

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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April 14, 1981

ALL-COUNTY LETTER NO. 81-40

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
FISCAL OFFICERS
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OFFICERS
COUNTY AUDITORS

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR EMERGENCY SHELTER INTAKE

REFERENCE:

This letter defines circumstances under which emergency shelter intake may be considered an Emergency Response (ER). It also reminds counties of ER program requirements which must be satisfied in order to qualify emergency shelter intakes for ER program funding reimbursement.

A routine admission to an emergency shelter cannot be considered an emergency response reimbursable from ER funding. However, when a county has implemented an approved basic 24-hour ER program, intake performed at the emergency shelter may be considered an emergency response in unusual circumstances.

When a law enforcement officer removes a child from the home directly to an emergency shelter, without initial involvement of a social worker in an emergency response, the intake performed by a social worker at the shelter may be considered an emergency response when the requirements for an emergency response, as outlined below, are met. Similarly, in an emergency situation where the parent or other person (including the child) brings the child to the emergency shelter without a prior emergency response by a social worker, intake at the shelter may potentially be considered an emergency response.

In order to qualify for ER funding, basic ER program requirements must be met. Social work staff must be available for 24-hour emergency response. The social worker making the emergency response must be a county employee, and may be either the social worker at the emergency shelter or the assigned ER social worker (Section 30-113.3, Manual of Policies and Procedures). Specific attention should be given to the following requirements:

1. The county must have a fully implemented basic ER program.
2. The county should make every effort to encourage direct referrals to the ER program (as outlined in Sections 30-113.11 and 30-113.13).

3. Face-to-face contact between the social worker and the child and parent/caretaker must be initiated within two hours from the time the social worker becomes aware of the case (Section 30-113.12). This could involve arranging to meet the parent/caretaker at the shelter or elsewhere.

This contact should be initiated within two hours and completed unless the parent/caretaker is unavailable. (Examples: The parent/caretaker refuses contact, cannot be located, or is a danger to the social worker.)

The purposes of this contact are:

- a. Determination, from the point of view of the child and parent/caretaker, of the need for removal of the child from the home, and other immediate and long-term needs of the child.
 - b. Assessment of the family's immediate and future access to resources other than shelter care which would enable the family to care for the child, preferably in the home, when appropriate.
 - c. Immediate initiation, or planning, whenever possible, of alternative services to shelter care and/or dependency.
 - d. Encouragement of maximum family involvement. The family should understand its responsibility and the alternatives available to the family and to the social worker.
4. The social worker making the response should begin development of case records immediately. These should include an assessment and service plan to assist in future case decisions or future recommendations in dependency and termination actions (Section 30-009.24).

The following action is also desirable:

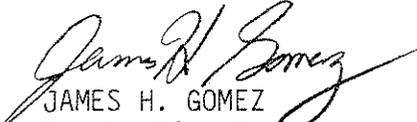
Initiation of immediate face-to-face contact with the law enforcement officer or other person who has taken the child to the shelter, in order to determine circumstances surrounding the removal of the child from the home and immediate and long-term needs of the child.

County 24-hour response capability will continue to be monitored by DSS program and fiscal staff.

Time spent by social workers and/or first-line supervisors assessing the circumstances of the emergency placement and the immediate needs of the child should be charged to Line E, Emergency Response, on the Social Services Time Study (DFA 46). Subsequent back-up services should be claimed according to instructions included in All-County Letter 79-40.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact your program management consultant in the Family and Children's Services Program Operations Bureau at (916) 445-7653, (ATSS 485-7653).

Sincerely,


JAMES H. GOMEZ
Deputy Director

cc: CWDA