

Overview of Child Welfare Community Based Service Contracts
September 24, 2004

Children and Family Services is committed to the vision that “All Children are safe in nurturing families and communities” and our mission of “Prevention, Protection and Preservation in child’s time.”

Family centered practice principles and community collaborations are at the core of our vision, the goal of the Systems of Care grant, and the basis of our state plan. These things will reinforce collaboration between SRS, families and community partnerships as well as promote increasing efficiency with the provision of child welfare services to families.

The major SRS objective which I think is what we are all about is to help maintain the family as a healthy functioning unit, if possible.

This philosophical base is at the heart of the new contracts which will begin July 1, 2005.

The new contracts address issues that were identified in stakeholder and consumer meetings across the state. We went out and talked to everyone to gain input as to the new structure of program and fiscal design. Workgroups identified by the RFP steering committee also provided input.

Issues identified were:

- Child transitions between contractors delayed permanencies
- Per child per month payment structure increased length of stay in foster care and adoption
- Services were focused on the child—not the family
- Youth aging out of the foster care system are not prepared
- Foster families often felt neglected and not part of the team
- Evidence-based practice was not rewarded
- Need to find a way to balance payment structure, accountability, and outcomes
- Need to find a way to balance desire for competition with need for collaboration

The 2004 RFP’s address these issues. CFS has 3 RFP’s that have been released and bid upon. The new contracts are called:

- Family Preservation Services,
- Reintegration Services, and
- Adoption Services

The Family Preservation and Reintegration Service contracts are regional contracts and the Adoption Service contract is statewide.

CFS essentially is “raising the bar” to enhance the delivery of services for child welfare. The new contracts are designed to improve continuity, increase outcomes of children remaining in their home, fewer removals, reduced time in out of home placement, and increase timeliness of permanency for children.

The contracts are designed so that children and their families partner with their service providers

and SRS to develop a plan to increase the likelihood that the child will remain in the home or return to permanency more quickly and with less disruption in their life.

When a child and family comes to the attention of SRS because of abuse or neglect, SRS will work with the family and determine safety of the child as part of the investigation process. If the child can be maintained at home with services a referral will be made directly to the Family Preservation contractor. If safety is an issue and the child must be removed from the home, SRS will make a referral directly to the Reintegration contractor.

The contractor who gets the referral initially will follow the child and family throughout the life of the case. There are no transitions between contractors. All Family Preservation and Reintegration contractors will provide a continuum of services including adoption.

The Adoption Contractor will provide services to the other contractors when there is not an identified resource for adoption. The Adoption contractor will be responsible for recruitment, training, preparation, retention and support of the adoptive/resource family. If there is no identified family for the child, the Family Preservation and Reintegration contractor will request adoption recruitment and matching services through SRS from the Adoption contractor. There is heavy emphasis on collaboration between the Family Preservation/Reintegration contractor and the Adoption contractor. They both will be accountable to the outcomes of Safety, Permanency and Well-being.

The outcomes set in the new contracts are in your packet.

Enhancements in the new service delivery child welfare programs include:

- An increased emphasis on community partnerships. Community-based partnerships serve as a vehicle for much of the service delivery to families
- We do not seek to tell the family what to do but to create an environment where families can best determine their own needs—family meetings
- We must ensure that services are planned and directed toward teaching the family skills to function on their own
- The new contracts are structured to improve outcomes by early identification of potential resources and kin through the active planning process. Delays which occurred in our current contracts will be drastically reduced—such as changing contractors, changing placement and duplication of gathering of information and assessment.
- Placement with kin and within their community is a required first step in the placement of children.
- For Reintegration contract—a meeting must be held within 24 hours of referral and must

include SRS staff participation. SRS staff must step up to the plate and provide resources that have been identified with the family.

- Concurrent planning will be used for all children in OOH placement
- Children in OOH placement must be able to remain in their same school
- Contractors are expected to fully share foster homes with each other to meet the needs of Kansas children and families
- Children and youth will have life skills and developmental milestones assessed and services provided to address identified needs
- We must ensure that youth who age out of the system have at least one positive relationship with an adult who can serve as a mentor when they leave foster care.
- A child must have a voice in decisions that impact his or her life.
- CFS expects that all care givers work with the birth family as a role model and mentor
- Family interactions must be as frequent as possible....more visits...go home faster
- Physical and mental health services will be accessible to the children through the medical card and these costs will not be a part of the contractor's rate.
- The Adoption contractor must develop a continuum of services for children being adopted who have no identified family that must include recruitment, assessment, and preparation of families who can adopt the children we have in custody; typically we need families for older children, children with special needs and sibling groups
- All contracts have strong program outcomes geared at achieving Safety, Permanency and Well-being.

The payment structure will be very different in the new contracts:

- Family Preservation will be paid in 3 installments, at the point of referral, the 45th day and the 90th day. The aftercare period is 12 months. If the family does not engage in services or the child goes into foster care prior to the 45th day, the last 2 payments will not be made. If the child goes into foster care prior to the 90th day, the last payment will not be made. In each of these cases the contractor would start the Tier One rate.
- Reintegration contract will be reimbursed through a tiered payment system. The first 6 months after the referral the contractor will receive a Tier One rate which will be an enhanced amount. A Tier 2 rate will be paid for months 7-12, covering what is projected to

be the average monthly cost for services and maintenance for a child in out of home placement. Month 13 and beyond, the contractor will be paid a reduced Tier 3 rate. The tier rate structure is expected to provide an incentive to the contractors to move quickly to either reintegrate the child or find another permanency such as adoption or guardianship. There will be a 12 month aftercare period.

- Adoption contractor will be paid a flat monthly amount to recruit and train a pool of potential families willing to adopt, and to provide matching services to the Family Preservation and Reintegration contractors.

Additional points:

- SRS has three teams helping with the transition and cultural change. The Core team provides oversight and direction of the other two teams which are the Cultural team and Transition team.
- The cultural team is working on helping SRS staff in the field make the cultural change. This is huge for SRS staff. We have not seen this type of cultural change in SRS ever. We have been talking about FCP for a couple of years now and we are finally beginning to see the fruits of our efforts.
- The transition team is helping with the nuts and bolts of the actual transition. We want to make it as painless as possible for our families. For example, families in the aftercare period on June 30, 2005 will not transition from their current provider. Families who have reintegrated and families whose adoption are finalized will still be served by the current contractor. Children who are in out of home placement on June 30, 2005 will be transferred to the Reintegration contractor based on their home county. The Family Preservation contractor will not inherit any cases on July 1. They will start from scratch and build their clientele as they go.
- The contract catchment areas will match the six new SRS regional boundaries, except the SRS SC region will be divided. The counties in the former Hutchinson area will remain with the western contract catchment area to provide a population base for the region. The remaining counties of the SC region will join the SE contract catchment area.
- The contracts will be for 4 years with an option of a one two year extension

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