Collaboration Between DCYF and DHS to Improve Services for Dual-System Families

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

Policy: 700.0155

Effective Date: August 31, 1987 Revised Date: December 29, 2006 Version: 2

The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) works in collaboration with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide services to dual-system families that assist parents in raising children in healthy families that are economically secure. A dual-system family is identified as a family receiving services from DCYF and DHS at the same time. Workers from each Department collaborate on the delivery of casework services and coordinate activities required of parents, in the DHS Family Independence Program (FIP) Employment Plan and DCYF Service Plan, to ensure safety and permanency for the child and child and family well- being.

There are unique challenges confronting dual-system families as they struggle to achieve financial security and remain intact. The complex service needs of dual-system families cannot be fully addressed by the programs administered by any one single state department. Rhode Island General Laws (RIGL) 40-5.1-2, 42-72-25 and 14-1-59 support interdepartmental cooperation in the development, delivery and/or management of services provided to families at risk.

Collaborative casework practice is consistent with the Department's efforts to fully incorporate Family Centered Practice and can assist in overcoming barriers in an area where DCYF and DHS program requirements intersect and have the potential to adversely affect dual-system families. This approach requires communication between employees of both Departments and supports the delivery of flexible, comprehensive and effective services to children and their families. The intent of collaborating on the delivery of casework services is not to have the Service Plan or the FIP Employment Plan have automatic precedence, nor is it to have one plan for the family. The intent is to ensure that the requirements of each plan are coordinated in the best interest of the family.

Related Procedure

Collaboration Between DCYF and DHS to Improve Services for Dual-System Families

Collaboration Between DCYF and DHS to Improve Services for Dual System Families

Procedure From Policy 700.0155: Collaboration Between DCYF and DHS to Improve Services for Dual System Families

A. Identifying a dual system family

1. An active DCYF family that is also active with DHS receiving FIP benefits is considered a dual system family.
2. One child must remain in the family home to be considered a dual system family; other children may or may not be in out of home placement.
3. During the initial and ongoing process of comprehensively assessing the family, DCYF primary service worker asks parents about financial and medical matters. This process provides the opportunity to ask parents about DHS involvement and more specifically if parents have a FIP Employment Plan.
4. Once a family is identified as a dual system family, primary worker discusses with the family how the communication between the two Departments allows for all parties to have an increased awareness of how each state Department is assisting the family to achieve family and economic security. Primary service worker requests that parent sign the Authorization for Release of Information for Coordination of Service Plans between DCYF and DHS (DCYF/DHS 1).
   a. Once a family signs the DCYF/DHS 1, primary service worker forwards the release to the DHS social worker and communication begins with the involvement of the family.
      i. If possible, a meeting is held with the family, DCYF worker and DHS worker to review the family's economic needs and any safety/risk factors to be addressed to ensure child safety, well being and permanency.
      ii. If a meeting cannot occur with all parties present, primary service worker attempts contact with the DHS worker in the presence of the family to stress the importance of collaboration as a team.
   b. Families have the right to refuse to sign the DCYF/DHS 1, preventing the sharing of information and communication between the DCYF and DHS workers.
      i. If a family refuses to sign the DHS/DCYF 1, primary service worker documents efforts to engage the family in the Department record.
      ii. Primary service worker attempts to gather as much information from each parent regarding his or her FIP Employment Plan and attempts to put services into place that are not in conflict with work related activities.

B. Working with a dual system family

1. Once a family has been identified as a dual system family and the DHS/DCYF 1 has been signed, DCYF primary service worker, DHS social worker and the family communicate about identified needs and develop the Service Plan and FIP Employment Plan jointly to ensure that the activities involved in each plan are not in conflict with each other.

2. ~~If the family has an approved FIP Employment Plan in place at the time of case opening to DCYF or upon learning that an active DCYF family is a dual-system family and the activities are in conflict with each other, both DCYF primary~~

service worker and DHS social worker work collaboratively to resolve the conflict in an effort to enable the parent to meet the requirements of each plan.

3. Up to ten (10) hours of a parent's required activities in a DCYF Service Plan may count towards the total required hours of an approvable FIP Employment Plan.
   a. DHS policy allows activities related to the following areas to count as approvable work readiness activities in the FIP Employment Plan:
      i. Mental Health Counseling
      ii. Substance Abuse Treatment
      iii. Parenting Classes
      iv. Visitation
      v. Other
   b. DCYF primary service worker informs the DHS social worker of the number of hours that it is reasonably expected that each parent will spend in complying with DCYF Service Plan activities.
   c. DCYF primary service worker documents the days and times of the required activity in the Service Plan and forwards the completed DCYF/DHS 2, Countable Activities towards the FIP Employment Plan, to DHS social worker.
   d. DHS social worker includes in the FIP Employment Plan up to ten (10) hours of those required activities as part of the parent's approved FIP Employment Plan.
4. When Service Plan activities are updated or changed and those activities have been counted as part of the DHS FIP Employment Plan, DCYF primary service worker discusses with the parent the need to inform DHS social worker so that the FIP Employment Plan activities can be revised. DCYF primary service worker provides DHS social worker with an updated DCYF/DHS 2.
5. If DCYF primary service worker becomes aware that the parent is not complying with the activities in the Service Plan that are included as part of the families FIP Employment Plan, he or she advises the parent about the impact on the DHS Employment Plan activities and potential for sanction if the parent continues with the noncompliance.
   a. If noncompliance continues DCYF primary service worker notifies DHS social worker and provides an updated DCYF/DHS 2.
   b. If a parent's noncompliance is excusable, DCYF primary service worker provides documentation regarding good cause for the noncompliance to DHS social worker.
6. DCYF primary service worker notifies DHS when a child is removed from a FIP home to ensure that the family's FIP payment can be adjusted according to the change in family size and to modify any changes to the FIP Employment Plan.
   a. DCYF primary service worker telephones DHS social worker and/or the Chief/Senior Casework Supervisor in the appropriate regional office when the child is removed from the home.
      i. An interface is generated through RICHIST to the DHS social worker for out of home placements recorded in the Placement Icon of RICHIST (**refer to RICHIST Window Help: Placement, and The Placement Type Window**).

ii. ~~DCYF primary service worker forwards the Notification of Removal from/Return to the Home (DCYF #111) to the DHS social worker for out of home placements recorded in the Living Arrangement Icon of RICHIST (refer to **RICHIST Window Help: The Participant Living Arrangements Window**).~~

b. ~~DCYF primary service worker contacts the DHS social worker as soon as possible when it appears placement out of the home will go beyond the forty-eight (48) or seventy-two (72) hour hold and that the extent of this placement will probably be over thirty (30) days.~~

7. ~~DCYF primary service worker notifies DHS as soon as possible prior to returning a child to a FIP home to ensure that the family's FIP payment can be adjusted according to the change in family size and to modify any changes to the FIP Employment Plan.~~

   a. ~~DCYF primary service worker telephones DHS social worker and/or the Chief/Senior Casework Supervisor in the appropriate regional office when planning to return a child home.~~

   b. ~~To confirm planned date of return, worker forwards the Notification of Removal from/Return to the Home (DCYF #111) to the DHS social Worker and/or Chief/Senior Casework Supervisor in the appropriate regional office.~~

8. ~~If the family is not active with DHS at the time of the child's return home, the parent must apply/reapply to DHS for FIP.~~

   a. ~~DCYF primary service worker provides the parent with a letter that informs Eligibility Technician at DHS that the child will be returned home.~~

   b. ~~The parent is instructed to give the letter to his/her Eligibility Technician at the time of application/re-application for FIP.~~

   c. ~~If child is not returned home within thirty (30) days of written notification, primary service worker contacts the Chief/Senior Casework Supervisor in the appropriate DHS regional office by phone.~~