



Administrative Policies and Procedures: 14.16

Subject:	Child Protective Services Case File Organization, Documentation and Disposition
Authority:	TCA 37-5-105; 37-5-106
Standards:	COA: PA-RPM 6.01; 6.02
Application:	To All Department of Children's Services Child Protective Services and Special Investigations Unit Employees
Policy Statement:	
All child protective services case records shall be maintained in a standardized confidential manner and shall be safeguarded from unauthorized and improper disclosure of information.	
Purpose:	
The procedures in this policy provide guidelines for the manner in which information is composed, maintained and expunged to ensure a systematic method for the creation of CPS case records. Emphasis is placed on being purposeful, specific, factual, and focus on the investigative, assessment and/or treatment process. The case record will summarize case work activity, including family strengths, efforts to address safety and risk issues, a summary of the activities of any treatment agents and/or family support teams. The record will also include the family's involvement in and reaction to services provided.	
Procedures:	
A. Confidentiality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All case records <u>must</u> be marked "CONFIDENTIAL" on the front of the folder and <u>must</u> be stored out of public view. 2. When writing case recordings, staff shall be mindful of the right to <i>confidentiality</i> and shall not include information about persons unrelated to the case, except where those persons that have a direct effect on the client child/youth and family (in which case, only relevant information shall be documented). 3. When writing case recordings, without sacrificing accuracy and completeness, staff shall be sensitive to the emotional well being of the client child/youth and family in the choice of terminology used (being mindful that the client child/youth and family may be voluntarily or involuntarily exposed to the documentation in the future). 4. The release of confidential case file information must be in accordance with Federal and State laws, statutes, rules and regulations, DCS policies 9.4, Confidential Child-Specific Records Information, 9.5, Access and Release of Confidential Child-Specific Information, 14.13 Confidentiality of Child

	<p><u>Protective Services Cases</u> and DCS Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) policies and procedures as applicable.</p>
<p>B. General Case documentation for case recordings Guidelines</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CPS General Case recording guidelines should include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Content - Includes a summary of the interactions, discussions, agreements, decisions, evidence of facts or issues that were discussed either face to face or by other contact means. Include discussions around the use of assessments and how they are being utilized in planning. Discuss how we engaged the family in exploring all factors or elements impacting their current global situation. When applicable, indicate whether or not the child/youth had 1:1 time with the worker and a brief description of that interaction. Specifically address the strengths and needs identified in all family case plans. Whatever purpose of contact was identified (<i>i.e.</i>, safety, permanency, well-being or service planning, <i>etc.</i>), the narrative needs to reflect what was discussed and how it relates to the long term view of the family case and/or in the resolution of the issues or concerns that brought them to the attention of the Department. b) Observation—describe in observable/measurable terms: individual behaviors witnessed; observations regarding the appearance of the children in relation to appropriate dress for current conditions, whether or not they appear well-nourished, any evidence of developmental delays, illness or need for medical care; the interactions among parties present including interaction with worker; significant environmental factors; safety and risk factors including observed strengths/needs; and the family’s response to interventions or services being implemented. c) Next Steps - state what is to be done next as a result of this contact, or as a natural progression of the case management process, including date/time and location of the next planned contact or follow-up. d) Transfer summary: details case activity if case is to be transitioned. e) Closing summary: a narrative description of reason for opening, current safety, risk and well-being status of child and family, classification decision and the justification, the case plan including any referrals made and the family’s reaction to case closure. 2. Case recordings must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Be relevant, reliable and written in clear and complete sentences, and b) Not include slang language or subjective/personal value judgments. 3. Abbreviations and acronyms used must be commonly understood and acceptable. 4. E-mails should not be pasted directly into case recordings. Staff should note in the narrative section that contact was made with an individual through email and noting only information pertaining to the case. Discussion of topics

	<p>unrelated to the case should not be contained within the narrative.</p> <p>5. Handwritten notes should not be maintained as part of the case record.</p>
<p>C. Case Record Composition</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each family shall have one (1) record. 2. All documents will be filed in a classification folder with two (2) dividers and the case record contents will be filed according to CS-0726 Child Protective/Non-custodial Case File Documentation and Organization Checklist. The CPS tab pages will be printed on blue copy paper. The Family Crisis Intervention Program (FCIP) tab pages will be printed on yellow copy paper. 3. The inside cover of each folder will be reserved for the Records Disposition Authority (RDA) information to be recorded. 4. The case record contents including forms will be filed in <u>ascending</u> (↑) order (most recent on top). 5. The case record will be labeled on the tab portion of the folder with the mother's or primary caregiver's last name listed first separated by a comma followed by the mother's or primary caregiver's first name.
<p>D. Case Recording Guidelines- Investigation and Assessment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A description of each case contact must be made in the case record. 2. Each contact will be documented in TFACTS case recordings within thirty (30) days from the date of the contact. 3. The components of case recordings may include the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The name of person contacted and relationship to child; b) The full date (month, day, year) and time of contact; c) Contact Type; d) Contact Method; e) Name of person making the contact (DCS employee); f) Names of persons present during the contact; g) Summary of facts and issues discussed; h) Observations of safety\risk factors including strengths and needs; i) Observations of the child/family; and j) List of the evidence that supports the facts. 4. Statements of future plan, actions or next steps.
<p>E. Supervisory</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When supervisory staff gives directions to case management staff regarding a specific action to be taken (or not taken) related to a case, that conversation

<p>Responsibility</p>	<p>will be entered by the supervisor in the case conference section in TFACTS.</p> <p>2. Supervisors will use the appropriate case file review tool for cases assigned under their supervision to ensure that appropriate case work and documentation are occurring. The case file review tool must not be filed in the case file.</p>
<p>F. Contact with DCS Legal Counsel</p>	<p>Case consultation between DCS staff and DCS Legal Counsel may be documented on the appropriate screens or case recordings in TFACTS.</p>
<p>G. Identification of closed files</p>	<p>Closed CPS records will be destroyed in accordance with the appropriate Records Disposition Authority (RDA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ RDA 2993 - Closed CPS- Non Fatality Case Files ◆ RDA 2844 - Closed CPS- Child Fatality Case Files
<p>H. Re-opened files</p>	<p>If a case is re-opened for a subsequent investigation, a new record disposition date will be determined based on the most appropriate RDA. Prior to file destruction of a case involving multiple investigations, the Team Leader/designee will confirm the RDA number.</p>
<p>I. Methods of record disposal</p>	<p>Approved methods for destroying Child Protective Services confidential paper record information will be as outlined in DCS policy 9.4, Confidential Child-Specific Information.</p>
<p>J. Disposal documentation</p>	<p>Form GS-0989, Certificate of Record Destruction, must be completed in accordance with DCS Policy 9.4, Confidential Child-Specific Information.</p>

<p>Forms:</p>	<p><u>CS-0726, Child Protective Services Case File Documentation Checklist</u> <u>GS-0989, Certificate of Record Destruction</u></p>
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<p>Collateral documents:</p>	<p><u>9.4, Confidential Child-Specific Records Information</u> <u>9.5, Access and Release of Confidential Child-Specific Information</u> <u>14.13 Confidentiality of Child Protective Services Cases</u></p>
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Glossary:	
<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>Expunge:</i>	To destroy or mark for deletion.