



**Administrative Policies and Procedures: 1.3**

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Communication: Meetings, Information Sharing, Policy Development and Review</b>
<b>Authority:</b>	TCA 37-5-105(3); 37-5-106; 37-5-112; 37-5-128
<b>Standards:</b>	<b>ACA:</b> 4-JCF-6A-11, 4-JCF-6A-12, 4-JCF-6A-15, 4-JCF-6D-02, 4-JCF-6D-03; <b>COA:</b> PA-AM 2.04(b), 2.05, 2.06, 6.03, 7.03; <b>DCS Practice Standards:</b> 2-100A, 2-206, 8-306
<b>Application:</b>	To All Department of Children's Services and Private Provider Employees

**Policy Statement:**

The Department of Children's Services (DCS) shall promote an environment that encourages open communications, information sharing and team building among all employees and shall establish a formal, centralized system for facilitating communication within DCS. DCS employees at all levels shall have timely access to information related to the mission, vision and values, guiding principles, professional practice standards, goals, policies and procedures, other practice-related documents and processes of the department.

**Purpose:**

Regular channels of communication are necessary for delegating authority, assigning responsibility, supervising work, coordinating efforts and complying with standards of professional practice.

**Procedures:**

**A. Monthly meetings for central office region/field offices and DCS facilities**

1. All Deputy Commissioners, Executive Directors and Directors or their designees in DCS central office must ensure meetings are scheduled and held as often as necessary, but at least monthly, with applicable employees and entities to revisit the department's vision, mission, values and goals, explore problem areas and to facilitate communication, information sharing and team building.
2. All YDC Superintendents, Regional Administrators, Executive Directors, Supervisors and Managers or their designees must ensure, at a minimum that monthly meetings are scheduled and held with applicable employees and entities to facilitate communication, information sharing and team building.
3. **Schedule and Agenda**  
A schedule for monthly meetings should be established so that employees are aware when meetings will be held so they can arrange their schedules and appointments. A written notice and agenda should be sent to the participants prior to a scheduled meeting. Employees desiring specific topics to be discussed should submit suggestions prior to the meetings for planning the

	<p>agenda.</p> <p><b>4. Attendance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Executive Directors, DCS Directors, Managers and Supervisors must ensure and encourage employee attendance and participation in the decision-making process through input at meetings as frequently as required for effective performance of their respective job duties.</li> <li>b) Adequate time is allowed for discussion of agenda items. A free exchange of ideas and opinions must be encouraged. Management must share departmental information at meetings to keep employees informed and aware of the DCS vision, mission, values and goals. After the meeting, attendees should be able to verify what decisions were made and what actions are to be taken.</li> <li>c) The person taking minutes at the meeting will ensure that an attendees list is prepared and signed by all attendees or participants names recorded if attendance is by conference call. The attendees list will be filed along with the meeting minutes.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Distribution of Meeting Minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) All meeting minutes must be kept up-to-date and distributed in a timely manner as applicable and maintained on file. For the purposes of cross-functionality and continuous quality improvement, a request to review meeting minutes will be granted to employees and others that request to review. Meeting minutes will be filed and maintained on file for review for three (3) years.</li> <li>b) Regional/field/facility meeting minutes must be forwarded to the appropriate Central Office Director and/or Executive Director. Regional Administrators may include field office meeting minutes with regional meeting minutes.</li> <li>c) Executive Directors and/or Central Office Directors or their designees will be responsible for distributing regional/field/facility/private provider meeting minutes to designated Program Supervisors/Managers at regularly scheduled meetings to facilitate communication, and to enhance policy development, policy review and technical assistance as outlined in the <a href="#"><u><b>Protocol for Communication of Policies and Procedures and Practice-Related Documents: Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors</b></u></a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Policy development, review and communication</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DCS policies and procedures will be developed when there is a need to <u>regulate, direct, or inform</u> and to guide DCS practices, operations and services to ensure compliance with applicable State and Federal Rules and Laws, Practice Standards, judicial mandates and managerial decisions and directives. (See DCS <a href="#"><u><b>Manual for Developing Policies and Procedures</b></u></a>.)</li> <li>2. A comprehensive review of all departmental policies and procedures and related documents will be performed at least annually, or as often as necessary, and revised accordingly to ensure compliance with applicable State and Federal Rules and Laws, Practice Standards, judicial mandates, managerial decisions and directives.</li> </ul>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. When new/revised policies and procedures, protocols, manuals or other practice-related documents are implemented, Managers and Supervisors or their designees must provide instruction, interpretation and/or training on those practice documents that are relevant to an employee's position and/or job duties (e.g., foster care policies/documents are reviewed with relevant foster care staff; CPS policies/documents are reviewed with relevant CPS staff; JJ policies/documents are reviewed with relevant JJ staff, etc.).</li><li>4. Policy review, instruction, interpretation and/or training may be accomplished through a formalized communication process (i.e., meetings, on-the-job training, videoconferences, computer-based training, mentoring with other employees, etc, or a combination of these examples). Review <a href="#"><u>Protocol for Communication of Policies and Procedures and Practice-Related Documents: Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors</u></a></li><li>5. All DCS offices, facilities and private provider locations must ensure employees have access to all applicable DCS policies and procedures, manuals, protocols, work aids or other practice-related documents.</li><li>6. DCS policies and procedures will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate program Deputy Commissioner, Executive Director, Director, Legal Counsel and final approval issued by the Commissioner.</li></ol>
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<b>Forms:</b>	<a href="#"><u>CS-0479 Acknowledgement/Verification of Policy Review and Other Documents</u></a> <a href="#"><u>CS-0724 Employee Monthly Training Roster</u></a>
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<b>Collateral documents:</b>	<a href="#"><u>Protocol for Communication of Policies and Procedures and Practice-Related Documents: Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Manual for Developing Policies and Procedures</u></a>
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