Purpose

To provide an overview of the central office consultations required by division policies, promote a strong culture of safety throughout the division, support a learning culture, improve consistency of practice and decision-making, and share the risk that may exist in complex situations.

Policy

Numerous division policies require district office staff to notify or consult with central office staff before making case related decisions. This policy summarizes the required consultations and articulates the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of central office and district staff for case specific consultations. Consultations should be strength-based, solution-focused, and encourage mutual respect and collaboration.

Policies Requiring Central Office Consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Consultant</th>
<th>When/Purpose</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy 51:</strong> Screening Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td>ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator</td>
<td>Notification when sex trafficking is known or suspected in a report</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy 52:</strong> Child Safety Interventions – Investigations and Assessments</td>
<td>Policy &amp; Operations Manager</td>
<td>To waive an alleged victim interview during a CSI</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Child Safety Manager</td>
<td>To waive an alleged perpetrator interview during a CSI</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy 56:</strong> Substantiating Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td>Child Safety Manager or Director of Operations</td>
<td>To waive a substantiation when evidence gathered meets criteria for substantiation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy 61:</strong> Responding to Domestic Violence in Child Safety Interventions</td>
<td>Domestic &amp; Sexual Violence Unit</td>
<td>All reports accepted for a CSI with co-existing DV/IPV concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Significant decision-making points in a case involving DV/IPV</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy 63:</strong> Investigating Reports of Methamphetamine Manufacturing and Caretaker Methamphetamine Abuse</td>
<td>Child Safety Manager or Director of Operations</td>
<td>All intakes alleging a parent or caretaker has allowed a child to be exposed to methamphetamine production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
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| **Policy 68**: Serious Physical Injury – Investigation and Case Planning | Policy & Operations Manager | Initial notification of a serious physical injury case  
Prior to agreeing to stipulated findings of merits  
When planning for reunification |
| **Policy 76**:  
Supporting and Affirming LGBTQ Children and Youth | Commissioner’s LGBTQ Committee (convened by the Director of Operations) | All decisions about medical treatment (puberty blockers/suspenders, cross-gender hormones, fertility preservation, or gender affirming surgery), legal identity changes, and placement disagreements |
| **Policy 77**: Medical Care for Children and Youth in DCF Custody | Policy & Operations Manager  
DCF Commissioner (notification to Policy & Operations Manager) | Consent for major surgery and treatment related to serious injuries  
End of life decisions for children and youth in DCF custody |
| **Policy 82**: Juvenile Court Proceedings – CHINS  
& **Policy 83**: Juvenile Court Proceedings – Delinquency | AAG and Director of Operations or Senior Policy & Operations Manager | Confidential placements and seeking a protective order for confidential placements |
| **Policy 98**: Reunification of Abused or Neglected Children and Youth | Policy & Operations Manager | Before establishing a case plan goal of reunification for serious physical injury cases |
| **Policy 125**: Permanency Planning for Children and Youth in DCF Custody | AAG  
Permanency Planning Manager  
AAG and Permanency Planning Manager | When considering TPR and adoption as the case plan goal  
Permanent guardianship as the case plan goal for children under 12 years old  
Situations where children are freed for adoption and permanent guardianship is being considered as the case plan goal (thus leaving DCF with residual parental rights) |
### Chapter: Coordinating with Others

### Subject: Case Consultations with Central Office

#### Policy 126:
Reinstatement of Parental Rights

**Consultant**
Policy & Operations Manager and District Permanency Team

**When/Purpose**
Prior to filing a petition for reinstatement of parental rights

#### Policy 134: Serving Families Affected by HIV

**Consultant**
Commissioner’s Committee on HIV (convened by a Policy & Operations Manager)

**When/Purpose**
All case issues related to HIV and AIDS

#### Policy 137:
Antipsychotic Medications for Children in the Care of DCF

**Consultant**
UVM Fellow in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

**When/Purpose**
When a prescriber recommends antipsychotic medication under certain circumstances

#### Policy 155:
Runaway, Abducted, and Missing Children & Youth

**Consultant**
ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator

**When/Purpose**

- All cases where trafficking is known or suspected
- All cases where a child or youth is missing and suspected to be in another state
- If a child or youth has been abducted by a parent with a history of DV/IPV

#### Policy 158:
Case Consultations with Central Office

**Consultant**
Next supervisor in the operational hierarchy

**When/Purpose**
When disagreement about next steps exists in any required consultation

#### Policy 160:
Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody

**Consultant**
Policy & Operations Manager

**When/Purpose**
Before establishing a case plan goal of APPLA or Independent Living

#### Policy 162:
Juvenile Probation

**Consultant**
Juvenile Justice Director

**When/Purpose**
If recommending probation for more than 24 months

#### Policy 181:
Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC)

**Consultant**
ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator

**When/Purpose**
All cases involving the ICPC

#### Policy 182:
Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ)

**Consultant**
ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator

**When/Purpose**
All cases involving the ICJ

#### Policy 195:
Guardianship Assistance Program

**Consultant**
Permanency Planning Manager

**When/Purpose**
Eligibility for guardianship assistance

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1 Acknowledgement that the consultation required by policy 137 is provided by a division partner, not central office staff as indicated in the title of this policy.
Consultation Approach

Utilizing the coaching approach to consultations is a way to expand knowledge in specific areas of practice, inform decision-making, and support critical thinking skills that enhance division employees’ ability to address the safety, permanency, and well-being needs of children and families. Consultation and coaching are an important component of a learning culture intended to support staff in the acquisition of knowledge and skills in a psychologically safe manner.

Central office consultants should present information in a manner that differentiates between decisions guided by the requirements of division policy or state/federal laws and areas with discretion that can involve creative thinking and strategizing within the team. Central office consultants will provide a summary at the end of the consultation to provide clarity on policy mandates and areas where district staff may use discretion.

Central office consultants will participate in coaching training and other professional development activities to develop and maintain effective consultation skills.
Consultation and Supervision

It is important to distinguish the difference between consultation and supervision. While consultation compliments supervision, decisions about next steps are made by individuals in the operational chain of command. When consultation is provided and there is disagreement about next steps, the next supervisor in the operational hierarchy will be brought into the conversation to help determine the division’s approach.

Multiple Consultants

Complex cases may require the expertise of multiple consultants. In these situations, a point person will be identified to facilitate the discussion and decision-making process to ensure coordination of next steps. This person will also be responsible for documenting decisions, next steps, and sending the information to all individuals involved with the consultation.