

Memorandum

To: FIT Early Childhood Coordinators
FIT Service Coordinators

From: Verna Trujillo, FIT Regional Manager

Through: Andy Gomm, FIT Program Manager

cc: Maryellen Bearzi, CYFD, Child Protective Services
Deb Martinez, CYFD, Child Protective Services

Date: 4/17/09

Re: Court Reporting Form

As you know the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program has received a significant increase in children referred through the child welfare system as a result of the 2003 amendment to the the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), which requires the referral of a child under the age of 3 who is involved in a substantiated case of abuse or neglect. FIT providers are often called to testify in family court and / or at Citizens Review Board (CRB) hearings (that review the cases of all children who are in out of home placement) and have been asked to submit reports.

In an effort to reduce the amount of time and effort spent by FIT Provider testifying and developing lengthy reports, the FIT Program and the Children Youth and Families (CYFD) - Child Protective Services (CPS) have developed a court reporting form, with input from a number of providers. The form has been approved by both CYFD and the statewide Citizens Review Board. The court report form will inform CYFD, the family court and the CRB about the child's progress and the biological family's participation in early intervention.

The court reporting form is to be submitted to the child's current CPS caseworker **on a quarterly basis, beginning thirty days after the starting date of the initial Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)**. The CPS case worker then incorporates the form into the packet that is submitted to the Citizen's Review Board (CRB) and to the family court judge. We further recommend that this form be used with sovereignty social service agencies who serve children in tribal communities.

The form includes instructions regarding how it should be completed, however it is important to emphasize that the report should be objective and stay focused on the child's and family's participation in early intervention. It is NOT the role of the FIT Program to make recommendations regarding the placement of the child.

The form will be distributed by CYFD to the CPS county offices and we encourage FIT providers and CYFD county office staff to meet and discuss this new process. We look forward to continued collaboration with CYFD at the local and statewide level to effectively implement CAPTA.

If you have any questions, please contact Andy Gomm at DOH (505) 476-2417 or Verna Trujillo at 476-2420.