

CHAPTER 2-000

SUPPORTS

Overview

Supports represent all the work activity it takes to bring about successful outcomes. Supports also develop the Department and community systems' ability to meet identified needs at the systems level.

Supervisors, managers and other Departmental staff provide support to the direct line staff in their work. A significant amount of the support function is accomplished by teams. Supports are provided in two primary ways:

- Individual Cases - Help to individual direct line workers on individual cases through the use of consultation, problem solving, and other needed assistance; and
- Systems - Work to continuously improve the quality of service delivered to children and families at a "systems" level. These systems may include public and community agencies.

2-001

USE OF CONSULTATION

The purpose of case consultation is to assure staff, families and the public of consistent application of Department policy and the consideration of as many factors and ramifications as possible when critical decisions are made. Consultation should take place with team members involved in the specific consultation issue in the case. Consultation should be done in a collaborative way.

Consultation is used when making children, families and staff decisions regarding specific issues and individual cases. At many points in the work processes, consultation will be used to arrive at decisions that represent the best interests of children and families. Frequent consultation strengthens practice and quality of service provided to children and families.

Consultation may occur with the team which could include the family, supervisor, therapist, foster parent, and other caregivers, school personnel, medical professionals, mental health or substance abuse providers, service providers, YRTC staff and other involved in the case or with expertise relevant to the case.

The supervisor has the responsibility to call to the attention of and redirect the worker regarding any decision on any case which is not consistent with the following criteria:

- The best interest of the child;
- Department policy and practice;
- Current court orders or established protocol;
- The case plan; and
- The safety of the community

The decisions of the team will be discussed with the supervisor if s/he is not present. See 2-002 for decisions in emergencies.

Specific consultation is not limited to but will occur before:

- Recommending removal of a child from the home;
- Recommending returning the child to the home;
- Recommending separation of a sibling group;
- Deciding on placement of a child in an adoptive home;
- Placing a child into a foster home, group home or residential facility located in another district;
- Placing a child into restrictive placements such as hospitals, Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers (YRTC), detention centers, jail, treatment facilities, and out-of-state;
- Discharging or parole of a child from YRTC;
- Requesting a variance to an existing policy;
- Developing case plan and determining decision making for child with more than one adjudication;
- Changing the permanency objective on a case;
- Accepting a relinquishment of parental rights;
- Recommending termination of parental rights; and
- Closing a case.

2-002

CONSENSUS ON DECISION MAKING

To the greatest extent possible decision-making occurs within a team that includes the case manager, family, child and other significant persons. Families will be included to the maximum extent possible on teams related to their case. These other significant people include any professional or individual with expertise that would be helpful in the decision-making process and to ultimately resolving the issue(s). This may include people such as a managed care coordinator, therapist, foster parent, provider, school representative, medical expert, another worker or supervisor who has expertise in a particular subject matter such as child sexual abuse, Juvenile services, resource development or others.

This team should come to consensus which is a decision that all members of the team can support. Every reasonable attempt will be made to reach consensus with all parties involved. In working to achieve consensus, or if there is a disagreement among the team members, the decision in question will be reviewed on the basis of whether the decision is consistent with:

- The best interest of the child;
- Department policy and practice;
- Current court orders or established protocol;
- The case plan; and
- The safety of the community.

The supervisor has the responsibility to call to the attention of and redirect the worker regarding any decision on any case which is not consistent with the criteria in the above criteria.

If, after reasonable attempts, the team cannot achieve consensus on a decision, the worker, in consultation with the supervisor, and others when necessary, will use the input from the team and make the decision. That decision will be final as long as it is consistent with the above criteria.

Team work and consensus are not always possible due to emergency or crisis situations. If there is a crisis situation, the worker should proceed with action, based on the above criteria, and then notify the supervisor as soon as possible. The notification of the supervisor provides an opportunity for review of the decision. The supervisor or worker may wish to reconvene the team to gather the opinions of the team members.

2-003

POLICY VARIANCE

At any time a worker, supervisory staff, or other management staff believes a state policy is contrary to the best interests of a child or family, then permission to deviate from policy in that instance will be requested. To preserve continuity and consistency in policy application for the Department such requests will be reviewed and approved by a team with a statewide perspective for this purpose. (Policy and Practice Team) This review will be done in a timely manner. (See Supports Guidebook.)

2-004

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Child abuse and neglect and juvenile delinquency are community problems. The Department plays a key role with the community in addressing the problems associated with abuse and neglect and juvenile delinquency. This occurs in two ways:

- Collaborating with others to deal with problems; and
- Helping develop the community's understanding and capacity to deal with the problems of its children and families through community development.

2-005

EVALUATION

Evaluation of the work and the support system's progress and success in achieving outcomes and continuously improving service delivery are essential. A variety of tools and techniques are used to achieve this kind of evaluation and continuous improvement.