



## Case Management Roles and Responsibilities Overview

The change that is planned for January in the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas involves assigning to lead contractor staff the case management decisions that Children and Family Services (CFS) staff have been performing. CFS staff take on a new and key role of analyzing recommendations, information and reports provided by contract case managers in order to assure:

- That the child's best interest is addressed and that reasonable efforts have been made to prevent the removal of a child from the family; or,
- If a child or youth has been removed, that reasonable efforts are made to return the child if possible or that a plan is developed and implemented that leads to the adoption or guardianship for the child.

This new "oversight" role of CFS staff is different in court-involved cases than in non-court involved cases because of requirements of state law for CFS decision-making in court cases:

- In non-court involved cases, when a child is determined to be unsafe and the case is referred to the lead contractor, the lead contractor assumes all case management responsibilities. No work is presented to CFS staff for review until a recommendation is made by the contract case manager for case closure. At that point, the CFS staff role is to confirm that reasonable efforts have been made for the child to remain with the family, that the safety threats that brought the family to the attention of CFS have been eliminated or mitigated, that aftercare services are available to the family, and that it is in the best interest of the child for the case to be closed. While lead contract case managers will not be presenting recommendations to CFS staff until case closure, the CFS role during the family's involvement in the child welfare system will be in conducting quality assurance (QA) reviews to assess contractor compliance with policies. The tool or tools to conduct this review are being developed.
- In court-involved cases, CFS staff takes on a stronger "oversight" role. When a child or youth is made a ward of the State, the law requires us to have certain decision making authority. In these cases, the lead contract case manager will present recommendations for case plans and court reports that CFS staff will review and present to the court. The review will focus on an assessment of reasonable efforts and best interest of the child. We also anticipate that, depending on each court and likely at least in the initial stages of this change, that CFS staff will be required to attend court hearings and be prepared to testify. In addition to the CFS role in reviewing lead contract case manager recommendations, CFS staff will conduct quality assurance (QA)

reviews to assess contractor compliance with policies. The tool or tools to conduct this review are being developed.

We anticipate that, for ongoing cases, each CFS staff will be responsible for oversight in approximately 80 family cases. While this number may seem high, it's important to remember that the change in roles and responsibilities refocuses CFS efforts on oversight rather than the day-to-day case activities and decision-making that are part of case management.

Because this is a major shift in how we do the work and how lead contractors do the work, there will be some time of transition for both of us as we get used to the new roles and responsibilities. It's important that CFS staff work closely and collaboratively with the lead contract case managers in order to make this transition in roles and responsibilities work the best for the children and families we serve.