

Commissioner Guidance Document Transmittal

Date – September 28, 2012

Manual - Child and Family Services Manual, Chapter B, Early Prevention Services (EPS)

Transmittal # - 252

The purpose of this transmittal is to provide guidance for the newly developed Early Prevention Services Chapter B of the Child and Family Services Manual. This is the first guidance focused on early prevention in the Manual and provides the framework for strengthening families practice across all of child welfare. Unless otherwise stated, the provisions included in this transmittal are effective upon receipt of this transmittal.

This manual has been formatted in the new Child and Family Services Manual format. The primary focus of the manual is on Early Prevention Services-those services provided to the general public, high risk groups or individual families prior to, or in the absence of, a valid CPS Referral. It incorporates best practice standards for providing effective early prevention services, uses the most current state of the art knowledge about trauma informed practice, strengthening families and protective factors and provides procedures and tools for providing Early Prevention Services, including foster care diversion services.

This transmittal presents two of five sections that will comprise the entire chapter: Section 1 and Section 4. These two sections comprise the core of Chapter B. It is expected that Sections 2, 3, and 5 will be published by April 2013. The five sections are titled as follows:

- **Section 1:** **Overview of Prevention for Practice and Administration** (provides a framework for the practice and administration of early prevention services in local departments of social services)
- **Section 2:** **Public Education and Awareness Activities to the General Public** (provides information on developing public service announcements and public education materials designed to strengthen and support all families, highlighting father involvement, strengthening marital and parental relationships, promoting healthy attachments and managing trauma related stress ; also provides information about conducting activities during Child Abuse Prevention Month).
- **Section 3:** **Early Prevention Services to High Risk Groups** (provides information on groups most at risk of abuse, neglect and out of home care including, but not limited to, parents who were abused as children, teen parents, incarcerated families, single parents, families impacted by substance abuse, and others)
- **Section 4:** **Early Prevention Services to At Risk Families** (provides supervisors and social workers involved in early prevention with strategies for engaging families, principles of practice for strength based, trauma informed practice and supervision in early prevention; guidelines for early prevention family assessments and trauma informed case management; prevention oriented service planning; tools to use for assessment and outcome measurements; definitions of case types for prevention; and, guidelines for foster care diversion services)
- **Section 5:** **Developing the Agency's Capacity to Provide Early Prevention Services through**

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Collaboration (provides guidelines and tools for agency and community based assessments for administrators of local departments of social services who want to initiate or enhance early prevention services and build community partnerships)

This guidance was developed with the assistance of a 47 member statewide committee consisting of representatives from 17 local departments of social services, 5 statewide community partners who provide early prevention services and state staff. The guidance is based on the outcomes of the following activities:

- A review of the literature on best practices in prevention
- Technical assistance from FRIENDS which provides the technical assistance for the National Center on Prevention and the federally funding Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Program
- Review of what other states provide in Early Prevention
- Development and distribution of a Prevention Survey supported by the Virginia League of Social Services Executives, to local departments of social services. One hundred fourteen (114) agencies responded and results contributed significantly to this chapter.
- Participation in 21 community based prevention meetings regionally and meeting with local supervisors across the state to provide information and solicit input on the development of this chapter.

Significant content for Sections 1 and 4 of the manual are as follows:

Section 1 Overview of Prevention for Practice and Administration	
Subsection	Significant Content
Defining Prevention	Defines prevention and distinguishes it from early prevention, those services provided to families before, or in the absence of, a valid Child Protective Services referral. It also provides the legal basis for early prevention and other related definitions.
Practice Model	Introduces guiding principles for early prevention services based on the VDSS Practice Model and the Children's Services Practice Model
Accomplishments and Challenges	This subsection highlights what Virginia has accomplished, the challenges still ahead and the vision for early prevention services.
Best Practice Models	This subsection describes the best practice models used in this chapter including family driven services, family engagement, strengthening families perspective, trauma informed practice, protective and risk

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	factors as a framework for practice, collaboration and an entrepreneurial approach to program development and services.
Types of Prevention Services	Defines Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Prevention Services and presents a Continuum of Prevention Services across child welfare.
Standards for Early Prevention Services	Presents accepted conceptual, practice and administrative standards for services.
Administrative Supports Needed for Prevention	Includes key tasks, staffing, funding, professional development, community collaboration, data management and program evaluation.
Resources for Early Prevention	Includes possible funding sources and a extensive list of on-line resources for early prevention administrators.

Section 4: Early Prevention Services to At Risk Families

Subsection	Significant Content
Engaging Families in Voluntary Services	These subsections include a focus on family well being and how to engage families in voluntary early prevention services. It includes connecting and reconnecting fathers through engagement, resources for involving fathers, and strengthening marital and parental relationships.
Protective and Risk Factors as the Framework for Practice	This subsection includes the conceptual framework for prevention, including strengthening families' initiative, and provides a detailed definition and examples of risk and protective factors in families.
Family Assessment	These subsections provide best practice guidelines for intake, short term and comprehensive family assessments, tools to utilize, including valid and reliable instruments to use in the assessment process.
Service Planning and Delivery	These subsections provide instructions for opening a case, introduce new case types for early prevention, guidance for developing and implement service plans with families, and the role of the worker and the family in planning and services,

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	and describes trauma informed case management
Foster Care Diversion	This subsection provides guidance for assisting families in locating a relative or friend who may be able to provide voluntary short term care of their child if needed to avoid removal and foster care placement. Outlines services that can be provided to both families, the role of the worker and the family in diversion situations, considerations to determine if the agency will support the family's decision, and helping the family determine if the diversion family can be a permanent placement option for their child.
Goal Achievement and Case Closure	Provides guidance for reassessment of the family's strengths and needs, a sample parent survey that measure satisfaction with services, and criteria to use to determine when a family's case can be closed.
Guidelines for Supervision in Early Prevention	This subsection provides guidelines for supervisors to effectively support Early Prevention Services, including a description of roles and tasks.

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