

# STANDARDS FOR SUPERVISING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORKERS (SCSWs)

Management Directive #09-11 | Revision Date: 4/23/2026

## Overview

This Management Directive (MD) is for all Supervising Children's Social Workers (SCSWs) as it is applicable to the SCSW's specific assignment or function. In recognition of the fact that child welfare supervisors have an enormous impact on a Children's Social Worker (CSW), both in terms of quality of work performance and staff retention, the Department of Children and Family Services has established the following professional standards for a SCSW. These standards outline in broad strokes the SCSW's responsibilities to the County, profession, social work staff, and most especially, the children and families served under their purview.

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## Version Summary

This management directive was updated from the previously revised 02/26/2018 version to incorporate the mandatory use of the [Consultation Worksheet \(DCFS 6075\)](#) by all Supervising Children's Social Worker (SCSWs).

# POLICY

## Introduction

Per the Memorandum of Understanding regarding Supervising Children's Social Worker [Article 45 (Work Schedule), Section D (Alternative Work Schedules and Teleworking)], Supervising Children's Social Workers shall utilize the Consultation Worksheet as designated by management to document case conferencing to ensure that engagement with direct reports is occurring at a minimum one time per month and ongoing on a routine and consistent basis.

## Guidelines

SCSWs must perform their duties and carry out their responsibilities in accordance with and in support of the Department of Children and Family Services' (DCFS) mission, values and goals.

## General Expectations

Supervisors will build competency in learning, recognizing and demonstrating the core elements, practice behaviors and leadership behaviors in the Integrated Practice Model through CPM training and ongoing coaching by managers and coaching opportunities with other internal and external coaches and community partners. Supervisors will be able to capture each social worker's growth towards facilitator certification and full competence in using the CPM in all casework and in interactions with diverse children, families, cultures, communities and situations.

SCSWs are responsible for upholding the highest professional social work standards for their units. They translate the organization's vision, mission and values to frontline social work staff by:

- a) Teaching CSWs to recognize potential child safety concerns and risk factors, as well as dangerous conditions and situations, and respond appropriately.
- b) Implementing the Core Practice Model, Qualitative Service Review (QSR), and other important departmental strategies to attain departmental goals (e.g., Structured Decision Making, Family Engagement, Teaming with both formal and informal supports, Assessing, Planning, Cultural Humility, Child and Family Team Meetings, Concurrent Planning, etc.) as they apply to their work, both as key participants and as team facilitators;

- c) Requiring CSWs to use a child-focused, family-centered, needs and strengths-based approach when conducting assessments, investigations, case planning and both oral and written descriptions and presentations.
- d) Ensuring CSWs provide culturally competent casework services and link families with culturally competent service providers.
- e) Cultivating leadership and management skills by seeking out and participating in relevant educational and experiential activities (e.g., professional development training).
- f) Staying current on developments in the field of child welfare social work, as well as related fields and current socio-economic events that affect the client's community through continuing education, voluntary participation in workgroups, attending non-mandatory Departmental training, and appropriate use of Self-Directed funded opportunities; and
- g) Seeking guidance and advice from their manager and other relevant departmental experts, as needed, on critical case decisions, specialized program matters, and personnel issues.

## **Training Requirements**

State regulations require SCSWs to complete select SCSW core modules within 12 months of appointment and to have 40 hours of ongoing training every two years thereafter.

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# **PROCEDURE**

## **A. WHEN: OVERSEEING CASEWORK PRACTICE OF CSWS**

### **SCSW Responsibilities**

SCSWs are responsible for overseeing each of their CSW's practice. SCSWs must ensure that the CSWs in their unit perform the essential job functions of their specific assignment on an ongoing basis by:

- a) Teaching CSWs how to identify children who have been physically abused, neglected, sexually abused or emotionally maltreated.
- b) Ensuring CSWs properly investigate reports of child abuse or neglect and assess the immediate safety and future risk of abuse or neglect to children in their homes.

- c) Ensuring CSWs properly record their investigative and case management activities in a timely and accurate way in CWS/CMS, court reports, and other required documents.
- d) Teaching CSWs the behavioral and emotional indicators of child maltreatment and how these factors may contribute to child maltreatment.
- e) Guiding CSWs to utilize a functional approach<sup>2</sup> to assess a family's protective capacity when determining the risk factors of the family and that the case planning process equally consider the individual, family, environmental and community factors to child maltreatment, as well as their strengths.
- f) Utilizing the [Consultation Worksheet \(DCFS 6075\)](#) to document case conferencing to ensure that engagement with direct reports is occurring at a minimum of one time per month and ongoing on a routine and consistent basis.
- g) Importing the completed Consultation Worksheet (DCFS 6075) into CWS/CMS. Refer to attachment [How to Import the Completed Consultation Worksheet into CWS/CMS](#) for instructions.
- h) Promoting the CSW's awareness and utilization of departmental resources such as Up Front Assessments, Public Health Nurses and community resources, when assisting the client to effectively reinforce protective factors and ameliorate risk factors in the best interests of the child.
- i) Ensuring that CSWs plan from the initial contact with the family that children and youth attain "permanency" by being enveloped in enduring connections and relationships that provide a sense of family, stability and belonging.
- j) Ensuring that CSWs focus on the enhancement of children's overall well-being by managing their screening, assessment and treatment to optimize their health status, emotional development, behavioral functioning, educational success, participation in extracurricular activities both inside and outside the school setting, and transitioning readiness of children.
- k) Ensuring that CSWs appropriately plan for transitioning youth into adulthood. CSWs need to ensure that youth will have the skills and housing and services that young adults need to improve risks of homelessness or incarceration.
- l) Ensuring CSWs facilitate the building of durable informal and formal support systems around families within a community of care and familiarity so that parents and guardians have the maximum opportunity to keep their children safe and nurtured without ongoing public child welfare assistance.

m) Utilizing the work of the former Child and Family Team during case conferences with CSWs and during follow up meetings with families and their teams as a tool to track progress and increase accountability.

n) Utilizing the [Consultation Worksheet \(DCFS 6075\)](#) tool to support CSWs in ways to organize balanced safety assessments and engagement efforts throughout the life of a referral/case. Utilization of the Consultation Worksheet provides an organized approach to help staff critically think through safety decisions and assess the protective capacities of families through the use of the Protective Factors framework. The Consultation Worksheet DCFS 6075 replaces the DCFS 6075 previously titled Coaching Guide and the ER Coaching Guide (DCFS 6078).

o) Utilizing the [Consultation Worksheet \(DCFS 6075\)](#) during Referral/Case Consultation- During an initial referral/case consultation, the SCSW is required to complete applicable areas of the form and [import](#) the form into CWS/CMS. For subsequent consultations on the same case or referral, the SCSW will use the initial worksheet to update changes to the Safety Worry Statement, Teaming & Safety Planning, Protective Factors, and follow-up items (as applicable). [DCFS 6075A- Consultation Worksheet User Guide](#) provides detailed instructions on how to utilize the Consultation Worksheet. Attachment [How to Import the Completed Consultation Worksheet into CWS/CMS](#) provides instructions on importing the DCFS 6075 into CWS/CMS.

p) Reviewing departmental policies on an ongoing basis with CSWs during unit meetings.

q) Providing CSWs with the appropriate interviewing tools and reviewing how the CSW uses such tools when interviewing clients; and

r) Ensuring CSWs continue to attend training that enhances their skills in working with children and families.

## **B. WHEN: PROVIDING INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP SUPERVISION**

SCSWs are expected to create an inviting learning environment characterized by support and mutual trust between the CSW and SCSW. Thus, SCSWs are expected to:

- a) Meet individually with each of their CSWs at least once every month or more frequently, as needed, for social work case management<sup>3</sup> guidance and coaching, assessing their staff for areas that need enhancing, and dealing with these needs in a positive, strength-based manner, guided by the [Consultation Worksheet \(DCFS 6075\)](#); [DCFS 6075A- Consultation Worksheet User Guide](#); [ER Supervision Tool](#); or [Continuing Services Coaching Tool](#), or any other tools

or standards within your specialized programs e.g. the [Child Protection Hotline Call Review Tool](#) and [Hotline Standards for SCSWs](#).

- b) Consult with each of their CSWs during critical case junctures (e.g., when the “Safety Plan” is being developed) and decision-making points (e.g., returning a child to their family of origin).
- c) Utilize the [Consultation Worksheet \(DCFS 6075\)](#) to document **all** case conferencing to ensure that engagement with direct reports is occurring at a minimum of one time per month and ongoing on a routine and consistent basis. [Import](#) the completed Consultation Worksheet (DCFS 6075) into CWS/CMS.
- d) Lead monthly unit meetings to share and explain important policy communiqués, provide teaching and group supervision, problem solve unit concerns, float ideas upward, case conference, build teamwork and provide documentation to section ARA.
- e) Ensure that CSWs are up to date with the knowledge base of the field of child welfare, community resources, as well as with policy and procedure through regular teaching. The SCSW should also reinforce the use of new training guides and tools in the application to their work.
- f) Oversee that CSWs participate in annual trainings that would best address the CSWs needs for strengthening their skills.
- g) Accompany CSWs during their home calls with client families on a periodic basis (no less than two occasions per year/per CSW) to provide guidance and learning opportunities for the CSW in their fieldwork practice and the SCSW to document the contact in CWS/CMS and in the CSW’s Performance Evaluation.
- h) Provide occasions for learning via case planning staffing. Debriefing and Coaching should be utilized for this purpose though sensitivity should always be shown to maintain the employee’s self-esteem.
- i) Keep their CSWs informed regarding areas of strength and needs for improvement throughout the year, not just at the time of the Performance Evaluation. In addition, review with CSWs what constitutes a “competent” evaluation vs. “very good” evaluation, so that CSWs are aware of the difference.
- j) Set firm and fair limits through appropriate implementation of progressive disciplinary procedures consistent with guidance from Personnel Manual, Regional Manager(s), and Performance Management, and incorporate lessons learned throughout the year within the body of yearly Performance Evaluations that are instructive and recommendation-based; and

- k) Create a milieu conducive to learning and interest through invitation of guest speakers, meeting in a variety of environments, incorporating creative informational delivery systems conducive with adult learning, and imbue a sense of Unit identity and cohesion.

**C. WHEN: MAINTAINING QUALITY CONTROL**

SCSWs are responsible for the quality, quantity and timeliness of work performance and product of all employees in their unit. As such, SCSWs should:

- a) Fully utilize available and pertinent automated tracking tools and reports to assist with their supervisory responsibilities of monitoring social workers' performance including:

Performance Measures	Staff Performance %
Child Contact	
Parent Contact	
Case Plan	
Medical	
[REDACTED]	
SDM Safety	
SDM Risk	
SDM Reassess	
FSNA/CSNA	
Current Kidpix	
Referrals Total	

Referrals > 30	
Cases Total	
CFTMs	
FM > 12	
FR > 18	
Limbo Children	

- b) Ensure CSWs comply with applicable statutory and policy requirements of the investigation and support the department’s priorities of child safety, timely permanency and a reduction in the Department’s reliance on out-of-home care to keep children safe;
- c) Ensure CSWs comply with applicable statutory and policy requirements for the completion of court reports and case plans, and support the Department’s goals of child safety, timely permanency and a reduction in reliance on out-of-home care;
- d) Ensure that the case record is complete and reviewed per policy, both in entries in the electronic case management system and the filing of required and relevant documents in the paper case file;
- e) Utilize the attached tools and guides for regular reviews on a random sample of their CSWs’ cases and referral investigations; and
- f) Establish organizational control systems to ensure that work is distributed equitably and that CSWs complete their work in a timely manner.

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## APPROVALS

None

## HELPFUL LINKS

### California Code

<https://www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

### Division 31 Regulations

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/legislation-and-regulations>

### Social Work Practice

<https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Practice-Standards-Guidelines>

[FYI-25-22 Consultation Worksheet](#)

## Attachments

[Hotline Standards for SCSWs](#)

[How to Import the Completed Consultation Worksheet into CWS/CMS](#)

## Forms

LA Kids

[Child Protection Hotline Call Review Tool](#)

[Continuing Services Coaching Tool](#)

[ER Supervision Tool](#)

[Hotline Standards for SCSWs](#)

[Consultation Worksheet \(DCFS 6075\)](#)

[DCFS 6075A- Consultation Worksheet User Guide;](#)

## NOTES

<sup>2</sup> Functional approach - Taft and Robinson applied Rank's basic principles of individual psychology and human growth and change to a new theoretical model of social work practice. This new practice theory unfolded slowly during the early 1930's culminating in Taft's seminal statement of Functional Practice which appeared as the lead article in the first issue of The Journal of Social Work Process, published by the Pennsylvania School in 1934.

First, in considerable departure from the psychoanalytic model of the clinician as the leader of change, Taft and Robinson's model emphasized the participatory role of the client in her/his own change process. Client growth and change occurred through mutual recognition of a problem and collaborative work toward its resolution. Second,

building on Rank's perception of time as a crucial variable in the growth process, the Functional Approach identified three specific time phases in the development of the helping relationship - the beginning, middle, and end. Each phase had a specific role and task in the movement toward change. Third, the Functional Approach used agency function as an organizing concept. Society, as represented by the social agency, defined the function and purpose of the social worker's task. Agency function also established for the client the kind of help that could be offered, the terms on which this help was given, and what was required of the client in return for receiving this help.

<sup>3</sup> According to the National Association of Social Workers, "social work case management" is defined as "...a method of providing services whereby a professional social worker assesses the needs of the client and the client's family, when appropriate, and arranges, coordinates, monitors, evaluates, and advocates for a package of multiple services to meet the specific client's complex needs. A professional social worker is the primary provider of social work case management. Distinct from other forms of case management, social work case management addresses both the individual client's bio-psycho-social status as well as the state of the social system in which case management operates. Social work case management is both micro and macro in nature: intervention occurs at both the client and system levels. It requires the social worker to develop and maintain a therapeutic relationship with the client, which may include linking the client with systems that provide him or her with needed services, resources, and opportunities. Services provided under the rubric of social work case management practice may be located in a single agency or may be spread across numerous agencies or organization" The key phrase, "therapeutic relationship" requires that SCSWs be familiar with, and practice, clinical supervision techniques

## References

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<sup>1</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway, Family Engagement & Involvement, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/famcentered/casework/engagement.cfm> (Nov. 19, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> University of Pennsylvania, Social Policy & Practice, <http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/about/approach.html> (November 19, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Case Management Standards Work Group, NASW Standards for Social Work Case Management, National Association of Social Workers, <https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Practice-Standards-Guidelines>.