

OVERVIEW

Caseworker contacts are a critical component for ensuring the safety of children and the well-being of families. Caseworkers meet with children, parents, and caregivers to:

- Monitor children's safety and well-being.
- Assess the ongoing service needs of children, parents, and caregivers.
- Engage children, parents, and caregivers in developing case plans.
- Assess permanency options for the child.
- Monitor progress toward established goals.
- Ensure that children, parents, and caregivers are receiving and benefitting from necessary services.

At minimum, the **assigned** caseworker must have contact with the child, caregiver, legal parent/guardian, treatment and service providers, and his/her supervisor according to the requirements listed in this item. The supervising agency must institute a flexible schedule to provide a number of hours outside of the traditional workday to accommodate the schedules of the individuals involved in all contacts. All caseworker contacts must be documented within the social work contacts of the case service plan.

Exception: For children under the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC); see ICM 130, Interstate Foster Care Procedures, ICM 140, Interstate Residential Care Procedures, and ICPC in this item.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

Federal

Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006, P.L. 109-288

Requires the state to describe standards for the content and frequency of caseworker visits for children in foster care, that, at a minimum, ensure that the children are visited on a monthly basis, and that the visits are well-planned and focused on issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the children's safety, permanency and well-being.

Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Children Act of 2006, PL 109-239

Requires state courts to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers of a child in foster care under the responsibility of the state are notified of any proceeding to be held with respect to the child and to allow caregivers the right to be heard in any proceeding held in reference to the child.

State**Probate Code, 1939 PA 288, as amended, MCL 712A.18f**

Review by child's physician in cases of abuse and neglect.

Foster Parent Bill of Rights, 2014 PA 524, MCL 722.958a

An act to establish certain standards for foster care and adoption services for children and their families; and to prescribe powers and duties of certain state agencies and departments and adoption facilitators.

Licensing Rule**Child Placing Agency Rule 400.12421**

Visitation and parenting time.

DEFINITIONS

Face-to-face contacts are defined as being held in-person. Video-conferencing or any other similar form of technology does not serve as a caseworker visit for the purposes of meeting the federal requirements set forth in the Social Security Act.

For purposes of this item only, a *caregiver* includes licensed foster parents, licensed/unlicensed relatives, unlicensed and unrelated caregivers, and non-custodial parents who are providing placement for a child in foster care.

Out-of-home placements include foster homes, relative/unrelated caregiver's homes, independent living placements, residential/institutional settings, and/or out-of-state placements that are not receiving ICPC services.

**CASEWORKER
CONTACT WITH
CHILDREN -
GENERAL
REQUIREMENTS****Quality Visits**

Quality visits between the caseworker and child have been found to produce positive outcomes for children in foster care. A quality visit is defined as one in which the caseworker:

- Meets with each child individually, without the presence of other individuals to give the child an opportunity to ask questions or to ensure safe sleep requirements are followed.
- Assesses each child's needs and takes appropriate action or offers services in response to the identified need of each child.
- Shows interest in the child to build and establish rapport.
- Shares and explains the case plan in a developmentally appropriate way while allowing the child to ask questions and express viewpoints.

**Required
Discussion**

The following topics must be discussed (when developmentally appropriate) with the child at each visit:

- Child's feelings/observations about the placement.
- Education.
- Parenting time.
- Sibling/relative visitation plans.
- Extracurricular/cultural activities/hobbies since last visit.
- Permanency plan.
- Medical, dental, and mental health.
- Any issues or concerns expressed by the child.

Private Meeting

A private meeting allows a caseworker to meet individually with a child. The way in which a caseworker conducts a private meeting will depend on the age and developmental ability of the child.

Preschool Children and Older

For older children, a private meeting gives the child an opportunity to ask questions and/or express feelings about his/her situation, without the presence of other individuals.

Toddlers and Non-Verbal Children

For younger children, a private meeting gives the caseworker an opportunity to observe and assess the child's behavior and development.

Infants

In lieu of a private discussion with a child under 13 months, the caseworker **must** view the child's sleeping arrangement and verify that safe sleep guidelines are being followed. Safe sleep information can be found by following the link below:

http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,4562,7-124-5453_7124_57836_58080---,00.html

Note: Face-to-face contact with the infant is still required during the home visit.

MiSACWIS Documentation

Caseworkers must identify whether a private meeting (which includes safe sleep verification) occurred for each child participant in the Participant screen within the Social Work Contact section of MiSACWIS.

**Caseworker Visit
Tool**

Two caseworker visit tools are available to assist caseworkers in gathering required information during monthly visits:

- DHS-904, Foster Care/Adoption/Juvenile Justice Caseworker Visit Quick Reference Guide. This guide contains the information that must be covered in a monthly visit but is not intended for recording notes.
- DHS-904-A, Foster Care/Adoption/Juvenile Justice Caseworker Visit Tool. This form may be used to take notes during the visit.

The caseworker visit tools provide structure and reminders of required topics. The forms are not be used as the documentation of the caseworker home visit in the case record, but as a tool to obtain pertinent information for the case service plans and to complete the social work contact.

CASEWORKER CONTACT WITH CHILD IN OUT-OF- HOME PLACEMENT

First Two Months after Initial Placement or a Placement Move

The caseworker must have at least two face-to-face contacts per month with the child for the first two months following an initial placement or a placement move. The first face-to-face contact with the child must take place within five business days from the date the case is assigned to the caseworker or within five business days of the date of the placement move. At least one contact each month must take place at the child's placement location. Each contact must include a private meeting between the child and the caseworker; see Private Meeting in this item.

Note: A month is defined as 30 calendar days, unless otherwise specified; for example, calendar month.

Subsequent Months

The caseworker must have at least one face-to-face contact with the child each **calendar** month. At least one contact each calendar month must take place at the child's placement location. Each contact must include a private meeting between the child and the caseworker; see Private Meeting in this item.

Telephone Contacts

Two telephone contacts (as age appropriate) are required during the first month after initial placement.

Non-Custodial Parent

The contact requirements identified above, apply to cases where children are placed with their non-custodial parent under a court order giving DHS responsibility for the child's placement and care.

**CASEWORKER
CONTACT WITH
CHILD RETURNED
HOME*****First Month after Return Home***

The caseworker must have **weekly** face-to-face contacts with the parent(s) and the child, in the home. At least one contact each calendar month must include a private meeting between the child and the caseworker. This period of contacts may be extended to 90 days, if necessary.

Subsequent Months

The caseworker must have at least two face-to-face contacts with the parent(s) and the child, each calendar month, in the home, until case closure, unless the family is receiving Family Reunification or Families First services.

**Family
Reunification/
Families First**

If the family is receiving Family Reunification or Families First services, these two programs are responsible for complying with all but one of the monthly visitation requirements with the child and family. This does not discourage any additional visits that the caseworker may choose to make.

Caseworker Responsibilities

The caseworker continues to be responsible for the case, contract service provider monitoring, and case service plan requirements. Additionally, the caseworker is responsible for the following:

- One face-to-face contact with the parent(s) and child every calendar month, in the home.
- At least one contact per calendar month with the Family Reunification/Families First worker, either face-to-face or by telephone, to discuss the family's progress and compliance with the in-home service.
- Summarizing pertinent information from the service provider's report in the case service plan and uploading the reports in MiSACWIS.

CASEWORKER CONTACT WITH CAREGIVERS

The caseworker must have at least one face-to-face contact in the caregiver's home each calendar month. If there are two caregivers, such as a primary and secondary caregiver, the caseworker must have a face-to-face contact with the secondary caregiver in the home at least once each quarter. The caseworker must make an unannounced visit to the home every quarter. The unannounced visit must be documented in MiSACWIS.

Non-Custodial Parent

The caseworker must have contact, as described in this section, with the non-custodial parent of a child placed in the parent's care when there is a court order giving DHS responsibility for the child's placement and care.

Residential/Institutional Setting

The caseworker must have contact with the case manager assigned to the child, as described in this section, when the child is placed in a residential or institutional setting.

Caregiver Input

Caregivers are to be actively involved in case planning, as a caregiver's involvement can be a source of support for the case plan. Caregivers **must** be afforded the opportunity to provide either written or verbal feedback regarding the child to include with each case service plan. A written statement is preferred and if one is provided it must be attached to the case service plan. If a written statement is not provided, the caseworker must summarize the caregiver's feedback in the case service plan. Requests for caregiver input may be sent on the DHS-715, Hearing Notice, if the court provides notice of hearing to the caseworker in a timely manner; see FOM 722-10, Court Review.

Required Discussion

The following topics must be discussed with the caregiver at the monthly home visit:

- Date of child's last physical and dental exam.
- Medication dosages and diagnoses for the child.
- Medical/dental/mental health concerns, appointments, treatment, follow-up care and therapy updates.
- Child behaviors, concerns, developmental milestones.
- Safe sleep guidelines for children under 13 months. More information can be found at:
http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,4562,7-124-5453_7124_57836--,00.html
- Educational/school status, performance, behaviors and services provided.
- Caregiver tasks to meet child's needs.
- Caregiver family's adjustment to the child's placement.
- Caregiver needs to support the child's placement.
- Permanency plan.
- Safety plan, if applicable.
- Any delinquency charges filed since the last visit.
- Any Children's Protective Services (CPS) or foster home licensing complaints made regarding the placement since the last visit.
- If the caregiver is pursuing licensure, obtain an update on licensing progress.

Distribution of the Case Plan and Treatment Plans

Caregivers must be included in the development of the case service plan and the parent agency treatment plan. The caregiver must be given a copy of each (redacted) case service plan and parent agency treatment plan. Caregivers are to be advised that copies of prior case service plans, court orders, and other written reports, except those made confidential by law, are available for

review upon written request. However, they must also be advised that the information contained in the plans and reports must not be released to persons not directly involved with the care and treatment of the child; see SRM 131, Confidentiality - Foster Care Records.

Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem

Caregivers may have access to the lawyer-guardian ad litem. Caseworkers may facilitate communication between the caregiver, the child and the lawyer-guardian ad litem; see FOM 722-10, Lawyer-guardian Ad Litem.

CASEWORKER CONTACT WITH PARENT(S)/ GUARDIAN(S)

For each child with a permanency goal of reunification, the child's assigned caseworker must have face-to face contact with the child's parent/guardian as follows:

First Month after Initial Out-of-Home Placement

The caseworker must have at least two face-to-face contacts with each parent/guardian, at least one of which must occur in the parent's residence. One of the face-to-face contacts must be used to discuss the following:

- Petition and court orders.
- Case service plan.
- Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths.
- Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths.
- Parent-Agency Treatment Plan & Service Agreement.
- Scheduling and expectations of parenting time.

Subsequent Months

The caseworker must have face-to-face contact with each parent/guardian at least once each calendar month, with at least one contact in each quarter occurring in the parent's place of residence.

Required Discussion

On a quarterly basis, the caseworker must discuss the following with each parent/guardian:

- Case service plan.
- Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths.
- Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths.
- Parent/Agency Treatment Plan & Service Agreement.
- Court orders.
- Parenting time.

This discussion may occur within the case plan development/reassessment family team meeting; see FOM 722-06B, Family Team Meeting. The results of these discussions must be reflected within the updated case service plan.

Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN)

A Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) check must be completed prior to contact with a family, if necessary, to make a decision regarding caseworker safety; see FOM 722-06A, Criminal Record Check - Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN).

Telephone Contacts

The caseworker must have two telephone contacts in the first month after initial placement and telephone contact as needed in each subsequent month, if the parent/guardian has a telephone.

Incarcerated Parents

Face-to-face contacts with incarcerated parents are not required. The caseworker must maintain monthly telephone and/or written contact with an incarcerated parent.

Note: Any written contact; for example, letter or email, must be uploaded in MiSACWIS.

**Parent(s) Who Live
in another State or
County**

Contacts made by interstate and/or a courtesy supervision caseworker meet the requirement for in-home visits with the parent(s) who live in another state or county; see FOM 722-14, Inter-county Courtesy Services and ICM 130, Interstate Foster Care Procedures.

If interstate and/or courtesy supervision is not secured, contacts must be made by the assigned caseworker as described in this item; see [EHP 212, Travel](#), for out-of-state travel policy.

**Permanency Goal
other than
Reunification**

For children with a permanency goal other than reunification, caseworker contacts should continue, if the parent/guardian continues to play an active role in the child's life. Ongoing contact with the parent/guardian is encouraged to allow the caseworker to monitor and assess the appropriateness and safety of the relationship.

**CASEWORKER
CONTACT WITH
TREATMENT AND
SERVICE
PROVIDERS**

Feedback from professionals working with the child and family must be obtained and incorporated in each case service plan. Caseworkers must make at least monthly contact with each professional involved in the child's care to solicit the professional's observations and recommendations regarding the child and the child's caregivers. These contacts must be documented in the social work contacts and the information obtained must be detailed in the appropriate section of the case service plan.

In addition, all professional reports for the child and parents including, but not limited to, psychiatric and psychological evaluations, therapy and treatment plans, substance abuse screens and treatment summaries, Early On® or other child developmental assessments must be reviewed and summarized in the case service plan and uploaded on MiSACWIS.

Physician Review of Case Service Plan

The caseworker must review the child's case service plan with the child's primary care physician (or the attending physician if the child is hospitalized) if the child is diagnosed with any of the following conditions:

- Failure to thrive.
- Medical child abuse.
- Shaken baby syndrome.
- Drug exposure in utero.
- A bone fracture that is diagnosed by a physician as being the result of abuse or neglect.

This is to ensure that the case service plan addresses the child's medical needs specific to the abuse and neglect.

The court of jurisdiction must notify that physician of the time and place of a hearing where consideration is given to returning the child to his/her home; see FOM 722-10, Dispositional Review Hearing.

CASEWORKER CONTACT WITH CERTIFICATION WORKER

The caseworker must have monthly contact with the certification worker until the family becomes licensed. The caseworker must assess any barriers that are impeding licensure, assist in rectifying the barriers, and document both the barriers and efforts in the case service plan; see FOM 722-03B, Relative Engagement and Placement.

CASEWORKER CONTACT WITH SUPERVISOR (SUPERVISION)

The caseworker must meet with his/her supervisor at least monthly for case consultation on every active case.

Exception: The caseworker must meet weekly with his/her supervisor for case consultation on any case where a child is placed in an emergency or temporary facility; see Caseworker

Contact when a Child is Placed in an Emergency or Temporary Facility, in this item.

Case Service Plan Approval

Supervisors must review and approve each case service plan. Case service plans cannot be approved until the supervisor has a face-to-face meeting with the caseworker, which can occur during the monthly case consultation.

Supervisory approval indicates agreement with the:

- Thoroughness, completeness and accuracy of the report.
- Assessment/reassessment of risk and safety of the child.
- Identified needs and strengths of the child and family.
- Progress - including barrier reduction and parenting time.
- Appropriateness of current placement.
- Current treatment plan for the child and parent(s).
- Permanency planning goal.
- Caseworker's court recommendations.
- Appropriateness of continued provision of services or case closure.

Foster Care Supervisory Guide & Tool

The DHS-1154, Foster Care Supervisory Guide, and DHS-1155, Foster Care Supervisory Tool, are available to assist supervisors, during case consultations, in gathering information and assessing whether a child's needs of safety, permanency and well-being are met.

The DHS-1154, Foster Care Supervisory Guide, contains the information that **must** be covered during case consultations, but is not intended for recording notes. The items in the guide are listed as prompts to guide discussion and should be supported by case documentation.

The DHS-1155, Foster Care Supervisory Tool, **may** be used to take notes on items for follow-up.

Note: The guides and tools are not to be uploaded in MiSACWIS.

**MiSACWIS
Documentation**

Monthly case consultations that include case service plan approval must be identified in MiSACWIS as the case contact type: *supervision*.

**CASEWORKER
CONTACT WHEN A
CHILD IS PLACED IN
AN EMERGENCY OR
TEMPORARY
FACILITY*****Child***

The caseworker must have weekly face-to-face contacts with each child placed in an emergency or temporary facility. The first face-to-face contact with the child must take place within five business days from the date the case is assigned to the caseworker or within five business days of the date of the placement move. Each contact must take place at the child's placement location. Each contact must include a private meeting between the child and the caseworker.

Facility Case Manager

The caseworker must have weekly contact with the case manager to provide status updates regarding the achievement of the discharge plan.

Supervisor

The caseworker must meet weekly with his/her supervisor for case consultation on any case where a child is placed in an emergency or temporary facility; see FOM 722-3, Placement in Emergency or Temporary Facilities.

**TIMELY ENTRY OF
CASEWORKER
CONTACTS**

All caseworker contacts must be entered in MiSACWIS; this includes attempted contacts and missed appointments, and all pertinent information obtained must be summarized and included in the appropriate section of the case service plan.

All face-to-face contacts must be entered in MiSACWIS, within five business days of the contact. This includes the following:

- Any face-to-face contacts with children, parents, or caregivers made by any of the following:
 - Foster care worker.
 - CPS worker.
 - Adoption worker.
 - Permanency resource monitors.
- Parent/child face-to-face contacts.
- Sibling/child face-to-face contacts.

All other social work contacts must be entered prior to the report period end date on the applicable case service plan.

Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC)

Caseworker contacts must be entered, as outlined above, for foster children referred through the ICPC Office.

Family Reunification/ Families First

Family Reunification/Families First contractors must submit all face-to-face contacts with children, parents and caregivers to the assigned caseworker by the third business day of each month. Family Reunification/Families First face-to-face contacts must be entered in MiSACWIS within five business days of receipt.

Note: Families First Worker and Family Reunification Worker are relationship types in MiSACWIS and they must be used when documenting social work contacts for families participating in either of these programs.