



**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**Division of Family and Children Services**

**Nathan Deal**  
Governor

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Director

March 18, 2015

**Child Welfare Services Manual Transmittal No. 2015-04**

**To:** County Departments of Family and Children Services  
DFCS Regional Directors  
State Staff

**From:** Bobby Cagle, Division Director  
Division of Family and Children Services

**Re:** Child Welfare Policy Manual: **Chapter 14: Resource Development**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Child Welfare Services Manual Transmittal is to release Chapter 14: Resource Development, of the Georgia Division of Children and Family Services' (DFCS) **new** Child Welfare Policy Manual.

**Discussion**

DFCS is committed to improving outcomes for the children and families served in Georgia and recognize that sound policies are the foundation for building and maintaining a solid framework for the practice of child welfare services. DFCS has redesigned and revised all child welfare policies to ensure they are aligned with federal and state statutes and are rooted in child safety, permanency and well-being. The policy development process included the following:

1. Review of existing policies;
2. Inclusion of existing County Letters and Memoranda;
3. Inclusion of federal statutes governing child welfare practice, including the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the Social Security Act, etc.;
4. Inclusion of current state statutes governing child welfare practices;
5. Research of best practices and child welfare trends; and
6. Internal and external stakeholder contribution.

The new structure for each policy includes the following sections:

1. **Codes/References:** Applicable federal and/or state laws.
2. **Requirements** (policy statements): Actions/directives set forth based on the regulations, law or practice.
  - a. Requirements that are set forth by federal statute are stated exactly or as close as possible to the language in the legislation to ensure full compliance.
  - b. All *italicized* requirements are those outlined in Title IV-E of the Social Security

Act.

3. **Procedures:** A series of steps to accomplish the directives set forth in the requirements.
4. **Practice Guidance:** Provides staff practical guidance on how to effectively integrate good social work practice into their work to achieve positive family and child outcomes. This section also provides additional information, definitions and clarifications.
5. **Forms and Tools:** Relevant forms and tools for the specified policy.

**New features of the Child Welfare Policy Manual include:**

1. Consolidation of all Social Services Policy Manuals into a comprehensive Child Welfare Policy Manual.
  2. All chapters have been organized by program area and subject matter.
  3. All state and/or federal laws are referenced in the related policy.
  4. Hyperlinks to related chapters and sections are provided for easy reference.
- NOTE:** Until all policies are uploaded to the Online Directives Information System (ODIS), some hyperlinks to other policies in the Child Welfare Policy Manual may not be operational.

**Chapter 14: Resource Development**

This new chapter consolidates the former 1014: Foster Parents and 1015: Foster Homes from the Foster Care Services Manual and includes the following highlights or changes:

1. Incorporates Title IV-E requirements;
2. Introduces new terminology for caregivers for consistency with the new Impact Training (e.g. Partnerships Parents and Resource Parents);
3. Requires caregivers affiliated with a Child Placing Agency (CPA) to meet the same standards as DFCS caregivers;
4. Incorporates the centralization of Criminal History Records Information (CHRI) under the Office of Inspector General (OIG);
5. Highlights that CHRI may not be disseminated across state lines;
6. Explains that DFCS continues to be responsible for the security and integrity of CHRI received before September 1, 2013;
7. Makes DFCS responsible for requesting CPS history screening from other states on behalf of CPAs, effective 11/30/13;
8. Requires DFCS to check CPS history in every state an applicant or their adult household members have resided within the past five years;
9. Updates the CPS screening process to include Georgia SHINES External Documents and ACCURINT searches;
10. Requires staff to check the Inquiry Information Line on a daily basis for new inquiries;
11. Changes what was called "Orientation" to "Information Session;"
12. Requires caregivers returning to services to repeat pre-service training if it has been three (3) years or more since completion;
13. Establishes IMPACT Family Centered Practice (FCP) as the updated DFCS pre-service training program, and requires three (3) in-home consultations, the first of

- which is to occur before the first session of IMPACT-FCP;
14. Requires all adult household members that will be involved in the parenting of children placed in the home to participate in IMPACT-FCP;
  15. Prohibits finalizing a permanency plan with any caregiver who has a pending CPS investigation until concurrence is received from the State Office;
  16. Requires approved DFCS caregivers to obtain a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of Continued Parent Development (CPD), formerly referred to as "training hours"; At least five (5) of the required CPD hours must be obtained via in-person interaction (one-on-one or group);
  17. Requires caregivers to complete CPR and First Aid training and obtain certification prior to approval;
  18. Updates the Initial Family Evaluation process and requires the process to be terminated for applicants who do not submit all required documentation within sixty (60) days of completion of IMPACT-FCP;
  19. Updates the Medical Report (Form 36);
  20. Introduces the Health Statement-Other Household Member Form 36-A and Medical Report for Re-evaluations Form 36-B;
  21. Requires RD workers to maintain monthly contact with DFCS caregivers and to make quarterly home visits;
  22. Incorporates the grievance procedure for foster parents affiliated with a CPA.

### **Implementation**

The policy updates are effective upon the release of this manual transmittal. Please note that although the policy changes will be effective immediately, they will be available on the Online Directives Information Systems (ODIS) at a later date.

Regional and County Leadership shall provide opportunities for staff to review and discuss the updated policies to ensure they are implemented into your practices. Questions may be directed to the Field Program Specialist in your region. Regional staff may submit questions to the [PPPDUnit@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:PPPDUnit@dhs.ga.gov).