 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		21
Chapter:	Policy	
Subject:	Developing Policy	Page 1 of 2
Approved:	Fredrick M. Ober, Division Director	Effective: 1/25/99 FINAL
Supersedes:	Administrative Procedure 100	Dated: 9/7/90

Purpose

To outline a consistent approach to establishing and updating division policy and procedure.

Policy

The division establishes policy and procedure in the form of the Family Services Policy Manual. The Family Services Policy Manual contains information about policy, casework, specific tasks and time lines, and other issues such as supervision, training, and administrative issues. It begins with a statement of mission, which guides all policy development.

Creation and Amendment of Policy


Any person may propose the creation or amendment of a policy to the policy and practice chief. The policy and practice chief will evaluate the need for the new or amended policy and make a recommendation to the family service unit chiefs. If the unit chiefs conclude that there is a need for the policy, an appropriate staff person will be assigned to develop a draft. The development of draft policy will involve, whenever appropriate, the representatives of groups who will be affected by the policy: division employees, clients, youth in custody, foster parents, etc. The policy and practice chief will approve final drafts before distribution for review.

Review of Draft Policy

Draft policy is distributed for review electronically to all users with such access, and to other users and stakeholders in hard copy. It may be distributed in one of two forms:

- Draft policy will be distributed with a comment period of at least three weeks except under unusual circumstances; or
- Interim policy, effective as policy until replaced or withdrawn. Interim policy allows the immediate adoption of a needed policy, at the same time establishing a specific period for comments pending finalization of the policy.

Finalization of Policy

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The policy and practice chief will present a summary of comments received and a proposal for a final version to the unit chiefs and others as appropriate. The division director will approve all final policy.

Distribution of Manuals

The Family Services Policy Manual is available on-line to every employee in the department with a valid login to our computer system. It is also available on the department's Web Page. Hard copies are available, if requested to:

- each district director and casework supervisor
- each district office chief clerk or district administrative assistant;
- ESP chief;
- Woodside director;
- Commissioner;
- Division director;
- Operations manager and assistant operations manager;
- Assistant attorney general; and,
- Policy and practice chief.

Hard copy manuals will be distributed to others inside and outside the department at the discretion of the policy and practice chief. A fee may be charged for copying of the manual for individuals who do not regularly need to know and follow division policy. In addition, all policies will be available to staff and to the public on the department's home page.