

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY ASSESSMENT (CFA)

*Effective: April 2005*

## **PURPOSE**

Assessment begins at initial contact with a family and continues until the family's case is safely closed. It is used to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the family as individuals and as a system. Comprehensive family assessments shall include, at a minimum, the following information for each family member.

- Developmental, behavioral, emotional, educational, and family history; and
- Information related to behavioral, emotional, educational, and medical/physical functioning.

Each family member's information is then analyzed in order to:

- create a basis for informed decision-making;
- identify the nature and extent of underlying conditions; and
- develop a strengths/needs based individualized service plan (ISP) that (1) helps family members reduce or eliminate risks and increase their strengths so they can provide a safe, stable home for their children without continued DHR intervention or (2) when the children are unable to safely remain with family, locate and finalize a safe, permanent home for them.

Four (4) areas of family functioning are utilized when gathering information from family members and other pertinent individuals in order to develop a comprehensive family assessment. These areas are parent functioning, child functioning, family functioning, and the family's community. Questions pertaining to each of the areas are included in the CFA Guide (located in the *Appendix* of ISP policy), not as an all-inclusive list of questions to ask or areas to explore, but as a tool to stimulate thinking as information is gathered. Workers must then consider all information obtained from and about the family in order to document their professional assessment of the family's situation.

## **THE CFA AS AN INTAKE EVALUATION**

The CFA may serve as a Medicaid rehabilitative service "intake evaluation" and be billed once per calendar year when all of the required information is completed for each Medicaid eligible child (per *Medicaid Provider Manual*; Chapter 105; Rehabilitative Services – DHR, DYS, DMH). If a child does not have "employment/vocational history," "military service history," and/or "legal history," the "N/A" box must be checked or each section must contain documentation that there is no history for the child.

Information required for an intake evaluation includes:

- Family history
- Educational history
- Employment/vocational history

- Military service history
- Legal history
- Relevant medical background
- Psychological/psychiatric treatment history
- Alcohol/drug use history
- Mental status examination
- A description/summary of the significant problems being experienced

**The intake evaluation must be completed before any other Medicaid rehabilitative services can be claimed or billed.** If it is necessary to authorize services prior to the CFA's full completion, the following areas, at a minimum, must be completed.

- Each family member's demographic information (Basic Social Service Information, PSD-DAR-723);
- "Child Functioning" section (including the DSM or V629 diagnosis) for each child in the family; and
- Worker's signature and date signed.

### **INITIAL COMPLETION AND UPDATES**

The CFA must be fully completed (including supervisory review and approval) within thirty (30) days of the date that a family's case is opened to on-going child welfare services.

In situations where children are summarily removed from their home and the initial ISP must be conducted within seventy-two (72) hours, document all known information and the minimum requirements for an intake evaluation as noted above. All sections must then be fully completed within thirty (30) days.

### **UPDATES**

The CFA must be updated, at a minimum, within twelve (12) months of the initial completion date (i.e., the date that all sections have been fully completed) and every twelve (12) months thereafter as long as the family's case remains open to child welfare services.

Updates shall be completed by entering:

- the date in the "Current update completed" field; and
- a brief summary of the year's contacts/changes for each heading preceded by a marginal date (i.e., date of current update).
  - If no changes occurred for a particular heading, enter documentation to that effect. This is required for the CFA to serve as an intake evaluation.

### **FILING**

Print a hard (i.e., paper) copy of the CFA and file the current CFA with the current ISP:

1. on the right hand side of the single file folder case records; and
2. in the "white" folder of the accordion file case records.

It is strongly recommended that workers store a soft (i.e., automated) copy of the CFA at the location of their choice in their PC or on diskette. This will allow updates to be more easily completed at a later time.

## **CFA FORMAT**

The CFA format is divided into 3 major headings. The first heading, *Information From The Case Record*, is intended to capture general information about the family.

The second heading, *Information From The Family And Other Pertinent Individuals*, is intended to capture detailed information about the family members. The information for this section is obtained from individual family members and other individuals knowledgeable about the family.

### Information From The Family And Other Pertinent Individuals

This heading contains 4 subheadings which are used to document substantive information obtained about the family members and their community. The "CFA Guide" has been developed to assist child welfare staff with completion of the CFA. The Guide contains suggested questions and prompts that staff may use when interviewing family members and other individuals. Refer to *ISP policy's Appendix* for a copy of the CFA Guide.

The "Parent/Caregiver Functioning" section and the "Child Functioning" must be completed for each parent/caregiver (including non-custodial parents) and each child, respectively. A separate section is needed for each person; therefore, the format of the appropriate section must be copied and pasted into the CFA to provide space for each individual's information.

The third heading, *Worker's Professional Analysis And Conclusions*, is the section where child welfare staff document their analysis and conclusions based on the information obtained about the family. Appropriate completion of this section is essential to the development of a successful ISP.

This section should include, at a minimum:

- any safety threats and/or risks of maltreatment;
- each family member's strengths and needs; and
- identification of known underlying conditions.

The CFA is then fully completed once documentation has been entered into each section; the worker selects the appropriate response regarding intake evaluation requirements being met; the worker enters his/her name, signs and dates the form; and the supervisor reviews the CFA, enters his/her name, and signs and dates the form.