

Case Documentation

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

Policy: 700.0070

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Although responsibilities of individual workers within the different divisions of the Department can vary in focus and in the kinds of case related information sought and maintained, much of the information gathered and recorded is the same throughout the Department. It is, therefore, important to maintain a consistent procedure for case recording throughout the Department but one which is flexible enough to accommodate the varied case responsibilities within the separate divisions.

A standardized format for documentation has been devised to maintain a uniform system for case recording throughout the Department. This system is comprised of recording case events using the Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST). Initial and periodic assessments of case problems, services and progress may be made using the information that is available in RICHIST.

Ongoing documentation must be an objective, factual and chronological account of case events. Entries in Case Activity Notes must be concise yet complete and factual. Case Activity Notes must include all data necessary to facilitate ongoing casework decisions and to document Departmental casework efforts. Entries must include who was involved in the contact, when the contact occurred, how the contact was made, where the contact occurred, and what transpired. The worker documents this information as well as a more detailed account of a specific event by accessing the Text template associated with Case Activity Notes.

At times a worker may wish to record his/her subjective opinion, impressions about family members or other involved individuals, or why certain case events may have occurred. If used judiciously and if clearly labeled "Impressions", these entries can add impact and insight to case recording. The Case Profile Narrative (DCYF #148) is used for this purpose so as to keep subjective information clearly separated from factual data contained in Case Activity Notes.

For most case situations there shall be one permanent record for each family unit (excluding Juvenile Correctional Services), and all contacts involving the individual family members shall be documented chronologically in Case Activity Notes. If individuals within the family unit are being serviced by more than one worker from the Department (example, Probation or CPS and Family Services), each assigned worker shall have access to all case information on-line. A separate section of RICHIST has been devised to incorporate information from Child Protective Services.

Due to the sensitive and often volatile nature of case situations serviced by this Department, it is crucial that information in the case record is kept current and that Case Activity Notes are up to date. Case Activity Notes shall be handwritten within five

working days and entered into RICHIST within 15 working days. Case Activity Notes are frozen once written, but, if necessary, may be edited by a supervisor. Supervisors shall periodically review Case Activity Notes in cases assigned to the workers in their unit. Periodic assessments of case progress shall be accomplished by completing a new Case Profile Needs Assessment Checklist (DCYF #147) no less frequently than every six (6) months after completion of the initial Checklist. Checklists are incorporated into the case record within the section identified for Case Plan/Agreements and Social Summary (now obsolete). Updates are made to the Case Profile Narrative whenever a new Checklist is completed or whenever case events so dictate. The Narrative is filed behind the Case Plan/Agreements and Checklists.

Related Procedures

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General Dictation Format

Procedure From Policy 700.0070: Case Documentation

- A. Each record maintained in the Department (excluding CPS) shall follow the following dictation format:
1. The Fact Sheet (DCYF #001) shall be completed for each case upon the initiation of service and shall be updated as needed;
 2. An Intake Summary (DCYF #071) shall be completed for the initial case opening and for each subsequent reopening. For cases opened to Probation a copy of the Conditions of Probation or a copy of the order for a pre-sentence report is used in place of the Intake Summary;
 3. The Contact Sheet (DCYF #075) shall be used to record each contact made or attempted in a case including correspondence sent or received;
 4. A Case Profile Needs Assessment Checklist (DCYF #147) shall be completed during the initial thirty day evaluation and assessment period for each case opening and then shall be completed no less frequently than every six (6) months thereafter;
 5. A Case Profile Narrative (DCYF #148) is completed based upon the Case Profile Checklist and the ongoing dictation and is updated at least every six (6) months; and
 6. When the initial Case Profile Narrative is developed and whenever it is subsequently updated, a notation is made by the worker in the ongoing dictation to delineate the update or event precipitating the update.
- B. Contact Sheets and Case Profile Narratives:
1. Contact Sheets and Case Profile Narratives are initially handwritten until transcribed; and
 2. Handwritten dictation shall be no more than one (1) week in arrears and typewritten dictation shall be no more than three (3) weeks in arrears. It is the responsibility of the primary service worker to ensure that all dictation (and any other documents, correspondence, etc.) is incorporated into the case record within these specified time frames.

Contact Sheet

Procedure From Policy 700.0070: Case Documentation

- A. Contact Sheets (DCYF #075) shall be the format used for all ongoing dictation entries in each case record:
 - 1. Each contact made or attempted in a case situation is initially recorded in writing by date on a Contact Sheet; and
 - 2. Each handwritten contact is subsequently typewritten on ongoing Contact Sheets in chronological order. The handwritten copy is then destroyed.
- B. Entries on Contact Sheets shall be an objective, factual account of case events:
 - 1. Entries must be concise yet must include all data necessary to facilitate ongoing casework decisions;
 - 2. Entries must include who was involved in the contact (name, address, telephone number, relationship), when did the contact occur (date/time), how and where the contact was made (type), why the contact was made (purpose), and what transpired (result); and
 - 3. When the initial Case Profile Narrative is developed and whenever it is subsequently updated, a notation is made by the worker in the ongoing dictation.

Needs Assessment Checklist

Procedure From Policy 700.0070: Case Documentation

- A. The Needs Assessment Checklist is the tool used to chart those areas in the family where issues/problems are observed. Its purpose is to assist the worker in focusing on those issues which require intervention to improve family functioning as relates to permanency planning:
 - 1. Checklists are developed as part of the initial thirty day assessment and are then completed periodically no less frequently than every six months thereafter; and
 - 2. There are ten categories of issues contained in the Checklist. Within each category are identified issue types.
- B. Elements of Checklist:
 - 1. Issue Identification;
 - 2. Delineation of person exhibiting the issue/problem;
 - 3. Service Priority; and
 - 4. Notes.
- C. The Needs Assessment Checklist is color coded to allow for easier access and reference in the case record.

Case Profile Narrative

Procedure From Policy 700.0070: Case Documentation

- A. The Case Profile Narrative is used to provide a family social and assessment summary and is completed based upon the Checklist and ongoing dictation and is updated at least every six (6) month.
- B. Detailed information is required concerning the following:
 - 1. reason for opening/agency involvement;
 - 2. family background (historical) for parent(s) and children;
 - 3. current situation/problem description;
 - 4. family strengths narrative;
 - 5. worker impressions (optional); and
 - 6. plan for continued service/reason for closing.
- C. A copy of the Face Sheet (DCYF #001) cover page is attached to the front of the Narrative.
- D. The Narrative is color coded to allow for easier access and reference in the case record.
- E. The Narrative affords the worker the opportunity to:
 - 1. focus on specific individual contacts as found on the Contact Sheets;
 - 2. review problems and service priorities as indicated on the Checklist; and
 - 3. record more general statements regarding case status progress.
- F. The Narrative is the format used for each closing and transfer summary.