

Commissioner Guidance Document Transmittal

Date – July 16, 2015

Manual - Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Child and Family Services Manual, Chapter C, Child Protective Services (CPS)

Transmittal # - 269

The purpose of this transmittal is to provide guidance for the CPS Chapter of the Child and Family Services Manual. Unless otherwise stated, the provisions included in this transmittal are effective upon release.

Significant changes include:

- Throughout the entire CPS chapter new links have been added that will take the reader to the latest chapter of the VDSS Child and Family Services Manual, Chapter H. Domestic Violence (DV). This new chapter presents an overview of DV and the related statutory requirements impacting local departments of social services (LDSS) and local DV programs. Information and guidance specific to Prevention, CPS and Foster Care is provided. Much of the specific information is applicable across program areas.
- In section 4, several changes have been made to enhance guidance for dispositional assessments (findings) including new guidance on preponderance of the evidence.
- In section 5, Out of Family Investigations, new guidance has been added regarding investigations involving public school employees (full time, part time, permanent or temporary) and the need to make dispositions within the mandated timeframes (45, 60 or 90 days) pursuant to §63.2-1505 B5, effective July 1, 2015.
- A new version of the child death reporting tool resulted in minor changes in section 11, Child Deaths.

This transmittal and manual are available on SPARK at:
<http://spark.dss.virginia.gov/divisions/dfs/cps/manual.cgi>

Significant changes to the manual are as follows:

Section 1 Introduction to Child Protective Services	
Subsection	Significant Changes
1.9	Added new section which provides an overview of the new DV chapter of the VDSS Child and Family Services Manual.
Section 2 Definitions	
Subsection	Significant Changes
2.6.2	Added new link to the DV chapter regarding DV and the definition of mental abuse and mental neglect.
Section 3 Complaints and Reports	
Subsection	Significant Changes
3.5.3	Added new section which provides link to the new DV chapter of the VDSS Child and Family Services Manual regarding universal screening for DV.

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	NOTE: Due to adding this new section, the numbering sequence for the rest of 3.5 has changed.
3.9.1	Added new link to the DV chapter regarding DV and track decision.
Section 4 Family Assessment and Investigation	
Subsection	Significant Changes
Entire Section	NOTE: Due to some sections being relocated or new heading titles added within the investigation section, the numbering sequence has changed.
4.2.3.8.5	Added new link to the DV chapter, Appendix G, regarding information on impact of DV on children.
4.4.6.1	Added new link to the DV chapter regarding interviewing the family, children, DV victims and DV perpetrators.
4.4.10	Replaced reference to DV screening tool that was in Appendix E with a new link to recommended screening tools found in the new DV chapter.
4.4.11	Removed reference for use of a safety plan when safety is assessed as unsafe. A court order, not safety plan, is required as the child has been removed and placed into foster care.
4.4.11.1	Added new link to the DV chapter regarding DV and family partnership meetings.
4.4.12	Added guidance to indicate that the title of the comments section of the safety assessment tool is comments/safety plan. (This will be updated in next OASIS release - 3.14) Added new link to the DV chapter regarding safety planning for DV victims and children.
4.4.14 and 4.4.14.1	Deleted guidance about need to enter a new investigation and close family assessment in OASIS when changing tracks as this is done automatically. Supervisory approval is required to change tracks.
4.4.16	Replaced reference to DV assessment tool that was in Appendix E with a new link to Appendix J in the DV chapter which provides guidance on the support of children and youth exposed to DV.
4.5.19	Replaced reference to DV screening tool that was in Appendix E with a new link to recommended screening tools found in the new DV chapter.
4.5.20	Removed reference for use of a safety plan when safety is assessed as unsafe. A court order, not safety plan, is required as the child has been removed and placed into foster care.
4.5.20.1	Added new link to the DV chapter regarding DV and family partnership meetings.
4.5.21	Added guidance to indicate that the title of the comments section of the safety assessment tool is comments/safety plan. (This will be updated in next OASIS release - 3.14) Added new link to the DV chapter regarding safety planning for DV victims and children.
4.5.25	Replaced reference to DV assessment tool that was in Appendix E with a new link to Appendix J in the DV chapter which provides guidance on the support of children and youth exposed to DV.


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4.5.26.4	Added guidance from section 2 (2.6.3) which provides for requirement of professional documentation for mental abuse or mental neglect in order to make a founded disposition. Added new link to the DV chapter regarding making dispositions in investigations involving DV.
4.5.27	This section was relocated and was formerly section 4.5.29.1. Added new guidance to clarify preponderance of evidence standard required to make a disposition of founded.
4.5.27.1	This section was moved and was formerly section 4.5.29.2. The title was changed to include direct and indirect evidence.
4.5.27.2	Added new section title "Credibility of evidence".
4.5.27.3	This section was moved and was formerly section 4.5.33.
4.5.28 (and subsections)	This section and subsections were moved from former section 4.5.30
4.5.33.1-3	The format for the examples provided for determining the level for founded dispositions was changed for clarification.
4.6.2	Added new link to DV chapter regarding guidelines for documenting cases that involve DV.
4.13	Appendix D: CPS Safety tool was revised to reflect changes previously made to the paper tool and OASIS.
Section 5 Out of Family Investigations	
Subsection	Significant Changes
Entire Section	NOTE: Due to some sections being relocated or new heading titles, the numbering sequence has changed.
5.7.2.2.1	Added new guidance to clarify preponderance of evidence standard required to make a disposition of founded. (same as section 4)
5.7.2.2.2	Changed title to include direct and indirect evidence. (same as section 4)
5.7.2.2.3	Added new title "Credibility of evidence". (same as section 4)
5.7.2.3.1-3	The format for the examples provided for determining the level for founded dispositions was changed for clarification. (same as section 4)
5.10.1.3	Added new guidance and citation from the Code of Virginia, effective July 1, 2015, which requires dispositions and notifications to alleged abusers employed within a public school to be made within mandated timeframes.
5.10.2	Amended title of section.
Section 6 Services	
Subsection	Significant Changes
6.2.2.1	Added new link to the DV chapter regarding DV and family partnership meetings.
6.3.2.2	Added new link to the DV chapter regarding DV and service planning.
Section 7 Appeals	
Subsection	Significant Changes
Entire section	No changes
Section 8 Judicial Proceedings	

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Subsection	Significant Changes
Entire section	No changes
Section 9 Confidentiality	
Subsection	Significant Changes
Entire section	No changes
Section 10 Substance Exposed Infants	
Subsection	Significant Changes
Entire section	No changes
Section 11 Child Deaths	
Subsection	Significant Changes
11.3.2	Revised guidance for completing section E and the description of section H of the child death reporting tool. (version 4)

Questions about this transmittal should be directed to Rita Katzman, CPS Program Manager at 804-726-7554 or by email at rita.katzman@dss.virginia.gov


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