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## **SOCIAL SERVICES MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** County Departments of Family and Children's Services  
DFCS Regional Directors  
State Office Staff

**FROM:** Ron Scroggy, <sup>RS</sup> Division Director  
Division of Family and Children's Services

**RE:** Clarification of CPS Screening Requirements outlined in  
Social Services County Letter (SSCL) 2012-06

Many of you expressed concerns regarding implementation of the new requirements for safety screenings outlined in SSCL 2012-06, specifically as it pertains to the new requirement to conduct the Child Protective Services (CPS) history checks prior to any placement and replacement of children including respite. The purpose of this memorandum is to address your concerns and provide clarification.

The new safety screening requirements were developed in an effort to increase the agency's ability to ensure the safety of children in care, and also comply with the Kenny A Consent Decree. While the Decree focuses on Fulton and DeKalb children, the Division recognizes the need for consistency in our practice as we work to prevent the abuse and neglect of all children across the state.

**CONCERN #1:** Who is responsible for conducting the placement safety screenings?

Placement safety screenings are CPS history checks that occur prior to all placements and replacements, including respite. County Department staffs are responsible for conducting the placement safety screening for placements in a DFCS or CPA home. County Department leadership is encouraged to develop a process for handling placement safety screenings to include respite, after hours, holidays and emergency situations, to ensure the screenings are conducted prior to the placement of children.

**CONCERN #2:** Conducting placement safety screens may cause placement delays.

As most placements require timely decision making, DFCS case managers must maintain close communication with the DFCS Resource Development (RD) and Child Placing Agency (CPA) staff to assure timely placement safety screenings are conducted. DFCS and CPA staff must communicate with caregivers the importance of advance planning for respite placements to ensure that safety screenings are completed prior to the placement of the child in the respite home. Please note that a safety screen is **not** needed for the return of a child to a foster home after respite, unless the child is entering a new placement.

**CONCERN #3:** What is the process for conducting the placement safety screening and which safety screenings are required prior to a placement?

For placement safety screenings:

1. Obtain the following information from the Resource Development (RD) or Child Placing Agency (CPA) staff:
  - a. Foster Parent (s) Name and Address
  - b. Names of other household members 18 years and older
  - c. Resource ID, Person ID
2. Review and assess the following to ensure the caregiver is eligible for placements:
  - a. SHINES Child Protective Services history
  - b. SHINES Foster/Adoptive Policy Violations
  - c. PSDS, IDS, IDS Placement Central, County Master File **only** on new household members. Review SHINES Records Check Summary for all other household members 18 years and older to ensure prior check is documented.
  - d. Out of State Abuse and Neglect Registry **only** when there are new household members 18 years and older (who have resided in another state), since the previous safety screening.

**Note:** Refer to the attachments "SHINES Screening for CPS history" and, "Screening the FAD Stage."
3. If CPS substantiation is noted, or if the foster home has had two (2) or more policy violations:
  - a. Check the foster home record for any waivers from the state office allowing the home to remain open and for what purpose.
  - b. If no waiver is located, alert the supervisor to ensure that appropriate action is taken to close the home.

**CONCERN #4:** Where do we document the placement safety screening?

Document the placement safety screenings in the Contacts/Summaries Tab in the Foster Care Child (FCC) stage. Select "Pre-placement" as the Purpose of the contact. Document the following information in the Narrative:

1. The foster parent(s) names, names and ages of other household members (make sure to identify relationships in your documentation.)

2. Databases screened, date screening was conducted, and results for all foster parents and household members 18 years and older.
3. Recommendation for whether child can be placed in the home based on the results of the screening.

DFCS staff should direct questions should be directed to the Field Program Specialist in your region. Regional staff may direct questions to the Practice and Policy Unit at [PPPDUnit@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:PPPDUnit@dhr.state.ga.us). CPAs should direct questions to [opmrequests@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:opmrequests@dhr.state.ga.us).

Thank you again for the opportunity to address your concerns and your efforts on behalf of our children and families.