate control;
 - parents have realistic expectations of the child;
 - family is functioning marginally but the risks to the child are too slight to justify court action and the family refuses to utilize services;
 - case has been opened for six (6) months or longer with no court involvement.
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Considerations When Deciding to Close a Case
(Continued)

An essential part of the planned review will be consideration of the following points:

- Is/are the child(ren) now in a permanent and adequate environment?;
- If the family has any continuing needs can these be adequately met by another agency?;
- Will the child and family follow through in working with such an agency without the impetus of protective services authority?;
- Is there an appropriate agency which will accept the child and family for service?;
- Are there additional ongoing safeguards that can be arranged for the child(ren) in the family?

DCF Involvement Beyond 12 months

If the department has been involved in a protective services case for twelve (12) months or longer, the case shall either be reviewed for closing or petitions shall be filed in Superior Court for Juvenile Matters.

The worker shall review the case with his/her supervisor to determine if the need for department involvement still exists. If the need still exists, a legal consult should be sought to determine if there is legal sufficiency for petitions.

Case closing due to end of court involvement

The family case shall be closed when a judicial decision has been made that the child(ren) is neither abused, neglected, nor uncared for or disposition has ended, within 30 days. The family may be offered department services for an additional period of time.

Family moves out of state

If a family moves to another state and the child(ren) continue to need protection, the Social Worker must contact the responsible agency in that state.

Referral to another agency

If the decision is made to close the Protective Services case after referral to another agency, the case record must fully document the understanding reached with the child and family and the other agency.

Supervisory Conference

At the worker's supervisory conference:

- the worker and supervisor shall identify cases to be closed;
- the social worker shall be directed to initiate the closing process; and
- the social work supervisor shall enter the supervisory conference notes into the computer system

The social work supervisor shall consult with the Program Supervisor if necessary.

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Time Frame for Closing a Case The following time frames shall be observed throughout the case closing process:

| Person Responsible | Task | Time Frame |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| On-going Social Worker | Submits case closing to supervisor | Within 30 calendar days from the decision to close |
| On-going Social Work Supervisor | Reviews case closing in computer and submits case to Program Supervisor | Three (3) calendar days from receipt of case from worker |
| Program Supervisor | Reviews case closing information in computer. Document reasons for approval or disapproval in computer system. | Five (5) calendar days from time of receipt of case from Supervisor |

Closing Documentation A closing summary shall be entered by the Social Worker either into the case plan or in narrative. The following topics provide a guideline for entering the closing summary:

- date and reason for most recent case opening;
- reason for case closing;
- previous DCF history, including legal;
- additional reports received and outcomes;
- other identified protective services issues;
- review of identified services and client's utilization/compliance/progress;
- current assessment of risk in the home; and
- recommendations.

If the closing of the Protective Services case involves a denial, termination or suspension of any money payment, the Social Worker shall send the client a DCF-800, Notice of Proposed Denial, Suspension, Reduction or Discontinuance of Department of Children and Families Benefits. Services shall continue for 10 days. If an appeal is timely requested, services shall continue until the resolution of the appeal.

Documentation to Client The Social Worker shall send written documentation to the parent(s)/guardian that the case has been closed.