FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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Issue 26-01 Date: 01/05/2026

POLICY AND FYI RELEASE UPDATE – FOURTH QUARTER 2025

This policy release update provides staff with a summary of new/revised guides and FYIs posted on LA Kids during the fourth quarter of 2025.

Policy Guides:

0070-516.15, Referring Children for Mental Health Services and the Coordinated Services Action Team (CSAT) | Revision Date: 10/6/2025
This policy guide was updated to provide revised instructions for the Coordinated Services Action Team (CSAT) Mental Health Referral (MHR) process. This includes new responsibilities for CSAT to complete the initial MHR for all newly detained and newly non-detained children, thereby removing the responsibility from the ER CSWs. CSWs will still be responsible for the completion of MHRs on re-referrals, as well as uploading consents on the referral portal.

0050-501.10, Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA) | Revision Date: 10/10/2025
This policy guide was updated from the 3/24/2023 version to incorporate new intake procedural requirements related to Assembly Bill (AB) 391 and All County Letter (ACL) 25-38, which requires agencies to ask non-mandated reporters to provide specific information when making a suspected child abuse report, including their name, telephone number, and information that led to the suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

0070-516.10, Assessing a Child's Development & Referring to a Regional Center | Revision Date: 11/7/2025
This policy guide was updated to incorporate new information for the Stand-Alone Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) Court Order, the DCFS Referral Portal for Regional Center services and provisional eligibility. New instructions were added to inform caregivers of dual agency rate and supplement if their child is found eligible for Regional Center services after the finalization of guardianship or adoption. In addition, updates and hyperlinks have been added to state-by-state comparisons of similar Regional Center programs, the developmental screening guide, a records transfer checklist, and referral status tracking guidelines.

0600-505.10, Supervising and Placing Children with Special Health Care Needs | Revision Date: 11/21/2025
This policy guide was updated to reflect changes from Level of Care (LOC) protocols. Procedures were updated and clarifications were added for case management of medically fragile children as well as title change to reflect this. The DCFS 6079, Medical Training Confirmation form and DCFS 416, Individual Health Care Plan forms were updated and a new attachment, Guidelines for Supervising Children with Special Health Care Needs was added.

0300-503.30, WIC 385: Requesting a Change of Order | Revision Date: 11/26/2025
This policy guide was revised to update and streamline procedures regarding removing a child from parents, legal guardians, or caregivers, requesting a more restrictive visitation/family time order, and to add references to the placement preservation process.

0300-303.15, Writing the Initial Hearing Report | Revision Date: 12/4/2025
This policy guide (formerly entitled: "Writing the Detention Report") was updated to reflect changes which require the social worker's report to include an assessment of short and long-term harm resulting from removal, least disruptive alternatives, and measures to alleviate disruption/minimize harms of removal. In the case of an Indian child, the social worker is to also assess and report on the child's connection to their tribe, extended family members, and tribal community. A revision was also made to ensure staff address potential school disruptions and school transportation issues when a child is removed from their home.

0300-503.15, Writing a Status Review Hearing Report for a WIC Section 364, 366.21(e) or (f), 366.22, or 366.25 Hearing | Revision Date: 12/19/2025
This policy guide was updated to incorporate the amendments to Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) sections 361.5 and 366.22 made by Assembly Bill 937 (Stats. 2023, Ch.458). The amendments require extension of reunification services beyond eighteen (18) months when a court finds at the 18-month review hearing that reasonable reunification services were not offered or provided to the parent, legal guardian, or Indian Custodian and/or that active efforts were not made, unless the court "finds by clear and convincing evidence based on competent evidence from a mental health profession that extending the time period for reunification services would be detrimental to the child." (WIC 366.22(b)(2)(B)). This revision also incorporates information regarding Senate Bill (SB) 463 and its impact on family reunification. SB 463 intends to further remove barriers to family reunification by instructing the courts that a parent or guardian's inability or failure to participate regularly and make substantive progress in court-ordered treatment programs shall not be considered prima facie evidence that returning the child would be detrimental. Additions were also made to further comply with documenting and reporting family finding efforts to the court, as a result of Assembly Bill (AB) 2929.

0900-522.00, Level of Care (LOC) and Specialized Care Increment (SCI) Rate Determinations / Re-determinations | Revision Date: 12/23/2025
This policy guide was updated to correct the eligibility criteria for Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) placement homes under the Home-Based Family Care (HBFC) Level of Care (LOC) rate determinations/re-determinations, update terminologies and program names and Foster Family Agency (FFA) homes' eligibility for the Dual Agency Lanterman (P2) rate, and reflect current procedures and forms completed by the LOC staff.

C300-051, Search, Attach, Assign, and Merge Specialist (SAAMS) Unit Responsibilities | Revision Date: 11/20/2025
This policy guide was revised to update SAAMS Clerk responsibilities, including the use of the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS). A procedural section for processing State IDs was updated. Clerical Policy C300-011, Referral Assignment Timeframes was cancelled, and the information therein was merged and updated on this policy. This includes the addition of Assignment Desk responsibilities for SAAMS clerical units.

C300-202, Transit Fare: Ordering, Disbursement and Reconciliation | Revision Date: 11/25/2025
This policy has been updated to align with the new 2025 DCFS Transit Fare process regarding reconciliation and to update the mailing address for the Accounts Payable (AP) section.

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FYIs:

FYI 15-04 (REV), Various Personnel Payroll Issues
The purpose of this FYI is to inform staff that overtime should be reported on the timesheet for the pay period in which it was worked. While full approval on Form 158 is required for the permanent record, the absence of the Office/Section Head's signature should not prevent an employee from reporting overtime on the appropriate timesheet submission in e-HR. To submit the overtime on the time sheet, only the pre-approval and first level approval are required. All other signatures are required as part of the final archive of the 158 in the system.

FYI 25-20, Clarification on Deleting SDM Assessments
The purpose of this FYI is to clarify procedures related to deleting SCSW-approved Structured Decision Making (SDM) assessments.

FY 12-34, Referral to Deaf Services Units
Contact information was updated for the Deaf Services Units.

FYI 25-21, Community Based Support Division Support to CalFresh Participation
The purpose of this FYI is to outline important information regarding supporting a family's access to food resources available to CalFresh participants who are impacted by the Federal Government shutdown.

FYI 25-22, Consultation Worksheet
The purpose of this FYI is to inform staff of the Consultation Worksheet tool, which was created to support CSWs, SCSWs and managers in ways to organize balanced safety assessments and engagement efforts throughout the life of a referral/case. The Consultation Worksheet ensures that SCSWs document monthly and ongoing case conferencing with staff. SCSWs must complete the worksheet during initial consultations and update it for subsequent consultations to reflect changes in safety concerns, teaming and planning, protective factors, and follow-up items.

FYI 25-23, Family Resources
The purpose of this FYI is to share information with staff about resources that are available to support families serviced by DCFS, and referral processes.

FYI 25-11 (REV), Office of the Ombudsperson for Youth in Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPS)
This FYI was revised to include that the Office of the Ombudsperson for youth also covers Transitional Housing Placement-Nonminor Dependent (THP-NMD) Youth. Contact Information for Ombuds Staff was also updated.

If you have any questions regarding this release, please email your question to:
Policy@dcfs.lacounty.gov