

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services  
(CCDCFS)  
Policy Statement**

**Policy Chapter:** Case Requirements  
**Policy Number:** 5.01.05  
**Policy Name:** Referrals for Community Based Services

**Original Effective Date:** 08/09/2007  
**Revision Date(s):** 08/01/2015, 08/12/2005  
**Current Revision Date:** 03/01/2019  
**Approved By:** Cynthia G. Weiskittel

**PURPOSE:** To ensure that families are strengthened through linkages with services within their community. To ensure consistency in the process by which Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) staff refer families to the Community Based Services (CBS) for supportive services.

**POLICY**

CCDFCS provides families with the opportunity to receive services within their own community by making appropriate referrals to the Community Based Services (CBS) agencies. The referral is based on the family's identified needs and the ability of the CBS to meet those needs efficiently and effectively.

Note: A variety of case situations may be appropriate for community linkage. This includes cases involving biological families, foster, adoptive, or kinship families. Each case is evaluated on an individual basis.

**PROCEDURES**

**General Guidelines**

Basic information about the CBS is provided to family members at their first contact with CCDCFS. In some situations, Hotline staff provides information about the CBS without ever accepting a referral for assessment/investigation.

- A. The Worker of Record (WOR) and supervisor identifies family needs that may be met by making a referral to the CBS agency. Those needs may be related to:
- (1) Service needs that may prevent the removal of children;
  - (2) Community supportive services to assist in meeting case plan objectives;
  - (3) Services to support reunification efforts;
  - (4) Services to support families at the time of case closure.

- B. Once a family's needs are identified, the WOR notifies the appropriate CBS program and completes the referral process. A Referral for Community Based Services Form and a Release of Information Form are required for CCDCFs to refer a family to a CBS agency for assistance. Additionally, a meeting comprised of CCDCFs staff and CBS' (identified) intake staff must be held to facilitate the referral process for obtaining supportive services via the CBS program. This may be completed at the time of any Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting being held for the family to which the CBS program was invited. For cases that are not closing and require continuation of services, a Family Team Meeting (FTM) must be completed as part of the referral process.
- (1) The referral identifies specific presenting problems regarding the family, as well as their strengths and identified needs.
  - (2) The WOR provides a signed Release of Information with the referral to the CBS agency.
  - (3) For CCDCFs active cases, the WOR provides a copy of the families' Case Plan/Family Service Plan. If the case plan is not completed at the time of referral, it is forward at completion to the CBS agency involved with the family.
- C. In emergencies, the WOR can contact the CBS representative to verbally discuss the referral of a family to their agency. The CBS staff may begin interventions to assist the family immediately; however, the referral form must be submitted within 72 hours to the CBS agency and a meeting scheduled.
- D. When a referral is being made on an active CCDCFs case, CCDCFs staff schedules a FTM as part of the referral process and, when necessary, a joint home visit is also planned. A release of information form is completed by the WOR at the time of the referral is made so that family information can be shared.
- E. If the CBS is working on a case that is active with CCDCFs, communication occurs between the CBS worker and the WOR, at a minimum of once per month, via telephone, office visits, participation in staffings or family team meetings, to receive progress updates on the identified objectives. CBS staff provides a copy of the Community Based Services Client Service Plan to the WOR every 60 days affirming the case is open with CCDCFs and the CBS agency. The CBS client service plan is aligned with the CCDCFs case plan, as applicable.
- F. CBS services, interventions and updates on active CCDCFs family cases are discussed during routine supervisory conferences. This information is always considered when making permanency decisions for the family.
- G. WOR assures CBS notification of the following meetings held.
- Initial Custody/Placement Staffings
  - Permanency Planning/Reunification Staffings
  - Semi-Annual Reviews (SAR)
  - Case Plan Family Team Meetings

- Case Closing Family Team Meetings
- “All About Me” Meetings
- Placement Change Staffings
- Other Family Team Meetings (as requested)

H. WOR must verify CBS staff attendance at meetings they have invited them to by signing the Community Partner Attendance Sheet.

**Family Visits at CBS Sites**

- A. CBS agencies are required to have an appropriate space for visits between parents and children in the care of CCDCFS. CCDCFS staff must complete the CBS Family Visits Form and schedule a Family Team Meeting with the CBS provider and the family, prior to visits starting, to discuss rules, guidelines and the level of supervision required. If no FTM is scheduled, prior to visits starting, the WOR and parent(s) must arrive, at least 30 minutes prior to the start time of the first visit, to discuss the rules and level of supervision required. CBS providers must notify the CCDCFS supervisor and senior manager when staff fail to show for the (initial) visit FTM.
- B. CCDCFS policy requires staff to be at the first and every fourth visits. CCDCFS staff who fail to attend the required initial FTM or subsequent 4<sup>th</sup> visits, (at the providers discretion), will not be allowed to schedule visits for families on their caseload until completing the initial FTM.
- C. When two-consecutive visits are missed by the family and CCDCFS staff, the visitation slot is forfeited and the CCDCFS’ WOR must complete a new referral to start visits again. A FTM must be completed before the visit can be rescheduled at any CBS site.
- D. Visits requiring special days and time outside of normal business hours (8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday) are arranged with each individual provider.
- E. If concerns arise around the visit, the CBS agency contacts the WOR and their supervisor to discuss the situation and together try to resolve the issue. If no resolution is reached, the matter is brought to the attention of senior level management via the WOR’s chain of command for decision making and agreement.

**SEE ALSO:**

- Policy 5.01.02 Case Plan / Family Service Plan
- Policy 5.01.04 Family Team Meetings
- Policy 5.02.01 TDM / Staffings Policy
- Policy 5.02.02 Case Reviews / Semi-Annual Administrative Reviews
- Policy 6.05.01 Family Visits

**FORMS**

- CCDCFS Community Based Services Referral Form
- CCDCFS Community Based Services Attendance Sheet
- CCDCFS Community Based Services Family Visit Form