



South Carolina Department of Social Services

Work Aid 5.4- Case Manager Contacts with Parents, Non-Custodial Parents, and Guardians

Supplemental to DSS Policy: Chapter 5 Foster Care

A. Phases of Case Manager Contacts with a Parent, Non-Custodial Parent and/or Guardian	1. A Case Manager's contact with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian consists of three phases: before, during, and after. 2. Before the contact with parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian occurs, the Case Manager: a. Considers the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian's schedule in determining the time the contact will occur. b. Considers the length and location of the contact to support an open and honest conversation. c. Gathers and reviews case documents, the Family Permanency Plan, and related data and information. d. Reviews documentation of the last contact to assess whether follow-up was completed. e. Makes any collateral contacts with key individuals in the case (e.g., therapist, treatment provider, doctor, school personnel) to assess progress and concerns. f. Sets a clear purpose and agenda for the contact. g. Identifies issues and concerns to explore (with room for adaptation during the contact). h. Considers and plans for Case Manager's safety. 3. During the contact with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian the Case Manager: a. Reviews the objectives and agenda for the contact and incorporates input from the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian into the discussion. b. Demonstrates genuineness, empathy, and respect. c. Suspends biases and avoid judgments. d. Seeks to make sure the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian feels comfortable discussing challenges and needs. f. Communicates support and partnership and listens. g. Assesses the child, youth or young adult's safety and risk (including identification of safety threats, vulnerabilities, and protective capacities). h. Discusses the Family Permanency Plan's goals, progress since the last contact, and the actions needed in the language that the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian can understand. i. Identifies strengths and opportunities for the Parent, Non-Custodial Parent, or Guardian.
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	j. Identifies concerns, changing circumstances, and challenges expressed by the Parent, Non-Custodial Parent or Guardian k. Observes what is happening in the home or residence. l. Discusses what the agency will do to support the family to meet the identified needs and expectations for the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian and family. m. Identifies any needed changes to the Family Permanency Plan. n. Concludes the contact with a summary, next steps, and actions steps for the case manager and the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian. o. Jointly schedules the next contact. 4. After the contact with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian occurs the Case Manager: a. Documents key information, observations, and decisions in a concrete, concise, and nonjudgmental manner. b. Record information, as appropriate and in accordance with agency policies into CAPSS c. Updates the Family Permanency Plan with the needs and strengths of the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian identified during the contact, progress made, and updates actions needed, the person responsible, and target dates.
B. Case Manager Parent, Non-Custodial Parent, and Guardian Contacts	1. No less than one time per month the Case Manager (CM) makes contact with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian. This monthly contact is conducted in the home of the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian, when possible. Best practice is for this monthly contact to occur no more than 30 calendar days since the last Case Manager Contact with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian. 2. Documentation of a required monthly contact with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian is entered into CAPSS within the calendar month the Contact occurred. 3. Communication with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian that is in addition to the required monthly Contact will also be documented in CAPSS. 4. Monthly, the Case Manager gathers information regarding relatives to assess or reassess for placement and permanency for the child.

	5. Where failure to remedy is a basis for the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) action or the agency is relieved of providing services, the Case Manager continues to make monthly contact with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian to monitor continued efforts to complete the Family Permanency Plan.
C. Concerted Efforts to Make Contacts	1. If a monthly contact is not made or feasibly cannot be made with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian, the Case Manager documents within the month all concerted efforts made to make the contact. The Case Manager uses action code "Diligent Efforts" when documenting the concerted efforts. See Concerted Efforts – Locating and Engaging Families policy. 2. The Case Manager will reschedule a canceled monthly contact within the same calendar month the contact was cancelled. The Case Manager documents the reason for the cancelled monthly contact and all attempts to reschedule. If the monthly contact is not rescheduled or feasibly cannot be rescheduled with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian, the Case Manager will document all efforts to make the contact. 3. By the 20th day of the month, if there is a risk that contact with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian will not occur within the month, the Case Manager consults with their Supervisor to develop a plan to complete the contact within the calendar month.
D. Documenting a Case Manager Contact with a Parent, Non-Custodial Parent, and Guardian	1. The case manager documents case actions, activities and events as appropriate and in accordance with agency policies and records key information, observations, and decisions in a concrete, concise, and nonjudgmental manner. 2. Within the documentation of the case manager contact with the parent, non-custodial parent, or guardian, the case manager: a. Documents contact participant relationships. Describes relationships of the participants of the contact to the child. Noting participants that were present and are not a recipient of the case. b. Quotes language and summarizes conversations of the contact participant as is relevant to the case and appropriate. Summarizing any conversation in which specific details do not provide any greater understanding of the contact, family dynamics, or parental progress. c. Strives for pronoun clarity by clearly identifying which documented participant is being referenced by the pronoun. Minimizing the use of pronouns to reduce confusion. d. Uses paragraphs by breaking sentences up into paragraphs when subject changes.

	e. Avoids duplication and does not copy, paste or repeat information from last dictation of a case manager contact. Only addresses information that has changed or note that there has been no change. Additionally, the case manager does not document information that is already documented elsewhere in CAPSS. If needed, the case manager references the information and where it can be found in CAPSS. f. Only uses acronyms or abbreviations that are approved by SCDSS and do so after the phrase has been spelled out in the initial reference. g. Documents what happened at that contact on that day. The case manager understands that some topics may not be covered at every contact. 3. Documentation of a required monthly contact with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian is entered into CAPSS dictation before the end of the calendar month in which the contact occurred. The case manager uses narrative format, avoids use of templates and copying and pasting documentation from previous case manager contacts with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian. The case manager documents what happened during the contact, describing conversations, interactions, decisions made, and observations. The case manager focuses on items that were discussed, addressed, or observed during the contact. 4. The Case Manager documents the required monthly contact with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian in CAPSS with the appropriate action code. a. For the parent or non-custodial parent, the Case Manager will use “CM Face to Face with Mother (reviewed case plan)” and “CM Face to Face with Father (reviewed case plan)” b. For the guardian, the Case Manager will use action code “CM Face to Face with Guardian (reviewed case plan)” 5. The Case Manager documents the location the required monthly contact took place with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian in CAPSS with the appropriate action code. Best practice is for a required monthly contact to occur in the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian’s home or current place of residence. a. For a contact made in the home or place of residence, the Case Manager uses action code “Location - Home/Facility Visit”. b. For a contact made in the DSS office, the Case Manager uses action code “Location – Office Visit”.
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	c. For a contact many in any place other than the home or current place of residence, or the DSS office, the Case Manager uses action code “Location – Other” 6. The Case Manager details the following in the documentation of a contact with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian in CAPSS dictation: a. Participants i. The case manager lists everyone present during the contact and the relationship to the child, youth, or young adult. b. Date and location i. The case manager inputs the date the contact occurred when initiating the dictation in CAPSS. ii. In addition to selecting the appropriate location action code in CAPSS (“Home/Facility”, “DSS Office”, “Other”), the case manager will further detail the location in relation to the child, parent, and case. c. Account of what happened at the visit i. The case manager documents an account of what was observed and witnessed during the contact with the parent, non-custodial parent and guardian. ii. This account must include conversations, interactions, actions taken by contact participants, and decisions made regarding services. d. Assessment of safety and risk i. The case manager documents an assessment of the child’s safety and well-being if returned or placed in the home of the parent, non-custodial parent, or guardian. This assessment will be based on observations of the home environment, physical appearance, and interactions during the contact with the parent, non-custodial parent and guardian. This assessment may include strengths or concerns related to the descriptions or details of: 1. the inside and outside of the home and the community 2. cleanliness of the home/facility 3. amount of food, 4. the designated room for the child, 5. how the environment is set up to accommodate/support the child ii. If safety concerns or risks are identified in relation to the physical environment, the case manager details what actions were taken and plans to address those identified concerns.
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	e. Progress toward Family Permanency Plan goals i. The case manager documents an assessment of the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian's progress towards the Family Permanency Plan goals and any changes to the Family Permanency Plan or tasks. This assessment must include: 1. Progress made towards goals identified by the Family Permanency Plan as reported by the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian. 2. Parent perception of services and impact on achieving goals identified by the Family Permanency Plan. 3. Observed behavioral changes and how behavioral changes impact the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian's ability to effectively parent the child. 4. Needs related to and any concerns about the Family Permanency Plan as reported by the parent, non-custodial parent and guardian and recommended changes or amendments to the Family Permanency Plan. See the Family Permanency Plan policy. f. Child or youth well-being (related to health, mental health, development, behavior, education, social activities, and relationships) i. The case manager documents conversations with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian regarding the services and care being provided to the child. ii. The case manager documents conversations with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian about increasing or continuing parental involvement in the child's educational, mental health and physical health services. g. Needs or concerns expressed by the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian i. The case manager documents any concerns or needs raised by the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian during the case manager contact. The case manager will capture all necessary details of the concern or issue, how it is impacting the contact participant and the case manager's plan to follow-up. h. Service needs i. The case manager documents observed needs for any additional services in addition to services established by the Family Permanency Plan. See the Family Permanency Plan policy. i. Follow-up activities and priorities. i. The case manager summarizes all follow-up activities at the end of the documentation. The case manager will detail who is responsible for the follow up activities and order of priority for each activity.
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	7. The Case Manager documents all communication with a Parent, Non-Custodial Parent, and Guardian that is outside the required monthly Contact in CAPSS dictation with the appropriate action code by type: a. Communication Type- Video Conference, b. Communication Type- Email, c. Communication Type- Text, or d. Communication Type- Telephone. 8. The Case Manager documents in-person interactions with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian made for purposes other than reviewing the case plan with action code “Face to Face with Adult (did NOT review treatment plan)” 9. The Case Manager or their Supervisor documents in CAPSS all concerted efforts to make a monthly contact with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian, when a monthly contact cannot be conducted. a. For an attempted contact made with the parent or non-custodial parent, the Case Manager will use “CM Face to Face with Mother (attempted to review case plan)” and “CM Face to Face with Father (attempted to review case plan)” b. For an attempted contact made with the guardian, the Case Manager will use action code “CM Face to Face with Guardian (attempted to review case plan)”
E. Case Supervision and Monitoring	1. By the twentieth day of the month, if there is a risk that a contact with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian will not occur within the month, the Supervisor consults with the Case Manager to develop a plan to complete the contact within the same calendar month. 2. If a Case Manager is absent, the Supervisor is responsible for making the contact with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian occurs during the Case Manager’s absence. 3. Contacts must be performed by a certified Human Service Specialist II or higher. 4. If a case is transferred out of county or to another unit within the same county, the Supervisor of the sending unit will make sure all contacts with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian for the month of transfer are complete prior to the transfer.

	5. The Supervisor reviews documentation of Case Manager contacts with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian. The Supervisor evaluates the quality of the documentation. 6. The Supervisor provides support and coaching to the Case Manager to address any barriers or issues related contacts with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian. 7. The Supervisor reviews weekly data reports for the occurrence of Case Manager contacts with parents, non-custodial parents, and guardians within the same calendar month.
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