



Iowa Department of Human Services

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GENERAL LETTER NO. 17-C(1)-11

ISSUED BY: Bureau of Child Welfare and Community Services,
Division of Adult, Children, and Family Services

SUBJECT: Employees' Manual, Title 17, Chapter C(1), **CASE PLANNING PROCEDURES**, Contents (page 1), revised; page 30, revised; and page 30a, new.

Summary

Chapter 17-C(1) is revised to specify the time frame for completing case notes. Initial case notes shall be completed within the first 60 days from the date the child enters foster care or the date the Department opens a child service case, whichever occurs first. Thereafter, case notes may be completed periodically throughout the life of the case but, at a minimum, must be completed at each six month review and whenever the case plan is updated or revised.

Effective Date

Immediately.

Material Superseded

This material replaces the following pages from Employees' Manual, Title 17, Chapter C(1):

<u>Page</u>	<u>Date</u>
Contents (page 1)	July 27, 2012
30	April 8, 2011

Additional Information

Refer questions about this general letter to your area social work administrator.

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Documenting Family Participation in Case Plan Development

1. Review the plan and the process that led to the development of the plan with the family and others involved in the plan.
2. Review in detail the identified goals and action steps.
3. Make modifications to the plan that may be appropriate and acceptable.
4. Affirm development of the plan by the participants:
 - ◆ Document participation in the development of the case plan on the “Signature and Notifications” page.
 - ◆ If the family was not part of the development of the case plan, document the reason in this section.

Case Notes

Initial case notes shall be completed within the first 60 days from the date the child enters foster care or the date the Department opens a child service case, whichever occurs first. Thereafter, case notes may be completed periodically throughout the life of the case but no less frequently than:

- ◆ At each six-month case review and
- ◆ Whenever the *Case Plan* is updated or revised.

It is important to capture practice in a written narrative form. Case notes is an evolving document that provides a written record of the interventions, progress, and efforts of those involved in the case as the case moves toward permanency and ultimately safe case closure. Case notes serve as a reference document throughout the life of the case and may be made available to the family, attorneys, or the court upon request.

Case notes may include case contacts, observations, interventions, or events. A sequential format should be followed when writing case notes. Case notes should be succinct yet offer the appropriate level of detail so to present a clear understanding as to what has occurred in the life of the case. The tone of the narrative should be neutral and objective and written in a professional manner using complete sentences.

The substance of the case notes should reflect and support the content of the *Case Plan*, *Safety Assessments*, and *Risk Reassessments*. The narrative may include the worker’s professional opinions and analysis but these should be differentiated from statements of fact by specifically identifying them as such.

Reviewing the Case Plan

Link to [Policy](#)

Review the case plan when:

- ◆ There is a significant change in concerns, risk factors, or strategies.
- ◆ At a minimum of every six months.
- ◆ Before any judicial or administrative review.
- ◆ When the family team has determined significant progress has occurred on the case plan goals.

Use the case plan review section to document:

- ◆ Progress and barriers to achieving the permanency goal.
- ◆ Achievement of desired results and case plan action steps.
- ◆ Whether the child continues to be at “imminent risk of removal” from home if in-home services were not provided and why.
- ◆ If the permanency goal is changed.
- ◆ When the case is ready to close.