

**INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Policy Number: GA-9

Effective Date: 10-19-06

Version: 1.0

POLICY TITLE: IV-E PRACTICA

OVERVIEW: The BSW and MSW practica provide educationally-directed practice experience under the direct supervision of an approved field instructor. A practicum provides opportunities for the application and integration of classroom concepts and principles for the development social work skills. Learning opportunities emphasize the values and ethics of the profession, fosters the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge, and promotes the development of professional competence.

While a student placed in a practicum should be involved in case planning activities and may make recommendations, **they may not make any decisions that impact the safety or well-being of children.** DCS employees participating in a work based practicum retain all decision making authority granted by their employee status. DCS employees participating in a work based practicum may only make case decisions within the guidelines of DCS policy. This policy applies to only those students participating in the Title IV-E BSW or MSW programs.

I. DEFINITIONS

- a. Practicum: Educationally-directed practice experience under the direct supervision of an approved field instructor.

II. REFERENCES

None

III. POLICY

- a. To be accepted into the practicum program, students must be enrolled in either the Title IV-E BSW or MSW program.
- b. Practica must not have an adverse effect on DCS operations. The educational needs of the student must be met without compromising the business needs of the work unit.
- c. Students can make recommendations but not decisions, given increasing responsibility over the course of their studies. Examples of activities that students **may conduct** include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Write and submit court reports to the FCM/Supervisor for approval. All reports must be submitted to court under the name of the assigned FCM not the practicum student.
 - ii. Conduct visits with an FCM present.
 - iii. Complete ICWIS data entry.
 - iv. Set up and conduct family case conferences/family team meetings under supervision of the assigned FCM or supervisor.
 - v. Conduct interviews under close supervision of the assigned FCM or supervisors.
 - vi. Make recommendations to the assigned FCM or Supervisor on cases/investigations.

- vii. May provide transportation for case management related functions. Prior to providing any transportation for a child the student must be introduced by the FCM and establish a rapport with the child/family.
- d. In order to ensure the safety and well being of children, practica students are prohibited from **making** any decision that may affect the safety and/or well being of children. Examples of prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Making decisions on the removal of a child/children from a home;
 - ii. Making decisions on the placement of a child/children;
 - iii. Making decisions or recommendations on Termination of Parental Rights;
 - iv. Providing court testimony or reports directly to the court;
 - v. Conducting formal assessments of families/children, including home studies;
- e. Students cannot have cases assigned in ICWIS.
- f. DCS employees participating in a work based practicum may only make case decisions within the guidelines of DCS policy.
- g. DCS expects staff to mentor the students and treat them as co-workers in training.
- h. A prospective practicum student must pass applicable background checks, including a Criminal History check, prior to the start of the engagement.
- i. Upon graduation and being offered employment by DCS, new hires must complete three (3) weeks on the job training.

IV. PROCEDURE

- a. Each program or local director should establish procedures for handling practicum students including how to interview potential students, assign supervisors and assess progress.
- b. Each practicum student is to be assigned to a supervisor who will have the primary responsibility for overseeing the student's work. The student should have the opportunity to meet and be encouraged to consult with other supervisors and experienced workers.
- c. The assigned supervisor and the practicum coordinate will remain in contact throughout the time of the practicum. Together they will address any issues or concerns with the student and the IV-E coordinator.

DATE: 10/19/2006

James W. Payne, Director
Department of Child Services

A signed copy is on file.