



State of South Carolina

Department of Social Services

Policies and Guidelines: Child Welfare Services

Subject	1.3 Regional Support Services
Authority	S.C. Code Section 43-1-80
Standards	Guiding Principles and Standards (GPS) Practice Model
Application	All Child Welfare Staff, County and Regional Leadership, State Office Operations and Permanency Personnel
Purpose	
To outline the policy guidelines for the use of Regional Support Services (RSS) to assist county staff and leadership in completing certain case management activities necessary to achieve the safety, permanency, stability, and well-being of children and families served by DSS. RSS staff provide support in accordance with DSS Policy, Mission, and the GPS Practice Model.	
Policy Statement	
County and Regional Adoptions Office staff may request the assistance of Regional Support Services staff. Regional Support Services staff may assist with case management activities for children in foster care placed outside of the case management region, as well as their families.	
Policy Administration	
The Division of Child Welfare Services, Office of Operations, is the owner of this policy. The Director, or designee, shall review this policy annually from the date published in the Child Welfare Services Policy Manual, or as needed due to changes in law or practice.	
Policy Guidelines	
A. Regional Support Services Team	- The Regional Support Services (RSS) Team provides support to: - Case managers with children placed out of region, by completing specific case management activities; - Families and case managers, by reducing travel times associated with facilitating various case management activities; and - Case managers with in-region child fatality investigations. - The RSS Team is available in the following regions to assist case managers and families statewide: - Lowcountry - Midlands - Pee Dee - Upstate - The RSS Team reports to the Division of Child Welfare Services, Office of Operations, Regional Support Services Team Coordinator.

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	4. The RSS Team may assist with the following case management activities: a. Child Fatality Investigations; b. Face-to-Face Contact with a Child; c. Family Visitation; d. Transportation; and e. Appointment Assistance.
B. Identifying the Need for Regional Support	1. Foster care or adoption services case managers shall request a Team Leader Case Consultation if they are at risk of being unable to complete any of the following case management activities at least three (3) days before the activity needs to occur: a. Face-to-Face Contact with a Child; b. Family Visitation (Parent or Sibling); c. Transportation; or d. Appointment Assistance. 2. County team leaders shall: a. Document the case consultation on DSS Form 3062: Team Leader Case Consultation; b. Notate the case consultation as a critical juncture; and c. Upload the form into CAPSS linked files within five (5) business days of completion. 3. County team leaders, or designees, shall complete the electronic form for the appropriate region utilizing DSS Form 37566 if the county case manager's team leader concurs with the need for the RSS Team to complete the case management activity. Note: For example, if Johnny who resides in Charleston, SC, has a family visit in Greenville, SC, and his case manager is unavailable to transport him for a family visit due to FMLA; a county team leader or designee shall submit a request for assistance to the Lowcountry RSS Team as that is the region in which the child currently resides.
C. Submitting the Request for Regional Support	1. Team leaders, or designees, shall complete the appropriate electronic regional request form, per DSS Form 37566, for the region the case manager is requesting to fulfill the request. a. To request assistance from the Lowcountry RSS Team, complete Lowcountry Regional Support Request (E-Form). b. To request assistance from the Midlands RSS Team, complete Midlands Regional Support Request (E-Form). c. To request assistance from the Pee Dee RSS Team, complete Pee Dee Regional Support Request (E-Form). d. To request assistance from the Upstate RSS Team, complete Upstate Regional Support Request (E-Form). 2. Once the request is submitted, county case managers await a response from the RSS Team. The response from the RSS Team will detail whether:

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	a. The request will be fulfilled and by whom; b. Additional information is needed to fulfill the request; or c. The request is denied or cannot be fulfilled, and the reason for denial or lack of fulfillment. 3. If the electronic submission request has been submitted and the support is no longer needed, requesting county team leaders, or designees shall cancel requests by notifying RSS team leaders, at least 24 hours before the case management activity is scheduled to occur.
D. Regional Support Assignments	1. RSS team leaders shall review the submitted request to determine whether: a. The request will be fulfilled and by whom; b. Additional information is needed to fulfill the request; and c. The request is denied or unable to be fulfilled. 2. RSS team leaders shall immediately notify the requesting county team leader and County Director of the denial or inability to fulfill the request and detail the reason(s) if the request is denied or cannot be fulfilled. 3. RSS team leaders shall immediately notify the requesting county team leader and County Director to obtain the necessary information if additional information is needed to fulfill the request. 4. If the request is approved, RSS team leaders shall: a. Capture incoming requests; and b. Assign completion of requests to RSS case managers. 5. RSS case managers shall: a. Complete the requested case management activity; b. Maintain contact with requesting county case managers and team leaders until the activity is completed; and c. Immediately notify requesting team leaders, or designees, and the RSS Team Coordinator if any unexpected barriers arise that may impede the RSS case managers' ability to complete the activity. 6. RSS case managers must document the completion of the activity in CAPSS according to DSS policy expectations and procedures for the activity. Once RSS case managers complete the case management activity, documentation requirements include, but are not limited to, the following policies and other related documents: a. Face-to-Face Contact with a Child i. Policy 570; and ii. Work Aid 5.5. b. Family Visitation (Parent or Sibling) i. Policy 510.3; ii. Work Aid 510.3; iii. Quality Visitation Guide; iv. Policy 570.1;

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	v. Work Aid 5.4; vi. Policy 570.2; and vii. Work Aid 5.6. c. Transportation i. Policy 535 d. Appointment Assistance i. Health related policies and work aids in the Foster Care chapter of the Child Welfare Services Policy Manual.
E. Management and Oversight of Regional Support Requests	1. RSS team leaders shall: a. Monitor the requests for assistance submitted electronically; b. Capture incoming requests and designate assignments to RSS case managers; and c. Prioritize assignments of the requests for assistance by region, specifically activities involving children in foster care or their families that must occur outside the case management region. 2. The RSS Team Coordinator shall monitor the requests and completion of the case management activities monthly, through ongoing unit meetings and one-on-ones with RSS team leaders. a. To promote continued family engagement and timely case progression, the RSS Team Coordinator and team leaders shall monitor repeated requests from any one case manager. The RSS Team Coordinator shall notify County Directors and Regional Directors of repeated monthly requests for support.
F. Assistance with Child Fatality Investigations	1. The RSS Team assists county staff with child fatality investigations in accordance with Work Aid 301.1: Child Fatality Investigation Procedures. 2. In the event the RSS Team does not have an available or assigned investigation case manager in the specific region the assistance is needed, the RSS Team Coordinator shall notify Regional and County Directors.

Forms	DSS Form 3062: Team Leader Case Consultation DSS Form 37566: Regional Support Team Request Form Links
Related Management Reports	Visitation Reports Case Manager Contact Reports

Glossary	
Appointment Assistance:	provided to the case manager by the RSS team to transport and accompany children to their medical, dental, vision, behavioral health, or specialty event that occurs between the child or youth and their healthcare provider
Case Consultation:	a guided discussion between a team leader and case manager during the case management process intended to:

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1. Foster a learning environment aimed at the professional development of the case manager to include promoting the development of case manager critical thinking, self-reflection skills, and the support of learning across each core practice skill through the lens of each guiding principle.
2. Focus on the achievement of policy and organizational expectations including those processes required on a specific frequency, the quality of the implementation of casework processes, and context within which services are delivered.
3. Assure the practice and decision-making by the case manager adheres to DSS policy and the Guiding Principles and Standards (GPS) Practice Model.
4. Provide a safe environment that supports case manager well-being, identifies, and addresses secondary trauma, and encourages self-efficacy.

Contact: an intentional face-to-face interaction between a case manager and a child, youth, or young adult in the care, custody, or guardianship of DSS, or a caregiver in which the case manager monitors progress and services, promotes the timely achievement of permanency goals, and addresses safety, permanency, and well-being needs

Immediately: as soon as possible, not to exceed one hour

Transportation Assistance: provided to the case manager by the RSS team to assist with transporting children to necessary events which support their permanency goals

Visitation: an intentional face-to-face interaction intended to reduce trauma, increase bonding and attachment between those participating in the interaction, strengthen the family, and move the family toward permanency which occurs between a child and the child's:

1. Parent(s), non-custodial parent(s), or guardian(s);
2. Sibling(s);
3. Relatives and fictive kin; and
4. Other significant persons.