
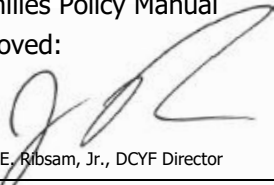


1209 VOLUNTARY SERVICES	
Chapter: Child Protective Field Services	Section: CPS Family Assessments
	New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual Policy Directive: 19-34 Effective Date: July 2019 Scheduled Review Date:
Related Statute(s): RSA 169-C Related Admin Rule(s): Related Federal Regulation(s):	Approved:  Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr., DCYF Director Related Form(s): FORM 1192, FORM 1208, FORM 1209, FORM 1520, and FORM 1869 Bridges' Screen(s) and Attachment(s):

The Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is committed to ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and youth, and the preservation of family. DCYF seeks to assist families using the least intrusive measures possible. When certain risk criteria have been identified within the home that cannot be otherwise mitigated, but which do not necessitate court involvement, DCYF has the ability to offer short-term, voluntary services in an endeavor to stabilize the family. Voluntary services encompass an array of services provided in response to concerns of abuse and/or neglect in an effort to promote safety and mitigate risk.

Purpose

This policy outlines the criteria for voluntary services, as well as the specific procedures necessary to provide and monitor these services.

Definitions

"Action Plan" means, for the purpose of a Voluntary Case, a document to be used with families to identify specific actions and strategies to avoid, disrupt, or escape high-risk situations. It is a fluid document that may change with the family's progress. The Action Plan shall serve as the family's case plan in a Voluntary Case.

"Assessment" means an investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect completed by a Child Protective Service Worker (CPSW) pursuant to RSA 169-C:34.

"Child" means an individual who has not attained the age of 18.

"Child in Need of Services" or "CHINS" means, for the purpose of this policy, "child in need of services" as defined by RSA 169-D:2.

"CPSW" or "Child Protective Service Worker" means an employee of DCYF who is authorized by the Division to perform functions of the job classification Child Protective Service Worker.

"DCYF" or the "Division" means the Department of Health and Human Services' Division for Children, Youth and Families.

"Household Member" means any person living with the parent, guardian or custodian of the child from time to time or on a regular basis, who is involved occasionally or regularly with the care of the child.

"Placement" means the removal of a child/youth from their normal place of residence to reside in a court-ordered substitute care setting under the placement and care responsibility of DCYF.

"Respite" means, for the purpose of this policy, a situation in which a family utilizes a DCYF foster home to care for their child/youth up to 14 days through an open Voluntary Case.

"Risk" is defined as the likelihood that a child will be maltreated in the future.

"Safety Plan" means a document developed with families, inclusive of a third party/primary third party caregiver, used to identify immediate concerns, resources and tasks to avoid potential danger to the child(ren)/youth and defuse situations as the need arises. The "Safety Plan" clearly outlines what needs to be in place for the child(ren)/youth to remain free from danger.

"Solution Based Family Meeting" or "SBFM" means a formal family engagement strategy used to engage the family and their supports that draws upon their past successes in problem-solving in working towards solution-based case planning to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being.

"Voluntary Services" means short-term assistance provided to a family either during an Assessment or directly following an Assessment in which significant risk is identified.

Policy

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">I. Voluntary services may be offered only after DCYF has received a report of concern through the Central Intake Unit and the assessment process has been initiated.II. Voluntary services can be provided at any time during the Assessment, regardless of a final disposition.III. Voluntary services are meant to provide short-term assistance to a family in an effort to prevent abuse and/or neglect by:<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Providing access to DCYF's full service array, excluding placement, to meet the specific needs of families relevant to the safety and well-being of the child(ren)/youth; andB. Providing short-term monitoring in addition to services when needs are identified, but which do not warrant court intervention.IV. Voluntary services can be provided within the first 60 days of the Assessment. When assistance is required past 60 days, a Voluntary Case shall be opened (see section XII below).V. Voluntary cases are expected to close within six (6) months of the signing of the Voluntary Service Agreement (Form 1209).VI. Assessment CPSWs must consult with their Supervisor prior to offering a family voluntary services to ensure appropriateness of said services.VII. Voluntary services are not considered appropriate when it is determined that a family is better served through one of the following DCYF cases:<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Non-Court (<i>B Cases</i>);B. Court Involved Child Protective Services (CPS) Abuse and/or Neglect;C. Child In Need of Services (CHINS); or |
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- D. Delinquency.
- VIII. Voluntary services may be considered to support a non-offending parent or legal guardian(s) in the primary household when there is risk of future harm to a child by a parent not in the household absent preventative services.
- IX. If there is a finding of abuse and/or neglect prior to the initiation of voluntary services, another type of case (Non-Court or Court Involved) should be considered as a more appropriate intervention, dependent upon the level of monitoring necessary to mitigate risk.
- X. If a finding of abuse or neglect is made after the voluntary services have been provided, the assigned CPSW must consult with their Supervisor as to how to proceed. If it is determined that court intervention is more appropriate, the voluntary services will remain in place through the initial stages of filing court petitions and will close if a Court Involved case is opened.
- XI. When voluntary services (including opening a Voluntary Case) are provided, there must be:
- A. Consensus between the CPSW and family as to the needs of the family that DCYF can meet through voluntary services and how these needs relate to child safety;
 - B. A plan for how the need will be met by DCYF and then maintained by the family in the future (with this being documented in the Bridges contact log);
 - 1. An Action Plan is needed for Assessments in which paid services are put in place;
 - C. Referrals, as appropriate, to [approved paid services](#) with a plan as to how and when services will step down;
 - D. A Service Authorization Request (Form 1869) provided to the Fiscal Unit for any paid service; and
 - E. Documentation in the closing screen as to any service(s) provided, including gift, gas, and/or Pre-Paid Visa cards provided by DCYF to ensure the safety of the children.
- XII. When short-term monitoring is warranted, the District Office will open a Voluntary Services Case and make a determination as to how best to provide and monitor services.
- A. The Voluntary Case is not case connected to the Assessment;
 - B. A separate case file is created;
 - C. Voluntary Cases must encompass all of the items directly above and also have both a Voluntary Service Agreement (Form 1209) and an Action Plan that are developed with the family at the onset of opening the case;
 - D. The Action Plan will serve as the Case Plan; and
 - E. Copies of the Voluntary Service Agreement and Action Plan must be provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and any paid service providers, and will be retained in the case file.

- XIII. Short-term respite (up to 14 days per fiscal year) is available through an open Voluntary Case as necessary to support safety within the home. However, placement is not offered through voluntary services. Should placement be necessary to ensure safety, the assigned CPSW must file petitions with the Court of jurisdiction.
- A. When Voluntary Services Respite is utilized, the CPSW shall work with the custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) to complete the Voluntary Respite Agreement (Form 1208).
 - 1. The agreement will serve as the agreement for the parent(s)/guardian(s) and all children/youth entering respite care as part of a Voluntary Services case.
 - 2. Each child/youth shall have their own medical authorization for emergency care, parental permissions for certain activities, and information about the child/youth to assist in meeting their needs while in respite care.
 - B. The 14 days of respite can be consecutive or intermittent.
 - C. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not able to have their child return home within 14 days, the CPSW must consult with their Supervisor as to how to proceed.
- XIV. If new concerns are identified by the CPSW while the Assessment is still open, the new allegations can be added to the Allegation Screen and assessed through the already open Assessment. If new concerns arise after the Assessment has closed, they shall be reported to Intake.
- XV. Parental Reimbursement does not apply to voluntary services.

Responsibilities

- I. The assigned CPSW shall:
 - A. Identify with their Supervisor, families they are working with who are at risk for child maltreatment and who they believe can benefit from voluntary services;
 - B. Meet with the family to discuss voluntary services and if they agree to said services, engage the family in identifying family strengths and needs, as well as supports, and establish a plan for how DCYF will assist;
 - C. Authorize payment for any paid services by completing Form 1869 Service Authorization Request (services cannot be put in place until the service authorization is made) and/or refer to Provider Relations for requested pre-paid cards;
 - D. Meet face-to-face with the child(ren)/youth and parent(s)/guardian(s) in the home a minimum of at least one (1) time per month;
 - E. Conduct both formal (Structured Decision Making) and informal assessments for safety and risk with the family on a continual basis and take immediate action if the child(ren)/youth is/are found to be at imminent risk of harm at any time;
 - F. Monitor the delivery and effectiveness of services (when in place) by reviewing progress reports, contacting providers, and meeting with the family;
 - G. Review progress on a monthly basis to assess for appropriateness of stepping down to a less intensive service when paid services are in place; and

H. Document any short-term assistance and/or paid services provided in the Closing Screen, noting what was provided and how it was monitored.

II. The Supervisor shall:

- A. Discuss the appropriateness of any requested voluntary services with the CPSW;
- B. Make the final determination as to the appropriateness of voluntary services and/or a Voluntary Case;
- C. Monitor the appropriateness of services in place at least monthly with the assigned CPSW; and
- D. Offer guidance and support around determining when it is appropriate to end voluntary services.

Best Practice

- I. When a Voluntary Case is opened, the Assessment CPSW and the Family Services CPSW (if the case is co-managed) should meet jointly with the family initially to co-develop and sign the Voluntary Services Agreement as time and workloads allow.
- II. Whenever possible, a Solution Based Family Meeting (SBFM) shall be conducted within 30 days of opening a Voluntary Case to review strengths and needs, as well as how supports will be utilized in maintaining safety.

Practice Guidance

What types of situations might be appropriate for Voluntary Services?

- A family is struggling with meeting the physical or emotional needs of the child(ren)/youth due to financial burdens that can be overcome by short-term assistance such as paying an outstanding bill or securing needed services/supplies (relevant to preventing maltreatment and safety); or
- There is a pattern of ongoing concerns precluding DCYF's confidence in closing the Assessment, yet there is insufficient evidence which would allow DCYF to move forward with opening a Court Involved case.
- Types of situations that must not be opened for voluntary services include:
 - Situations in which safety can only be established through court intervention;
 - Situations in which it is determined that potential long-term case management is more appropriate than short-term monitoring when a finding of abuse/neglect will be made regarding a household member; or
 - Families whose child/youth is a child in need of services (CHINS) or a delinquent.

What types of services may be offered through Voluntary Services?

- DCYF short-term monitoring;
- Child Care;
- Child Health Support with a step-down to community supports;
- Family Counseling through in-home services;
- Home-Based Therapy (HBT) with a step down to Child Health Support;
- Individual or Group Outpatient Counseling;
- Individual Service Option (ISO) with a step down to HBT or CHS;
- LADC consultation through DCYF contracted LADCs;
- Other DCYF purchased services upon the Supervisor's prior approval;

- Respite up to 14 days when there is an open Voluntary Services Case;
- Substance Abuse Outpatient Counseling referrals; and
- Transportation, pursuant to policy 1916 Transportation Services.

What do I do if a family comes back for an Assessment who has already received Voluntary Services?

- The Assessment should be conducted as any other Assessment.
- Should it be determined that services are again needed to mitigate risk, the Assessment CPSW must consult with their Supervisor around how best to serve the family.
- If the new allegations are the same as, or similar to, the concerns that warranted voluntary services previously, the Assessment CPSW and the Supervisor should consider if court intervention may be more appropriate to meet the needs of the family.

What do I do if a family is offered a voluntary services and they decline?

- If a family declines voluntary services, engage them around their reasons why and be sure to document what was offered and why they declined in the Assessment; and
- Consult with your Supervisor to review the family's reason for declining and determine the best course of action.
- When closing the Assessment select the appropriate action for opening/not opening a case in the Case Connect screen and in the dialogue box enter, "Voluntary services offered and declined" along with the date they were declined. This must be the first line in the comment box.