



March 3, 2022

Child Welfare Services Manual Transmittal No. 2022-02

To: County Departments of Family and Children Services
DFCS District Directors
DFCS Regional Directors
State Office Staff

From: Candice L. Broce, Director ^{CB}_{CB}
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services

Re: Child Welfare Policy Manual: Education Needs

Purpose

The purpose of this Child Welfare Services Manual Transmittal (CWSMT) is to announce policy updates to section 10.13 Foster Care: Educational Needs. Various other policy updates are also included in the specified section below titled "Policy Maintenance."

Discussion

The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) is responsible for ensuring the safety, permanency and wellbeing of children served. This includes ensuring that the educational needs of children in foster care are met. The Child Welfare Policy Manual is being updated to reflect changes to section 10.13 Foster Care: Educational Needs to align with practice and organizational changes. The following are highlights of the policy updates.

10.13 Foster Care: Educational Needs

1. Updates information to be provided to applicable schools at the time of enrollment or placement change to confirm that DFCS has placement authority and to provide the current placement information. This is accomplished with the new Education Notification Form for School Age Youth in Foster Care, included in Forms and Tools.
2. Updates the language used to refer to the Educational Assessment by removing the term diagnostic.
3. Clarifies that children from five years of age up until their 18th birthday shall receive an educational assessment and consultation via the DFCS Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation (EPAC) Unit within 30 calendar days of entering foster care, as opposed to 30 business days.

4. Clarifies that the best interest determination related to a child's educational stability is completed in Georgia SHINES.
5. Updates the list of attendees at the meeting held within 10 business days of a child's entry/re-entry into foster care or change of schools to include the Education Support Monitor and other authorized representatives from EPAC.
6. Clarifies that Educational Assessments only need to be provided to a CCFA provider if a school transfer occurs prior to completion of the CCFA.
7. Explains that the Non-Traditional Education Approval Form is to be submitted to EPAC for approval of alternative schooling options. This form has been included in Forms and Tools.
8. Clarifies that the Education Detail page in Georgia SHINES must be updated with current and accurate education information.
9. Clarifies that a child's Educational Stability Plan (ESP) is to be completed within 30 calendar days of the child entering care and is to be developed jointly with the Education Support Monitor (ESM), the child's parent(s), placement resource, Social Services Case Manager, and the local educational agency.
10. Removes references to the Education Action Plan (EAP) which was replaced by the Educational Stability Plan (ESP).

Policy Maintenance

1.15 Administration: Child Abuse Protocol

1. Removes the child abuse protocol (CAP) SharePoint site as the required submission location for the annual CAP and CAP report; and includes that the documents should be submitted to the state office designee.
2. Adds language about the DFCS Child Abuse Protocol Committee (CAPC) representative communicating considerations for protecting the alleged victim and the need to preserve the confidentiality of the report when law enforcement is involved with investigating the report of child abuse.
3. Updates the procedures for the Regional Director to review the CAP and CAP report and ensure timely submission to the state office annually.
4. Adds Practice Guidance to include the purpose of the child abuse protocol.

19.6 Case Management: Supervisor Staffing

1. Changes the "safety resource" and "relative" terminology to "kinship", "kinship caregiver" or "voluntary kinship caregiver" where appropriate.

22.8 Kinship: Financial and Non-Financial Supports for Children in Foster Care or Who Achieved Permanency

1. Clarifies that the provisions in this policy section pertain to children in foster care or those who have achieved permanency from foster care.

Implementation

This policy update is effective upon the release of this manual transmittal and is available on the Online Directives Information System (ODIS) at <http://odis.dhs.ga.gov/>. Regional

and County Leadership shall provide opportunities for staff to review and discuss the updated policy to ensure implementation. Please refer to policy [1.3 Administration: Access, Distribution and Review of Child Welfare Policies](#) for the applicable requirements and procedures for policy review.

Please direct questions regarding this policy release to the Field Program Specialist in your region. Regional staff shall submit questions to the Policy and Regulations Unit at PPPDUnit@dhs.ga.gov.