
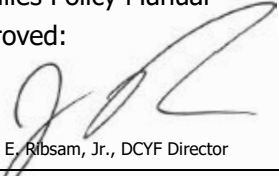


1262 CLOSING IN-HOME CASES	
Chapter: <b>Child Protective Field Services</b>	Section: <b>CPS Family Services</b>
	New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual Policy Directive: <b>19-36</b> Effective Date: <b>September 2019</b> Scheduled Review Date:
Related Statute(s): <a href="#">RSA 169-C</a> Related Admin Rule(s): Related Federal Regulation(s):	Approved:  Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr., DCYF Director Related Form(s): <b>FORM 1260, and FORM 1520</b> Bridges' Screen(s) and Attachment(s):

The Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) utilizes a team approach with children, youth, families, and community partners to help families provide for their own safety, permanency, and well-being. DCYF has an obligation to end its involvement with families in a timely manner once they have been able to demonstrate their ability to maintain safety for all children involved. Families must be engaged in the decision-making process and invited to provide input as to ending DCYF's involvement.

### Purpose

To outline CPSW procedures for determining the appropriateness of closing case when a child/youth is in their home (regardless of whether a placement occurred during the case) and the necessary steps to do so.

### Definitions

**"CASA"** or **"Court Appointed Special Advocate"** means a volunteer who serves as an advocate for an abused and/or neglected child/youth in the New Hampshire court system.

**"CPS"** means the Bureau of Field Services' Child Protective Services within DCYF.

**"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.

**"Family Level Objective"** or **"FLO"** is a statement of what the family will do to safely accomplish the high-risk everyday life event(s) that have led to the maltreatment identified in the assessment. The Family Level Objective refers to the tasks, plans, or arrangements that the whole family can and will do to improve the overall safety and security of the family. Family Level Objectives cover issues like keeping the house clean, child supervision, or proper nutrition.

**"Guardian Ad Litem"** or **"GAL"** means a court-appointed representative designated to represent the best interests of children legally considered to be incapable of managing their own affairs.

**"Individual Level Objective"** or **"ILO"** is a statement of what certain individuals (typically caretakers) in the family will do to safely manage their personal behavioral issues that have been shown to interfere with the successful accomplishment of the everyday family life tasks as identified in the assessment (and therefore the Family Level Objective). Individual Level Objectives cover issues like overcoming substance use, controlling one's anger, or maintaining emotional stability.

**"JPPO" or "Juvenile Probation and Parole Officer"** means an employee of DCYF who is authorized by the Division to perform functions of the job classification Juvenile Probation and Parole Officer.

**"NHIA"** means New Hampshire Integrated Assessment, which is the process and tools that assist the CPSW in assessing the families' safety and capacity utilizing a standardized, systematic approach to manage Child Protection Services.

**"Non-Custodial Parent"** means a parent who is not exercising physical custody of their child(ren) at the time of the Division's involvement with the family. This may include a parent who has shared physical custody of their child(ren), who has had no contact with the child(ren), or is currently incarcerated.

**"Solution Based Family Meetings" 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.

### Required Practice

- I. The CPSW and their Supervisor must continuously assess for child safety and risk factors within the family throughout the course of a case.
  - A. When a family is demonstrating that they are meeting case plan objectives and are able to maintain safety within the home, the CPSW and their Supervisor shall begin to explore the appropriateness of closing the case.
  - B. This exploration must include consultation with the following prior to the decision to close the case being made:
    1. The family;
    2. Any community agencies involved;
    3. The assigned JPPO on any co-occurring cases with Juvenile Justice Services; and
    4. The CASA/GAL on all Court involved cases.
  - C. Any services that will not be working with the family post case closure should be ended a minimum of four (4) weeks prior to closure to allow the family the ability to demonstrate that they can maintain safety independently.
- II. Once the decision to close the case has been made, the CPSW shall:
  - A. Meet with the family to discuss case closure and the process involved;
  - B. Establish clear timeframes with the family and service providers for when case activities will be completed;
  - C. Review with the family the progress made during the case process, emphasizing their efforts that were essential for the resulting changes;
  - D. Work with the family and community to identify resources and supports that are available to the family after DCYF has closed the case;
  - E. Work with the Staff Attorney to motion the Court for closure when necessary;

- F. Notify all professionals involved with the case, such as attorneys, CASA/GALs and community resources, prior to the date of case closure regarding the status of the case and any follow-up services in place;
  - G. Complete the In-Home Risk Review, as well as the Strengths and Needs Assessment in Bridges;
  - H. Notify the Fiscal Specialist of the case closure;
  - I. Prepare and submit the electronic (Bridges) and paper files for closure as outlined in Practice Guidance below; and
  - J. Complete and submit the Case Closure Summary (Form 1260) for approval.
- III. The Supervisor shall:
- A. Review and approve the NHIA tools;
  - B. Review the paper and electronic (Bridges) files;
  - C. Approve the Bridges closing and Case Closure Summary (Form 1260); and
  - D. Forward the paper file(s) to Archives.
- IV. When the case is Court involved:
- A. The Court must approve case closure as well as terminate existing court orders prior to closing the electronic and paper files; and
  - B. The CPSW needs to continue to see the family until the final order has been received.

<b>Best Practice</b>
----------------------

- I. Best practice dictates that all required practices are followed with an emphasis on the engagement of the family, and their supports, in planning for ending DCYF's involvement.
- II. The CPSW and their Supervisor shall determine if it is appropriate to close the case. In doing so, they should take into account:
  - A. The family's feelings on case closure and progress made on identified FLOs and ILOs;
  - B. Resources available to the family; and
  - C. Input of others working with the family not required in II under required practice, such as the child(ren)'s school.
- III. Once a decision has been made to close the case, the CPSW should arrange for a Solution Based Family Meeting to occur at the time and location endorsed by the family.
  - A. Participants in the meeting should include:
    - 1. The family;
    - 2. Supports identified by the family;
    - 3. The GAL or CASA; and

4. The assigned JPPO if applicable.
- B. The meeting should focus on:
1. Review of the family's support network;
  2. Recommendations for aftercare and community supports; and
  3. Celebrations of competencies achieved and other successes.
- VI. The CPSW should make and document efforts to notify any non-custodial parent(s) of the case closing and provide them an opportunity to provide input.

### Practice Guidance

#### **What if DCYF plans to close a case, but the family wishes to remain involved?**

- The CPSW should explore with the family why they want the case to remain open and they should be reminded of the progress they have made that warrants closure. If a family indicates safety concerns continue to exist, the CPSW should look to bring in supports to mitigate risk and further discuss this with their Supervisor.

#### **What if DCYF plans to close a case, but CASA or others involved do not want it to close?**

- The CPSW should explore the basis of their concerns with them and seek to build consensus around the appropriateness of closure by reiterating supports in place and progress made.

#### **How do I prepare the electronic (Bridges) and paper files to close?**

- Ensure that all contacts are entered into Bridges;
- Update all demographic screens;
- Ensure that all paperwork is filed in the case file;
  - Add a copy of the Court's order to close the case (if applicable) and any other orders in the Court section of the case file;
- Enter the reason for closing the case and date in the Bridges Case Summary Screen; and
- Complete the Case Closure Summary (Form 1260) and file it in the front of the case file.