

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>158</h1>
Chapter:	Coordinating with Others	
Subject:	Case Consultations with Central Office	Page 1 of 5
Approved:	Aryka Radke, Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 8/10/2023
Supersedes:	Family Services Policy 158	Dated: 6/15/2023

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

Policy	Consultant	When/Purpose
Policy 51: Screening Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect	ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator	Notification when sex trafficking is known or suspected in a report
Policy 52: Child Safety Interventions – Investigations and Assessments	Child Safety Manager	To waive an alleged victim interview during a CSI
	Child Safety Manager	To waive an alleged perpetrator interview during a CSI
Policy 56: Substantiating Child Abuse and Neglect	Child Safety Manager or Director of Operations	To waive a substantiation when evidence gathered meets criteria for substantiation
Policy 61: Responding to Domestic Violence in Child Safety Interventions	Domestic & Sexual Violence Unit	All reports accepted for a CSI with co-existing DV/IPV concerns Significant decision-making points in a case involving DV/IPV
Policy 63: Investigating Reports of Methamphetamine Manufacturing and Caretaker Methamphetamine Abuse	Child Safety Manager or Director of Operations	All intakes alleging a parent or caretaker has allowed a child to be exposed to methamphetamine production

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Policy	Consultant	When/Purpose
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	Consent for major surgery and treatment related to serious injuries
	DCF Commissioner (notification to Policy & Operations Manager)	End of life decisions for children and youth in DCF custody
Policy 82: Juvenile Court Proceedings – CHINS	Policy & Operations Manager	Prior to agreeing to stipulated findings of merits for serious physical injury cases
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 85: Minor Guardianships Through the Probate Division of the Superior Court	Permanency Planning Manager	Cases involving minor guardianships with significant complexity or disagreement with partners.
Policy 93: Kinship, Foster, and Pre-Adoptive Parent Training	Deputy Commissioner	Waiver requests for good cause to not meet the pre-adoptive training requirements (<i>Fostering to Forever</i> or <i>Families Forever</i>).
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

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Policy	Consultant	When/Purpose
Policy 125: Permanency Planning for Children and Youth in DCF Custody	AAG	When considering TPR and adoption as the case plan goal
	Permanency Planning Manager	Permanent guardianship as the case plan goal for children under 12 years old
	AAG and Permanency Planning Manager	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)
Policy 126: Reinstatement of Parental Rights	Policy & Operations Manager and District Permanency Team	Prior to filing a petition for reinstatement of parental rights
	ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator	Situations where a former parent resides out-of-state and reinstatement of parental rights or a trial placement is being considered
Policy 137: Antipsychotic Medications for Children in the Care of DCF	UVM Fellow in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry ¹	When a prescriber recommends antipsychotic medication under certain circumstances
Policy 155: Runaway, Abducted, and Missing Children & Youth	ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator	All cases where trafficking is known or suspected All cases where a child or youth is missing and suspected to be in another state
	Domestic & Sexual Violence Unit	If a child or youth has been abducted by a parent with a history of DV/IPV
Policy 158: Case Consultations with Central Office	Next supervisor in the operational hierarchy	When disagreement about next steps exists in any required consultation
Policy 160: Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Policy & Operations Manager	Before establishing a case plan goal of APPLA or Independent Living
Policy 162: Juvenile Probation	Juvenile Justice Director	If recommending probation for more than 24 months

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.

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Policy	Consultant	When/Purpose
Policy 181: Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children	ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator	All cases involving the ICPC
Policy 182: Interstate Compact on Juveniles	ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator	All cases involving the ICJ
Policy 195: Guardianship Assistance Program	Permanency Planning Manager	Eligibility for guardianship assistance
Policy 196: Post-Adoption Contact Agreements	Permanency Planning Manager or designated PACA Consultant	When a post-adoption contact agreement is being considered or developed
Policy 250: Reporting and Responding to Staff Safety Threats	Staff Safety Team	All staff safety threats and incidents requiring a Staff Safety Incident Form (FS-110) All foster/kinship parent threats and incidents requiring an FS-110
Policy 262: Conflicts of Interest	Policy & Operations Manager	When placing a child or youth in DCF custody into the home of other department staff (ESD, CDD, OCS, OEO, and DDS) If an employee becomes the conditional custodian of a child/youth served by the division. If an employee becomes the foster parent or caregiver of a child in another state's custody.
	Deputy Commissioner	All waiver requests included in Policy 262
Policy 270: Damage Claim Expenses	Policy & Operations Manager	Notification of all injuries to people or animals caused by a child or youth in DCF custody
	Director of Operations	All instances of infestations, such as bed bugs.

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

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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.