



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 1
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

I. PURPOSE

The overall purpose of Social Worker contacts with children, Non-Minor Dependents (NMD), parents/guardians, and caregivers, includes assessing and monitoring safety & risk, gathering information to determine effectiveness of services, monitor progress with the case plan, establish positive engagement, and to maintain a helping relationship with all parties.

The requirements detailed in this policy are mandatory under state and federal regulation and are subject to department and state compliance review. Documentation of work done is the key to verification of compliance with these regulations. Please see companion [Quality Contacts Desk Guide](#) for additional resources.

II. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following apply:

- A. **Completed Child Contacts:** For a case compliance contact with a child to be completed the contact must be made in person (i.e., face-to-face). Additionally, the contact must:
1. Be recorded in CWS/CMS as “in-person”
 2. Have a status of “completed”
 3. Have either “Deliver Service to Client” or “Conduct Client Evaluation” chosen as the Contact Purpose. Or, if investigating a referral choose “Investigate Referral” as the Contact Purpose.
 4. Have significant, relevant information in the narrative for each participant selected in CWS/CMS (for further details please refer to [QC Desk Guide](#))
 5. Be case specific, accurately reflect the date the contact occurred and what happened during the contact
 6. Have “SW Plan Contact” chosen as a Case Management
- Note:** Please see [Quick Guide For Contacts](#) for further details.
- B. **Out of Home Caregiver:** Relative, NREFM, Resource Family Home (RFA) or Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP)/Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) staff, and Foster Family Agency (FFA) staff.



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 2
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

- C. **Social Worker:** Assigned as the person(s) responsible for monitoring an open case or referral. A Social Worker can be either assigned as primary or secondary. As such, their responsibilities vary depending on assignment.
- D. **Visit:** Also known as a face-to-face contact with a child, parent, or caregiver. It may be conducted by either primary or secondary worker. The primary worker must visit the child the majority of the time while assigned the case.

III. LEGAL MANDATES

- A. Social Worker must visit face-to-face with each child and parent on their caseload at least once a calendar month.
- B. Face-to-face contact must be in the child's home or placement a majority, or 51%, of the time while the case is open. Additionally, no more than two (2) consecutive visits held outside the child's/youth's residence are allowed.
- C. Social Worker must have a one-on-one private conversation for at least part of a visit for each child who is old enough to express themselves.
- D. For children in STRTP placement, or group home care the visits by the Social Worker must be two weeks apart.
- E. Each parent/guardian named in the case plan whose child is placed out-of-home will be seen in-person at least once each calendar month.
- F. Social Worker will ensure during each visit that all the child's needs are being met by assessing safety, risk, health, education, permanency and emotional well being.
- G. An attempted visit to conduct a face-to-face visit **is not** considered a completed case contact. It is expected that Social Workers make repeated attempts to ensure child/parent is seen.

IV. CONTACT REQUIREMENTS

Social Worker is responsible for making contact with each child, parent/guardian, and out-of-home caregiver as indicated in the approved case plan.

A. Children:

The purpose of the Social Worker contact with the child named in the case plan includes, but is not limited to, the following objectives:

DMCL # 17-107



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 3
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

1. **Will be seen in-person face-to-face at least once each calendar month.** The following objectives must be completed monthly during the face-to-face visit and documented in CWS to ensure a quality contact:
 - Assess for ongoing risk and safety in the home/placement.
 - Verify the location of the child; check on child's adjustment to the home/placement, and stability of placement.
 - Inquire about Indian ancestry to determine if ICWA applies.
 - Assess connections with extended family, friends, and community providers/individuals to explore alternative permanency options.
 - Assist the child/youth in preserving and maintaining religious, sexual and ethnic identity.
 - Monitor the health and safety of the child; check physical health, medical/dental appts, check for injuries new or old, or risks.
 - Assess progress and attendance in school by checking with school as well as care provider.
 - Assess the child's emotional well-being; is the child happy/depressed, eating, sleeping, how do they present?
 - Gather pertinent info to assess; the needs of the child, the quality of services provided to meet the child's needs, the child's case plan progress, and the case plan objectives.
 - Establish and maintain a helping relationship between child, parent and caregiver to provide continuity and stability for the case.
 - Solicit and encourage active participation in case plan development with the child, parent and caregiver.
 - Ensure child is able to maintain a relationship with siblings, relatives and those adults who are important to the child.
 - Inform the child, parent, caregiver regarding current and future placement plans, court progress, and discuss progress with them.
 - Assess the readiness of children and youth fifteen and half years of age and older for emancipation and develop a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) with them.

Note: Please refer to [Quality Contacts Desk Guide](#) for support on how to include all the above objectives in a cohesive format within the narrative.

DMCL # 17-107



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 4
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

2. **Face-to-face contacts will occur in the child/youth's residence a majority of time (51 percent) within a calendar year.** Additionally, no more than two (2) consecutive visits held outside the child's/youth's residence are allowed. (MPP Div 31-320.4)
3. **Each child will be interviewed alone and in a quiet/private setting for some portion of each face-to-face contact. This applies to various contact settings including; Community Family Team (CFT), Katie A, Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Team Decision Meeting (TDM).**
4. **For children in out-of-home care, the Social Worker will inform each child of the right to request a private conversation** occur away from the residence of the out-of-home caregiver in a manner appropriate to the age and developmental level of the child. The contents of the conversations are not to be shared with the caregiver unless the Social Worker believes the child/youth may be in danger of harming him or herself, or others, and the Social Worker believes disclosure is necessary to meet the needs of the child/youth or the child/youth consents to disclosure. (WIC 16516.5)
5. **Foster care rights shall be reviewed with each child in care every six months** until the child is no longer a dependent. Please refer to the handout [Foster Child Rights](#) for more information on the rights of children while in care.

B. **Parents/Guardians:**

The purpose of the Social Worker contact with the parents/guardians named in the case plan includes, but is not limited to, the following objectives:

- Verify the location/address of the parent/guardian and assess suitability of the home or living environment including observation of the child's room.



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 5
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

- Assess the parent's/guardian's protective capacity as it pertains to meeting the child's basic and special care needs, including education, emotional and medical needs.
- Assess the safety of the child in the home, or the safe return to the home.
- Assess the effectiveness of services provided to meet the needs of the parent/guardian.
- Monitor the parent's/guardian's progress on identified case plan goals.
- Establish and maintain a helping relationship with the parent/guardian.
- Counsel the parent/guardian as to the child's current placement status and progress.

1. Family Maintenance (FM) Cases:

- Will be seen in-person at least once each calendar month.**
- In order to assess risk and safety of the child, the home environment of each parent must be assessed on a monthly basis.**
- Unannounced visits in the primary residence are encouraged as often as possible, but must be completed within thirty days prior to any calendared hearing.**

2. Family Reunification (FR) Cases

- A parent/guardian with a case plan goal of FR will be seen in-person at least once each calendar month.**

If a parent/guardian is not available for in-person contact [e.g., incarceration, institutionalization, resides out-of state or beyond contiguous counties, etc.], the Social Worker will maintain monthly telephone or written contact. If the parent/guardian is not known or whereabouts are not known then contact is not required if an Absent Parent Search (APS) is completed and filed with Court via Declaration of Due Diligence. An APS and Declaration must be completed every six months or until parent/guardian is no longer included in the case plan.



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 6
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

- b. **Face-to-face contact with the parent/guardian will occur in the parent/guardian's primary residence within the calendar month prior to any unsupervised visits or any hearing recommending return home, in order to assess the home environment for risk and safety as well as the functioning of the parent/guardian.**

Note- primary residence can be a shelter or temporary housing facility if parents/guardians are without permanent housing.

C. **Out-of-Home Caregiver:**

The caregiver of a child in out-of-home care will have face-to-face contact a minimum of once every other calendar month. In addition, the caregiver will be contacted monthly via telephone, letter, email, or text.

The purpose of Social Worker contact with out-of-home caregivers, includes, but is not limited to, the following objectives:

- Monitor/assess the safety and risk of the child with caregiver as well as the quality of care being provided
- Monitor/assess caregiver's ability to meet the child's basic, developmental, and special needs (e.g., health, education, individual living skills)
- Gather information to assess the effectiveness of services provided to meet identified goals
- Gather and verify information necessary for court reports
- Maintain a case plan that is responsive to current and future needs
- Establish and maintain a mutually cooperative relationship
- Counsel caregiver as to progress on case plan/TILP
- Inquire as to any or additional support that may be needed
- Attempt to provide advance notice of in-home visits with caregivers
- Assess whether a higher frequency of in-person contact is necessary to support placement stability and ensure the caregiver can meet the child's needs

V. FREQUENCY AND TIMING

A. Emergency Response

DMCL # 17-107



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 7
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

1. Social Worker is required to have at least three face-to-face visits in the first 30 calendar days from the initial in-person response.
(MPP DIV 31, 320.2)

However, if a case plan is completed in the first 21 calendar days after the initial removal of the child or in-person response, the social worker is permitted to have a minimum of two face-to-face visits.

Note- Court and Continuing Social Workers should make every attempt to assist Emergency Response Social Workers with face-to-face requirements if a case is transferred over prior to the initial 30 calendar days.

2. After the initial 30 calendar days, a minimum of one face-to-face contact per month is required for a child whether he/she is placed in or out of the home.

Note: Please refer to ER- Face-To-Face Contact Requirements policy [DC 31-084.14](#) for further details on contact requirements for Emergency Response.

B. Court, Continuing, Adoption, Specialized Programs

A minimum of one face-to-face contact per month is required for a child/NMD whether she/he is placed in or out of the home.

C. Intensive Family Services (IFS)

1. During the first 30 days, following the start date of IFS, the IFS Social Worker will meet with the family a **minimum** of one time per week.
 - a. These visits can alternate between the home, school and other appropriate family-centered locations. Face-to-face contact should be with each of the Case Plan participants for the purposes of determining the parent(s)/guardian(s) progress with the Case Plan and assessing that the IFS Case Plan continues to be appropriate for ensuring the children's safety.
2. After 30 days, face-to-face contacts with all case participants should be a **minimum** of two times per month. Visits will continue to be a minimum of



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 8
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

two times per month until the case is successfully closed or transferred to Court.

Note- For further details on Intensive Family Services (IFS) policy please refer to [DM 31-087](#).

D. **All Children Following a Placement Change**

Social Worker is responsible for making a face-to-face contact with the child in his or her new placement within 24 hrs of a placement change. If placement change occurs on a weekend/holiday, after hours worker contact can be substituted for case carrying Social Worker.

E. **Non-Dependent Legal Guardianship Cases**

A minimum of one face-to-face contact every 6 months is required.

VI. **VISITING CHILDREN OUT OF COUNTY**

For children placed in any of the 13 Bay Area counties outside Contra Costa County, the Social Worker is responsible for face-to-face contact:

- Alameda
- Mendocino
- Monterey
- Marin
- Napa
- San Benito
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Santa Clara
- Santa Cruz
- Solano
- Sonoma
- Sacramento



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 9
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

For children placed in other counties in California, the Social Worker should first contact CFS program analyst over Courtesy Supervision to arrange for that county to make monthly visits and provide verbal or written reports to the Social Worker, which should be documented in the case record. See the [Courtesy Supervision Request](#) form for further information.

Until Courtesy Supervision is approved by the receiving county the Social Worker is responsible for having face-to-face contact every calendar month.

VII. VISITING CHILDREN OUT OF STATE

- A. Children/Non-Minor Dependents (NMD) who are placed outside of California must be visited in-person, every month, by the assigned Social Worker or by an Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) Social Worker, if there is an approved ICPC. Please refer to the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children policy [DM 31-510](#) for specifics on the ICPC courtesy supervision application process.
- B. Children/Non-Minor Dependents (NMD) who are residing out of state in a group home/residential treatment facility must be visited in-person each calendar month by the assigned Social Worker.

VIII. NMD (Non-Minor Dependent)

- A. Social Worker visitation requirements for NMDs are the same as child visits. The NMD must be visited face-to-face a minimum of once a calendar month. However:
 - 1. If NMD resides out of the bay area counties, the Social Worker may arrange for courtesy supervision as appropriate.
 - 2. If NMD resides out of state and not in a group home, the Social Worker may apply for ICPC courtesy supervision.

Note: Until approved for courtesy supervision the Social Worker must continue to visit face-to-face once a calendar month. Please refer to Extended Foster Care policy [DM 31-650](#) for further details.

IX. AWOL/MISSING/RUNAWAY YOUTH

DMCL # 17-107



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 10
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

If a child's whereabouts are unknown because they are missing, ran away or are AWOL (Absent Without Leave) the efforts to locate the child must be documented in the case file once per calendar month.

AWOL or runaway youth are counted in the face-to-face federal measure. Therefore, an in-person visit must be completed with the youth for the case to be in compliance for the month. Please refer to AWOL/Missing/Run Away Youth Policy [DM 31-481](#) for specific details on compliance for AWOL youth.

X. CASE TRANSFERS

For the purpose of complying with Div. 31 the following guidelines will apply:

- A. **The transferring Social Worker is responsible for the monthly face-to-face contact** for each child, parent/guardian, and care provider listed on the case plan **during the month in which the case file was transferred.**
- B. For inter-district transfer of cases please refer to established policy [DM 31-706](#)

XI. DOCUMENTATION

The Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) is the primary source of information for Child Welfare Services. CWS/CMS input is mandated. No handwritten contacts are counted towards compliance.

- A. Timely Entry of Contacts
 - 1. Social Worker will record all contacts and attempted contacts made in the Contact Notebook within the child/family's CWS/CMS case, as soon as possible following the contact or attempt, but no later than the following:
 - a. **Emergency Response (ER)** contact notes must be entered into CWS/CMS within forty-eight (48) hours of each ER interview/contact/attempt, service or visit.

REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 11
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

- b. **Court, Continuing, Adoption, Specialized Programs** contact notes must be entered into CWS/CMS within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date of the contact/attempt, service or visit.
 2. If contact/attempt, service or visit narratives are completed more than thirty (30) days from the date of the actual contact/attempt, service or visit, the contact information and the content of the narrative should be supported by some source of documentation to assure accuracy of the contact/attempt information (e.g. hand written notes, notes on case plan, etc.).
- B. Quality Visit Content

 1. When completing CWS/CMS contact, service and visit notes, the "Narrative" section must contain substantive documentation that is strength based, factual and descriptive. Please see [Quality Contacts Desk Guide](#) documentation template for further details.

 - a. The narrative will address the attempt(s), what was observed during the contact, service, or visit as well as document the conversation and the issues discussed. Additionally, all required assessment questions (ie. safety, risk, medical, education, mental health, rights of child, etc.) must be documented within the contact note.
 2. Correspondence with parents, care providers (eg. RFA, FFA), or children/youth are also recorded as contacts.

 - a. If the correspondence is in writing (e.g. letter), a contact is recorded that summarizes the content of the written document. The written document is then filed in the physical case folder.
 - b. If the correspondence is an email or text, the content of the email and text is copied and pasted into the contact narrative.
 - c. Any progress reports received by Resource Family Approval (RFA), Foster Family Agency (FFA) or out of state ICPC agency must be entered into CWS/CMS as a contact.



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 12
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

3. The contact narrative sections will be used to support the Social Worker's summary in the Court Report and the service goals in the Case Plan.

XII. PROCEDURE

A. The Social Worker will:

1. Record every contact/attempt, service and visit made on behalf of a child/family in CWS/CMS per policy timeframe outlined above.
 - a. Enter each contact/attempt, service and visit into CWS/CMS following the [Quick Guide to Recording Contacts, Services and Visits](#) instructions found on FormSTARS,
 - Or
 - b. Complete form CWS 17, [CWS/CMS Contact/Associated Services/ Associated Visits Worksheet](#) for each contact/attempt, service and visit and submit to Clerical Staff for entry into CWS/CMS within seven (7) days from date of contact/attempt, service or visit.
2. If contact/attempt, service or visit narratives are completed more than thirty (30) days from the date of the actual contact/attempt, service or visit, there must be source documentation to support the content of the narrative (e.g. hand written notes, notes on case plan, etc.) and the documentation must be submitted to the Social Work Supervisor II for review.
3. For each case, print the delivered service log for prior six months and attach to the draft Court Report for the Social Work Supervisor II to review.

B. The Social Work Supervisor II will:

1. Discuss and ensure Social Workers are following the documenting contacts/attempts, services and visits policies and procedures.



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 13
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

2. Review source documentation for all contact/attempt, service or visit narratives completed more than thirty (30) days from the date of the actual contact/attempt, service or visit.
 3. Review printed delivered service logs for each case, since the last hearing, or the preceding six months' worth, whichever is shorter, to ensure Social Workers are following the documenting contacts/attempts, services and visits policies and procedures.
- C. Clerical Staff will:
1. Within in seven (7) days and based on the Social Workers' completed CWS 17 form enters all contact/attempt, associated services, associated visits, and narratives into CWS/CMS.
- D. Clerical Supervisors will:
1. Based on the Social Workers' completed CWS 17 form ensure Clerical Staff, in a timely manner, enter contact/attempt, associated services, associated visits, and narratives into CWS/CMS.

XIII. INFORMATION NOT TO BE RECORDED IN CONTACTS

- A. Communications with County Counsel – Notes regarding discussions with County Counsel should be recorded on the County Counsel Case Notes Form S3 DC. (This form can be printed from FormSTAR). Communications with County Counsel are not recorded in CWS/CMS.
- B. Information regarding HIV, AIDS or AIDS related conditions, STD's, or Pregnancy related conditions of minors and other Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) protected information is not recorded in contacts and is treated as confidential. Refer to [DM 31-003](#), Confidentiality, [DM 31-004.1](#), Case Record Information Excluded from Discovery, and [DM 31-906](#), Health & Education Passport (HEP) Protocol for more information.



REPLACES:

SECTION: 31-331, 31-340
PAGE NO.: 1
ISSUED/REVISED:

Quality Contacts

SECTION: 31-332
PAGE NO.: 14
EFFECTIVE: 10/23/2017

1. Information regarding reproductive health care for children 12 and older is not recorded in CWS/CMS.
2. The names and addresses of foster parents and their family members are redacted from Discovery. If this information is recorded in the CWS/CMS Contact Notebook, it needs to be redacted when a case is sent for Discovery. Please use abbreviations as often as possible instead of the real names of caregivers, (SCP- Substitute Care Provider, MGM- Maternal Grandmother, RFH- Resource Family Home)

XIV. REFERENCES

- The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 S. 1542
- WIC Section 16501.1(k)
- MPP CDSS Division 31 Section 31-320, 325
- ACIN I34 - 07 Recording Social Worker Contacts in the CWS/CMS
- ACL 09-11 Monthly Caseworker Visits with Foster Children
- ACL 10-19 Monthly Caseworker Visits with Children Forms and Documentation
- ACL 11-69 Extension of Foster Care and Beyond Age 18: Part One
- ACL 13-13 Monthly Caseworker Visits With Children
- ACL 14-50 Changes to the Requirements for Monthly Caseworker Visits
- SB 342 Foster Children Social Worker Visits
- CFS DM 31-706 Interdistrict Transfer of Permanent Placement Cases
- CFS DM 31-481 AWOL-Missing-Runaway Youth
- CFS DM 31-650 Extended Foster Care
- CFS DM 31-510 Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
- CFS DM 31-303 Confidentiality
- CFS DM 31-906 Health and Education Passport

CONTACT PERSON: First line Supervisors and above may contact the Program Analyst with any questions regarding this Department Manual Section.