



State of South Carolina

Department of Social Services

Work Aid 400.1: Documentation

Supplemental to DSS Policy Manual: Child Welfare Services, Family Preservation Services

Purpose: This work aid guides case managers through documenting case activities throughout the life of a case.

A. Documenting Contacts with Parent, Non-Custodial Parents, and Guardians	1. The case manager documents the following: a. Case actions; b. Activities actions; c. Events actions; d. Key information actions; e. Observations actions; and f. Decisions in accordance with agency policies in a concise and non-judgmental manner. 2. Documentation must include the following: a. Participants present at contact, along with their relationship to the child, and whether or not they are a case recipient; b. Date of the contact; c. Time of the contact; d. Location of the contact; e. Information that has changed since the last visit and note if nothing has changed; Do not document information that is already documented in CAPSS. Case manager can reference where to find other information; and f. What happened at the contact while understanding that some topics will not be addressed at all contacts.
B. Document Assessment of Safety and Risk	1. The case manager assesses the child's safety and well-being in the home of the parent, non-custodial parent, or guardian where they are living. This assessment will be based on observations and physical appearance of the home environment and child. The assessment will also include 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: a. The inside and outside of the home and the community; b. Unsanitary hazards of the home or facility that may pose a health or safety risk; c. Presence of necessities (food, utilities, etc.); d. A designated sleeping space for the child; and e. How the environment is set up to accommodate and support the child.

	2. If safety concerns or risks are identified in relation to the physical environment, the case manager updates the Family Advocacy and Support Tool (FAST) to detail what actions were taken and the plan to address the identified concerns.
C. Entering Dictation into CAPSS	1. General documentation standards a. Documentation is to be entered in CAPSS within five business days of the encounter. b. Documentation should include quotes, body gestures, and summaries of conversations that are relevant to the case and appropriate. c. Summarize conversations to include specific details that provide a greater understanding of the contact, family dynamics, and parental progress. d. Minimize the use of pronouns by referring to participants by their name to prevent confusion about who is speaking or being referred to. e. Avoid duplication and do not copy, paste, or repeat information from the last dictation. f. Acronyms or abbreviations that are approved by DSS can be used after first spelling out the acronym. Example: "Welcome to the Department of Social Services (DSS). DSS is a state agency." 2. The case manager documents the contact with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian in CAPSS with the correct action code. a. For the parent or non-custodial parent, the case manager will use the action code "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 the action code "CM Face to Face with Guardian (reviewed case plan)." 3. The case manager documents the location where the contact took place with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian in CAPSS with the appropriate action code. The best practice is for the contact to occur in the parent, non-custodial parent, or guardian's current place of residence. a. For a contact made in the 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." c. For a contact made in any place other than the home, the current place of residence, or the DSS office, the case manager uses action code "Location – Other." 4. The case manager documents all communication with a parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian that occurs without a face-to-face contact, in CAPSS using the following action codes. a. Communication Type- Video Conference b. Communication Type- Email c. Communication Type- Text d. Communication Type- Telephone

	5. The case manager or supervisor documents all concerted efforts to contact the parent or non-custodial parent when contact cannot be made. 6. For an attempted contact made with the parent or non-custodial parent, the case manager uses action code “CM Face to Face with Mother (attempted to review case plan)” and “CM Face to Face with Father (attempted to review case plan).”
D. Progress Towards the Family Permanency Plan	The case manager documents an assessment of the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian’s progress towards the Family Permanency Plan (FPP) goals and any changes to the FPP or tasks. This assessment must include: 1. The parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian reported progress made towards goals identified by the FPP; 2. The parent’s perception of services and the impact of achieving goals identified by the FPP; 3. Observed behavioral changes and how behavioral changes impact the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian’s ability to effectively parent the child; and 4. The parent, non-custodial parent, or guardian and recommended changes or amendments to the Family Permanency Plan and their reported needs and concerns about the FPP.
E. Child Health and Well-Being	1. Child or youth well-being (related to health, mental health, development, behavior, education, social activities, and relationships) a. The case manager documents conversations with the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian regarding the services and care being provided to the child. b. 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. 2. Needs or concerns expressed by the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian a. The case manager documents any concerns or needs raised by the parent, non-custodial parent, and guardian during the case manager contact. b. The case manager captures all relevant details of the concern or need, how it is impacting the contact participant, and the case manager’s plan to follow-up. 3. The case manager documents observed needs for any additional services in addition to services established by the Family Permanency Plan. 4. Follow-up activities and priorities a. The case manager summarizes all follow-up activities at the end of the documentation. b. The case manager details who is responsible for the follow-up activities and the order of priority for each activity.