



Tennessee Department of Children's Services Case Closure Protocol for Dependent, Neglected and Unruly Children

Prior to Case Closing:

1. Planning for the termination of services is an integral part of all service planning. At the first contact with a child and family DCS will begin planning for permanency and case closure.
2. Case closure is considered when the level of risk for the child/youth is significantly reduced from the time of initial assessment. This will be based on the outcomes of appropriate assessment tools. The factors causing maltreatment, abuse or neglect or delinquency are resolved to the point that the parent or guardian can protect and meet the needs of the children.
3. The Family Service Worker (FSW) and/or the CPS worker will interview and observe the child/youth and family in preparation for case closure. If a family member is not available then DCS will make a "good faith effort" to find and inform the family member of the need for case closure.
4. The Family Service Worker and/or CPS will discuss the case with the team leader regarding their agreement with case closure and complete documentation of this process within the current child welfare information system.
5. This previously mentioned case review may take place prior to the Discharge Child and Family Team Meeting. Discharge plans will be developed with the child/youth and family at the Discharge CFTM. The discharge plan will be recorded on the **CFTM Summary Form, CS-0747**, for custodial cases and in the Case Summary recording for non-custodial cases.
6. Following case closure, aftercare services, community services and linkages to all necessary supports are documented and arranged by the Family Service Worker or CPS. The family/guardian/youth must have contact information available so that they can re-establish a connection with DCS as needed for services, questions or concerns.
7. Family Service Worker and/or CPS requests legal involvement in petitioning the court for child permanency with the intention of case closure. The legal involvement would be dependent upon if the case is custodial or if the non-custodial case was recommended to receive services via the court system. Family Service workers for **delinquent** youth should refer to the **Case Closing Protocol for Delinquent Youth** and Policy 13.31, Discharge of Delinquent Youth from Probation/After Care.
8. Family Service Worker and/or CPS worker will complete Case Summary note in the system for closure.
9. For custody cases, after permission for case closure is provided by the court, the FSW will send form **CS-0476, Notification of Change of Circumstance** to the Child Welfare Benefits worker, and other necessary units as appropriate. The Exit Survey is completed and the custodial case is closed.
10. The Family Service Worker and /or CPS complete the filing as per case record policy and then the case is sent to closed files.
11. The Family Service Worker or CPS worker provides the documents listed below to the child/youth and family prior to case closure. If there is a need for continued use of specific documents during the closure process then the worker will make arrangements to send the documents to the family's home via mail or by delivery.

Effective Date: 11/30/09

Supplemental to: DCS Policy 16.12

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Subject: Protocol for Trial Home Visits less Than 90 days

Case Closing Essential Documents List:

Any child/youth in DCS custody or non-custody ongoing services, who exits to permanency by guardianship, custody or reunification, shall receive the following documents/information prior to exiting. If some items are needed beyond the case closure date arrangements will be made to deliver or mail the documents to the family.

- List of emergency contacts, including Team Leader and Team Coordinator
- Driver's license (If Applicable)
- Social Security Card (original, Copy for DCS file) • Resume (If Applicable)
- Updated & Recent Medical Records (include immunization records)
- TennCare Card: *refer to Protocol for Continuation of TENN CARE Eligibility for Children Exiting Custody*
- Birth Certificate (original to client, a copy for the DCS file)
- Religious Documents and Information (If Applicable)
- Documentation of Immigration, Naturalization (If Applicable)
- Death Certificate for deceased parents
- Life Book/ pictures/ personal items
- List of Adult Relatives, and other supportive adults (contained in Genogram documents)
- Previous placement information (printed placement page from the current child welfare information system)
- Educational records (not to include psychological, only list of schools attended and grades)
- Copy of Discharge CFTM that outlines the aftercare plan
- Court order indicating family/guardian has custody of the child/youth
- State ID, dependent upon youth's age