

Policy

Protective Services can justify its intrusion upon the privacy of a family only on the premise that it has information which leads it to believe that children are neglected or abused. Thus, when neglect or abuse is no longer noted, the Protective Services intervention should cease.

For the families who are Protective Services clients, a case closing is a beginning. It is the point at which they will try to function independently in a new, healthy way. It is often difficult to accurately determine when a family is ready for a case closing and make it on its own or with the assistance of community services. There may also be a reluctance on the part of the Protective Services worker and supervisor to close a case.

The social worker and social work supervisor shall consider whether a case should be closed before attending the first six (6) month Administrative Case Review (ACR) on the case.

**Guidelines
Which Should
be Considered
When
Deciding to
Close a Case**

When deciding to close a case, the worker and supervisor shall consider if the:

- agreed-on treatment plan goals are completed
- family has had any new reports of abuse or neglect during the department's intervention
- client is functioning at an acceptably improved level and is better able to cope
- parents have demonstrated a willingness and an ability to use others in time of need
- problems and situations are resolved or under adequate control
- parents have realistic expectations of the child
- family is functioning marginally but the risks to the child are too slight to justify court action and the family refuses to utilize service
- case has been opened for six (6) months or longer with no court involvement.

**DCF
Involvement
Beyond
Twelve
Months**

If the department has been involved in a protective services case for twelve (12) months or longer, the case shall either be reviewed for closing or petitions shall be filed in Superior Court for Juvenile Matters.

The worker shall review the case with his/her supervisor to determine if the need for department involvement still exists. If the need still exists, petitions shall be filed to ensure family compliance with the Treatment Plan and to provide an additional level of review of the plan and of the child's safety.

Steps in Closing Services

The worker may find it helpful to review the following steps with the family when considering a case closing:

- Review the presenting problem with the parent. What were the reasons for Protective Services?
- Evaluate with the family the progress which has been made. Review how you both worked to solve the presenting problem which brought you into the family's life.
- Look together at how the parent(s) have become responsive to the presenting problems.
- Discuss how the family can handle problems in the future.
- Encourage the family to seek help from DCF if a need should arise in the future.
- Allow for parental feelings of concern and bring these feelings out in the open and discuss them.

The case closing process must begin several weeks before the last home visit.

Termination Because of a Judicial Decision

The family case shall be closed when a judicial decision has been made to the effect that the child(ren) is neither abused, neglected nor dependent; however, the family shall be offered department services for at least four (4) weeks.

Termination Because the Family Moves

If a family moves to another state and the child(ren) continues to need protection, the Social Worker must contact the responsible agency in that state.

Closing Documentation

To complete a case closing, the social worker shall complete the appropriate LINK entry and forward to his/her supervisor for approval.
