



B. J. Walker, Commissioner

Georgia Department of Human Resources • Division of Family and Children Services • Mary Dean Harvey, Director • Two Peachtree Street, NW • Suite 19-490 • Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142 • Phone: 404-651-8409 • Fax: 404-657-5105

SOCIAL SERVICES COUNTY LETTER 2007-03

To: County Directors of Family and Children Services
Managers of Field Operations
Regional Directors
Field Program Specialist
State Office Staff

From: Mary Dean Harvey, Director
Division of Family and Children Services

Re: Family Preservation Services

Date: July 1, 2007

PURPOSE

This Social Services County Letter is provided to establish the policy and practice of providing Family Preservation Services for Child Protective Services families.

DISCUSSION

In May 2005, the Commissioner directed the Division to form a statewide workgroup to formalize and pilot the new model of doing child protective services in a more family centered way to incorporate services early into the life of the case. Family Preservation Services will be the name used for services provided previously as Child Protective Ongoing Services. The model is based on core guiding family centered beliefs and values that follow a definite course. It will require a new way of doing business, but will allow the Department of Family and Children Services to provide better services to identified families in need of continued services.

FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES (PREVIOUSLY CPS ONGOING)

Family Preservation Services is a family centered integrated approach that includes joint collaboration with Social Services and OFI, to engage families and the community in addressing a family plan to strengthen a family. Core to this approach are early identification and intervention, family team meetings, and development of a family plan for the family. Family Preservation establishes DFCS best practices to be used in everyday work in the field.

Requirements:

Cases are identified as needing Family Preservation Services during an investigation. Identification of the case is made once the Investigator and Supervisor agree that the case contains evidence to warrant risk assessment or substantiation and further services by DFCS. **(Note - Early intervention is key. Family Preservation Services should not be delayed pending case disposition. Partnership with the CPS Investigator, Family Preservation Worker and OFI case manager should begin immediately upon determination that the case will need services.)**

- Investigation standards must be maintained. The CPS investigator is responsible for early identification of the case; participation in the initial/joint staffing and participation in the joint family visit.
- An initial staffing is held between the CPS Investigator, Family Preservation case manager, the respective supervisors and FTM Coordinator (if applicable) to determine immediate services needed and plan for a joint visit with the CPS investigator, FPS worker, and the family.
- An initial family meeting/joint visit is scheduled and held within 5 days of the case being identified for Family Preservation Services. Participants include the investigator, Family Preservation Worker, OFI case manager (if applicable) and the family. **(Note this is not a Family Team Meeting)**

Core to the Family Preservations Services are Family Team Meetings Utilizing the Family Centered Practice approach.

The Family Assessment is completed within 30 calendar days of the case being identified for needing Family Preservation Services. **(Note the Family Assessment is not considered a mandatory form. However the Financial Statement portion of the family assessment is mandatory. Completion of the Family Assessment is encouraged as best practice to further the opportunity to gather information and engage the family)**

- The initial FTM is scheduled and held within 45 calendar days of the case being identified as needing Family Preservation Services
- This FTM is held to develop the family plan (formerly the case plan), set contact standards, identify appropriate collaterals, identify potential safety resources, and begin developing an exit strategy. The community and family supports identified during the FTM will need to be in place at the time of case closure.
- Duration of the Family Plan is not predetermined and is decided at the initial Family Team Meeting.
- The Family Plan will be written during this initial Family Team Meeting; therefore it is essential that the Family Preservation Worker not facilitate this FTM.

Each case will have at a minimum two FTM's; an initial case planning FTM and a closure FTM to evaluate and finalize the exit strategy. **(Exception, the family achieves goals by the initial FTM; initial and closure FTM are one)**

- FTM's are also held throughout the life of the case as situations arise that require case plan revisions. Situations that may warrant an additional FTM are:
 1. requests from the family
 2. additional risk identified
 3. significant changes in family composition and
 4. lack of progress
- Contact standards are determined during the Family Team Meeting. The minimum contact after the FTM is one contact per 30 days. The FTM will identify community and service agencies that will have contact monthly to support the family. **(Note investigation contact standards remain per the risk level determination pending the FTM.)**
- The contact standards are discussed between the supervisor and the case manager prior to the initial FTM and an individual is identified to facilitate the FTM. The Family Preservation Case Manager should not facilitate the Family Team Meeting.
- Child safety is continuously assessed throughout the case. The case Reassessment is completed per policy 2107.17 every 90 days and at case closure.

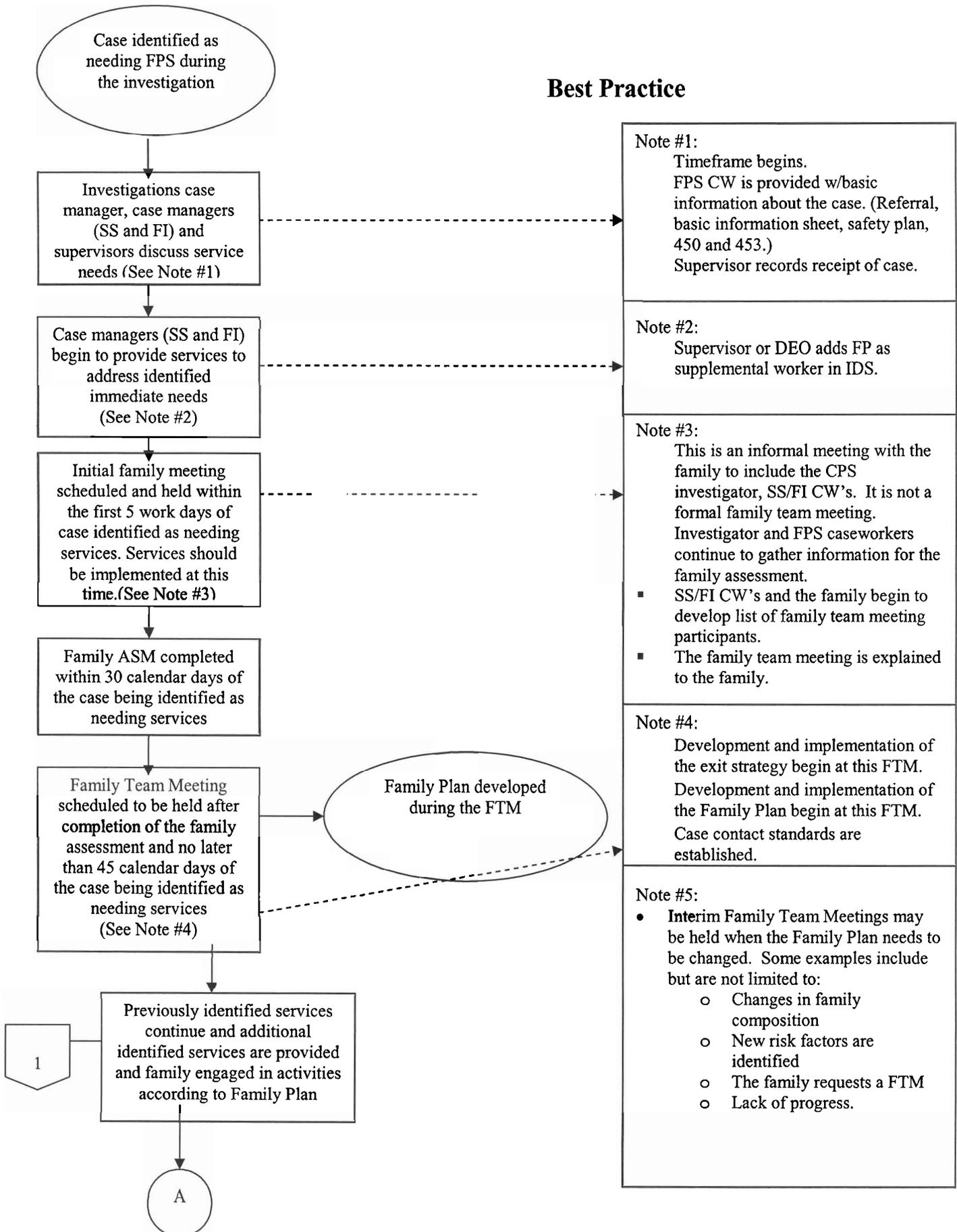
EFFECTIVE DATE

This county letter is effective July 1, 2007

CONTACT REGARDING QUESTIONS

Questions should be directed to Mary E. Jenkins, Program Planning and Policy Development Unit at 404-657-3409 or mejenkins@dhr.state.ga.us

Flow Chart Page 1



Best Practice

- Note #1:**
 Timeframe begins.
 FPS CW is provided w/basic information about the case. (Referral, basic information sheet, safety plan, 450 and 453.)
 Supervisor records receipt of case.
- Note #2:**
 Supervisor or DEO adds FP as supplemental worker in IDS.
- Note #3:**
 This is an informal meeting with the family to include the CPS investigator, SS/FI CW's. It is not a formal family team meeting. Investigator and FPS caseworkers continue to gather information for the family assessment.
- SS/FI CW's and the family begin to develop list of family team meeting participants.
 - The family team meeting is explained to the family.
- Note #4:**
 Development and implementation of the exit strategy begin at this FTM.
 Development and implementation of the Family Plan begin at this FTM.
 Case contact standards are established.
- Note #5:**
- **Interim Family Team Meetings** may be held when the Family Plan needs to be changed. Some examples include but are not limited to:
 - Changes in family composition
 - New risk factors are identified
 - The family requests a FTM
 - Lack of progress.

Flow Chart Page 2

