

Parent-Child-Caseworker Visitations

(FY2019 Appropriation Act - Public Act 207 of 2018)

March 1, 2019

Sec. 564. (1) *The department shall develop a clear policy for parent-child visitations. The local county offices, caseworkers, and supervisors shall meet an 85% success rate, after accounting for factors outside of the caseworkers' control.*

(2) *Per the court-ordered number of required meetings between caseworkers and a parent, the caseworkers shall achieve a success rate of 85%, after accounting for factors outside of the caseworkers' control.*

(3) ***By March 1 of the current fiscal year, the department shall provide to the senate and house appropriations subcommittees on the department budget, the senate and house fiscal agencies, the senate and house policy offices, and the state budget office a report on the following:***

(a) ***The percentage of success rate for parent-child visitations and court-ordered required meetings between caseworkers referenced in subsections (1) and (2) for the previous year.***

(b) ***The barriers to achieve the success rates in subsections (1) and (2) and how this information is tracked.***



Parent-Child-Caseworker Visitations

In prior years, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has reported compliance in this area based on quality assurance compliance review sample data. This year, MDHHS is reporting based on these measures in the Implementation, Sustainability and Exit Plan report for cases in reporting period 13, July 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017. Findings revealed:

- Children had visits of sufficient frequency with their parents 60% of the time in order to promote parent-child relationships.
- Caseworkers visited with parents at a frequency sufficient to address issues pertaining to the safety, permanency and well-being of the child and promote achievement of case goals 60% of the time.

Barriers to Compliance

- Time involved in transportation and supervision of visits is difficult for workers and foster parents.
- The number of available volunteers for visitation is a continued barrier.
- Standardized assessment tools for development of family-specific visitation plans.
- Continued education of community partners regarding the role and importance of parent-child visitation in child welfare cases.

Efforts to Mitigate Barriers

- Volunteer training has been developed to provide hands on knowledge for volunteers for transportation, supervision and mentoring of parent-child visits. Volunteer training is provided to all child welfare volunteers who currently assist with visitation.
- MDHHS is working with volunteer organizations to increase the number of volunteers in order to increase capacity for visitation. Development and promotion of training for volunteers will provide guidance for transportation, supervision and mentoring.
- The Foster Care Supportive Visitation contract program provides intensive and individualized parent-child visit services to families whose children are in foster care and where reunification is the case goal. General activities include providing in-home parenting education, observing parent-child interactions, and giving helpful feedback to the parent before and after each session.
- Development of contracts for the delivery of evidenced-based/best practice services to address needs related to parenting skills.

Parent-Child-Caseworker Visitations

- The Enhanced MiTEAM Practice Model includes guidance on development of parenting time plans and assessment aspects of the case service plan.
- Statewide training was provided to first line supervisors to ensure a clear understanding of visitation policy, proper documentation of visitation in MiSACWIS, and the use of data in identification of trends and gaps locally and statewide.
- As a part of continuous quality improvement efforts, development and revision of tools to assist in improving parent-child visits, including:
 - Foster care case transfer tool that includes a renewed focus on maintaining parent-child visits.
 - Supervisor case read tool; emphasis placed on identifying barriers to visitations and interventions to address those barriers.
 - Development of survey for foster care caseworkers, parents, caregivers and older youth to help identify barriers to visitation to inform policy and practice.
- Revision of Family Team Meeting policy, practice guidance, and documentation requirements to provide better guidance on developing comprehensive parent-child visit plans.
- Efforts to identify decision points in foster care cases to address issues of overrepresentation of minorities coming into care and strategies to address issues of permanency, safety and well-being.

Tracking

MDHHS developed standard reports, a book of business, and performs quality assurance compliance reviews to track compliance with caseworker-parent visits, parent-child visits and to monitor compliance with policy.