



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Interim Secretary

DATE: November 7, 2014

TO: Regional Managing Directors

THROUGH: ^{Fabruia Goodland for Pete Digre} Pete Digre, Deputy Secretary
Janice Thomas, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare

FROM: Traci Leavine, Director of Child Welfare Practice

SUBJECT: Foster Parent Investigations

PURPOSES: The two purposes of this memorandum are to raise awareness among all staff of the Quality Parenting Initiative in Florida, and to remind child protective investigators of the requirements to provide frequent communication to foster parents, just as you would bio-parents, who are the subject of an investigation.

The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) in Florida has brought attention to the critical role the foster parent plays as partners on the professional child welfare team. Each CBC lead agency has a QPI lead responsible for coordinating the QPI teams and meetings. The QPI teams are made up of child welfare partners from the local community, and are a great forum for communication between foster parents, case managers, child protective investigators, licensing specialists, adoptions counselors, guardians ad litem, and attorneys. The attached "Florida's Quality Parenting Initiative" document contains additional information on QPI.

While QPI has facilitated great progress in partnering, there is still a need for investigators to increase communications with foster parents. Foster parents should be included in staffings, should be provided information throughout the investigation process as to status, and must receive an investigation closure letter indicating the outcome of the investigation, as well as appeal information for verified reports. Below is an excerpt from CFOP 175-12:

*(7) When the CPI makes initial contact with the foster parent, the **Child Protective Investigations Involving Foster Parents Information Sheet (CF/PI 175-73, available in DCF Forms)** shall be provided, listing the intake number, CPI name and contact number, and the CPI Supervisor's name and contact number. The CPI shall explain the investigative process to the foster parent and inform the foster parent that he/she may contact the CPI or CPIS at any time with questions/concerns regarding the investigation.*

*(8) **An initial staffing shall occur within the first two weeks of receipt of the investigation. All parties with pertinent information shall be notified and the CPIS***

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

may determine who shall attend (discretion in inviting foster parents shall be utilized when there are pending criminal charges, if the staffing would interfere in the CPI investigation, when there are safety reasons, or when this would not be in the best interest of the child).

(a) If an investigation closure decision is not known at the time of the staffing, **a follow-up staffing shall occur to include the same parties involved.**

(b) **CPI staff will notify the parties of the investigation outcome and how the investigation maltreatment(s) will be founded and closed.**

(c) Notifications and scheduling of staffings shall be developed by each region or circuit to best suit the individual community needs.

(9) **Investigation closure letters shall be sent out for all investigations no later than 15 calendar days from investigation closure.**

ACTION REQUIRED: Please disseminate this information to all child protective investigations staff, and emphasize the importance of partnering and communicating with foster parents in all circumstances, but particularly in investigations of foster parents from the time of commencement until the time of closure. Please ensure all staff are following the protocols set forth in CFOP 175-12. Encourage child protective investigators to participate in QPI events in your community.

CONTACT INFORMATION: For additional information, please contact Carrie Toy in the Office of Child Welfare at (850) 717-4491 or carrie_toy@dcf.state.fl.us.

Attachments:

Child Protective Investigations Involving Foster Parents Information Sheet CF/PI 175-73

CFOP 175-12, Intakes and Response to Foster Care Referrals and Investigations Involving a Foster Parent

Florida's Quality Parenting Initiative

cc: Regional Family and Community Services Directors
Community-Based Care CEOs
Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association