
**ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY
CFS OPERATIONS MANUAL**

Effective Date: April 5, 2012

Number: B-0117

Child Fatality Reviews

Purpose	To provide guidelines for Child Fatality Reviews conducted by Children and Family Services (CFS) Quality Assurance (QA) Program staff.
Approved	This policy was approved by Gary Taylor, Director of CFS, on April 5, 2012. <i>Signature on file.</i>
Most Recent Revision	<p>This revision of the Policy and Procedure (P&P) contains clarification of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program Manager’s (PM) role in providing feedback to staff resulting from an In-House Child Fatality Review meeting• Identification and assignment of action items made at an In-House Child Fatality Review meeting, with subsequent follow-up and review at the next scheduled In-House Child Fatality Review meeting
Background	Although not mandated to do so by law, CFS conducts Child Fatality Reviews in pursuit of best child welfare practice. In addition, CFS collaboratively reviews any child fatality report, involving any child for whom a petition has been filed, or any Orange County Juvenile Court dependent, with the Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC), per Miscellaneous Court Order 528.7.
Legal Mandates	<p>The following legal and regulatory references were utilized in the development of this P&P:</p> <p>Welfare and Institution Code Section 830 authorizes the disclosure and exchange of information and writings between members of a multidisciplinary personnel team engaged in the prevention,</p>

identification, management, or treatment of child abuse or neglect including any incidents of child abuse that may also be part of a juvenile court record or otherwise designated as confidential under state law. The team member in possession of the information or writing must reasonably believe it is generally relevant to the prevention, identification, management, or treatment of child abuse, or the provision of child welfare services.

[Welfare and Institution Code Section 5328](#) authorizes the disclosure of information and records between persons who are trained and qualified to serve on multidisciplinary personnel teams. The information and records sought to be disclosed must be relevant to the provision of child welfare services or the investigation, prevention, identification, management, or treatment of child abuse and neglect.

[Welfare and Institution Code Section 18951 \(d\)](#) defines “multidisciplinary personnel” as any team of three or more persons who are trained in the prevention, identification, management, or treatment of child abuse or neglect cases and who are qualified to provide a broad range of services related to child abuse or neglect.

[Welfare and Institution Code Section 18964](#) authorizes a person who is trained and qualified to serve on a multidisciplinary team to be a member of the team for a particular case whether or not the person is serving on the team. The designated team must specify its reasons, in writing, for deeming that person to be a member of the team. The person deemed a member may receive and disclose information relevant to a particular case as though he or she were a member of the team.

[Penal Code Section 11167.5](#) allows the disclosure of confidential reports of suspected child abuse or neglect and information contained therein to specified persons or agencies including multidisciplinary personnel teams as defined in WIC 18951(d).

[Orange County Juvenile Court Miscellaneous Order 528.7 \(Authorization for Inspection of Records, Access to Minors, and Meeting Participation by the Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission\)](#) authorizes the Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission to inspect and receive copies of relevant records of minors under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court; allows the Juvenile Justice Commission to apply to the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court for an order seeking copies of any available medical or psychological reports of minors under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court; orders the notification of the Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission of any incident in which serious injury, or death, of a child under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile

Court occurs; authorizes the Juvenile Justice Commission to participate on the Child Death Review Committee, including the sharing of case information related to the review whenever a child is under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court and is the subject of the review.

Definitions None.

POLICY

CFS Child Fatality Reviews

Child Fatality Reviews will be completed by CFS staff under the following circumstances:

- A. The death of all children **currently receiving child welfare services from Orange County**, regardless of the reported cause of death.
- B. The death of all children suspected of resulting from child abuse or neglect when there was **prior Orange County CFS involvement**. This includes:
 - Emergency Response referrals
 - Voluntary or court ordered Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, and Permanency Planning Services
 - Voluntary Placement
 - Children for whom a petition has been filed with Juvenile Court

Referral to Quality Assurance

The CFS QA Program is notified of child fatalities by *Special Incident Report (SIR) (F063-03-48)*, pursuant to SSA Administrative P&Ps [Client Death/Serious Incident Notification Dependent Children and Voluntary Supervision Cases \(D 9\)](#) and [Special Incident Report \(F 13\)](#).

Goals of the Review

CFS Child Fatality Reviews are intended to:

- Identify the circumstances of child deaths
- Confirm CFS compliance with policy, legal requirements, regulations, and best child welfare practices
- Identify needed policy and/or procedural modifications
- Identify education and training needs for CFS staff and the community

Review Process QA staff is responsible for conducting Child Fatality Reviews. The review process will include, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- A. Preliminary review of all child deaths reported to the Child Abuse Registry (CAR). This review will determine if a Child Fatality Review is necessary per the review and goals outlined above.
- B. Review of the child’s medical records, autopsy report, and all other available records relevant to the child’s death.
- C. Review of the child’s CFS electronic and written case file, current or previous services provided by CFS, previous referrals to CFS, and related information (e.g., medical records, police reports, Coroner’s report, etc.) deemed relevant by QA.
- D. Interviews of persons involved in the child’s referral/case and/or death, as appropriate.
- E. Identification of case management and procedural issues, including compliance with state regulations and CFS P&Ps.

Note: QA may re-contact staff, (i.e., PM, Senior Social Services Supervisor [SSSS], Senior Social Worker [SSW]), in order to clarify information that was obtained during the initial Review Process via interviews of staff involved in the child’s referral or case.

Child Fatality Review Report—CFS Review

QA staff will prepare a draft report summarizing the results of the Child Fatality Review within 90 days of notification of the child’s death. The written report will include:

- The deceased child’s identifying information
- A brief summary of CFS involvement
- A brief summary of the circumstances of the child’s death
- Recommendations for P&P compliance or revision

In-House Child Fatality Review Meeting

An In-House Child Fatality Review meeting will be held monthly to review the results and recommendations of the Child Fatality Review. The QA PM and QA SSSS will present the report to the In-House Child Fatality Review participants, including CFS Deputy Directors, PMs, County Counsel, and other attendees as invited, for discussion on all relevant issues.

The In-House Child Fatality Review will be held within 30 days after completion of the report, not to exceed 120 days from the date of notification of the child's death, unless extenuating circumstances require a lengthier review period.

Note: Planning and Permanency Services Deputy Director and QA PM will discuss and agree on any extension requested. Status updates will be provided to the CFS Deputy Directors every 30 days until the report is complete.

Action items will be identified at the end of each In-House Child Fatality Review meeting. Action items will be assigned to appropriate staff for completion, with subsequent follow-up and review at the next scheduled In-House Child Fatality Review meeting.

PMs will provide staff with feedback on all pertinent issues that are discussed at the In-House Child Fatality Review meeting and will ensure implementation and compliance.

**Child Fatality
Review
Report—JJC
Review**

A CFS Deputy Director, the QA PM, and QA staff will meet quarterly with representatives of the JJC to collaboratively review any fatalities of dependent children, or of children for whom a petition has been filed.

QA will schedule the meetings and notify the JJC 10 calendar days before the date of the cases to be reviewed, identifying the following:

- Deceased child's name
- Date of birth
- Date and cause of death
- DP or J number
- Review date

The outcome of any action items identified during the In-House Child Fatality Review meeting will be documented in the final written report to the JJC.

Seven calendar days prior to the meeting date, final written reports will be made available for the JJC to review in CFS offices. The final written reports will also be made available to the JJC to review during the quarterly meetings.

REFERENCES

Attachments and CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards

Hyperlinks are provided below to access attachments to this P&P and any CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards that are referenced.

None.

Hyperlinks

Users accessing this document by computer may create a direct connection to the following references by clicking on them.

- CFS P&P [Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities \(A-0204\)](#)
 - SSA Administrative P&P [Client Death/Serious Incident Notification Dependent Children and Voluntary Supervision Cases \(D 9\)](#)
 - SSA Administrative P&P [Special Incident Report \(F 13\)](#)
-

Other Sources

Other printed references include the following:

None.

REQUIRED FORMS

Online Forms

Required forms listed below may be printed out and completed, or completed online, and may be accessed by clicking on the link provided.

Form Name	Form Number
Special Incident Report	F063-03-48

Hard Copy Forms

Forms listed below must be completed in hard copy (including multi-copy NCR forms). ***For reference purposes only***, links are provided to view these hard copy forms, where available.

Form Name	Form Number
None.	

**CWS/CMS
Forms**

The following required forms may **only** be obtained in CWS/CMS. ***For reference purposes only***, links are provided to view these CWS/CMS forms, where available.

	Form Name	Form Number
	None.	

Brochures

Brochures to distribute in conjunction with this procedure include:

	Brochure Name	Brochure Number
	None.	