

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



July 1, 1998

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 98-40

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY PROBATION OFFICERS

SUBJECT: LEVEL OF CARE ASSESSMENT

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Changes
 Federal Law or Regulation
 Change
 Court Order or Settlement
 Agreement
 Clarification Requested by
 One or More Counties
 Initiated by CDSS

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the status of the level of care assessment instrument and process mandated by Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 11467. Senate Bill 370 (Chapter 1294, Statutes of 1989) added Section 11467 to the Welfare and Institutions Code to require the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to develop and implement a level of care assessment instrument and process for children entering specified out-of-home care settings.

In response to a suit filed by the Youth Law Center (*Bohler v. Anderson*), the California Superior Court issued on November 4, 1997, an Order Granting Writ of Mandate, directing CDSS to comply with WIC Section 11467. In February 1998, the court extended CDSS' compliance dates for instrument development to July 1, 1998, and for implementation to November 1, 1998.

Enclosed is a copy of the Instrument as transmitted to you in August 1997, within the Report to the Legislature entitled "Development of the Level of Care Instrument." Also in that Report were copies of the program statement formats for group homes and foster family agencies.

In its November 4, 1997, Order, the Superior Court directed CDSS "to fully implement, by requiring all counties to use, the level of care instrument and process so developed." In compliance with this Order, CDSS is issuing this All County Letter to specify the implementation process which will be mandatory on November 1, 1998.

After the decision has been made to place a child in a group home or foster family agency:

- (A) The level of care assessment instrument is to be administered to determine the child's needs, including the need for mental health treatment.
- (B) The structure, supervision and services specified in the program statements of the group homes and foster family agencies under consideration for that child's placement are to be compared to the results of the level of care assessment.

Page Two

- (C) Placement decisions are to be made on the basis of (1) a match between program statements and the results of the level of care assessment instrument, and (2) compatibility with the characteristics of other children in the facility as specified in the program statement.

The CDSS will soon meet with representatives of the California Welfare Directors' Association to discuss these new requirements and to develop a training plan on the application of the instrument. If you have any questions, please contact the Foster Care Policy Bureau at (916) 445-0813.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By
Marjorie Kelly on 7/1/98***

MARJORIE KELLY
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

Enclosure

LEVEL OF CARE

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

LEVEL OF CARE ASSESSMENT

A. CHILD IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Name (Last, First, MI): _____ AKA: _____

Case Number/Unique ID: _____ WIC status 300 601 602

Sex: M F DOB ____/____/____ Age: _____ Ethnicity: _____

County Use: _____

(Instructions: This form reflects what is known about the child the date it is completed. Check all items that apply to the child. Write in comments, examples or additional information on the child's needs in the space provided.)

B. CHILD'S STRENGTHS

- 1 Insight into problem
- 2 Motivated to solve problem
- 3 Ability to cooperate
- 4 Relates to parental figures or adults
- 5 Good social skills
- 6 Other (write in) _____

CDSS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

C. EDUCATION

- 1 Documented problems with school work
- 2 Significant behavior problems at school
- 3 Chronic truancy
- 4 IEP (nonSED)
- 5 IEP/SED
- 6 Last grade completed: _____

CDSS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

D. BEHAVIORS

(These behaviors may indicate a need for more than a minimum level of structure & supervision.)

- 1 Physically assaults peers
- 2 Verbally/physically threatens people
- 3 Is cruel or mean to others
- 4 Intentionally destroys property
- 5 Plays with matches
- 6 Has temper tantrums, is volatile
- 7 Demands attention
- 8 Does not get along with other children
- 9 Acts disobediently at home
- 10 Gets into fights
- 11 Swears, uses obscene or provocative language
- 12 Acts impulsively/without thinking
- 13 Exhibits sudden mood changes
- 14 Does not accept authority
- 15 Does not bond with parental figures
- 16 Is manipulative of adults
- 17 Is restless or hyperactive
- 18 Doesn't seem to feel guilty after misbehaving
- 19 Lies and/or cheats
- 20 Expresses thoughts that other are out to get him/her
- 21 Associates with children who get in trouble
- 22 Screams more than usual for age
- 23 Worries excessively/preoccupied
- 24 Acts fearfully or anxiously
- 25 Other (write in) _____

CDSS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- E. PHYSICAL/SENSORY/HEALTH CONDITIONS**
- 1 Significant health conditions/medical issues/current medications (explain)
 - 2 Suspected or known in-utero alcohol/drug exposure
 - 3 Developmentally disabled

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- F. MENTAL HEALTH**
(These conditions or behaviors may indicate a need for mental health assessment and/or treatment.)
- 1 Psychiatric hospitalizations (current or past)
 - 2 Psychotropic medications (current or past)
 - 3 Frequent & persistent depressed behavior/withdrawal
 - 4 Frequent & persistent mood swings
 - 5 Suicide attempts
 - 6 Suicidal ideation with plan
 - 7 Violence/harm toward self
 - 8 Hallucinations/delusions/bizarre thoughts
 - 9 Violence/harm towards others or property destruction grossly out of proportion to provocation
 - 10 Inappropriate sexualized behavior
 - 11 Sexual offenses, e.g., rape, molesting others
 - 12 Frequent & persistent conflict with sexual identity
 - 13 Fire setting
 - 14 Cruelty to animals
 - 15 Bizarre behavior, e.g., eats/drinks things not food (pica)
 - 16 Other (write in)
- CDSS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
(how long, how often, when, where, reported by whom, etc.)

- G. SEXUAL ISSUES**
- 1 Victim
 - 2 Perpetrator/exploits others
 - 3 Other (write in)
- CDSS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- H. DRUG/ALCOHOL USE**
- 1 YES 2 Suspected
 - 3 Type:
 - Frequency: 4 Occasional 5 Moderate
6 Heavy
 - 7 Previously treated for drug/alcohol abuse
 - 8 Engages in high risk/delinquent/antisocial activity when under the influence
 - 9 Engages in high risk/delinquent behavior to procure drugs/alcohol
 - 10 Cannot remain sober/drug free for 7 consecutive days when not confined

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- I. JUVENILE JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT**
- Arrests:
- 1 Felony
 - 2 Misdemeanor
 - 3 Offenses against persons
 - 4 Offenses against property
 - 5 Drug/alcohol offenses (sales/possession)
 - 6 Other (write in)
- CDSS
- 7 Previous court ordered commitment to camp, ranch or locked facility
 - 8 Other (write in)
- CDSS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- J. GANG ASSOCIATION**
- 1 Associates with gang members
 - 2 Gang member
 - 3 Name of gang:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
(include degree of involvement)

- K. STRUCTURE/SUPERVISION NEEDS OF CHILD**
- 1 Structured environment/behavior management
 - 2 Awake night staff
 - 3 Supervision at residence, at school, in community (24 hours)
 - 4 One-to-one supervision
 - 5 On-ground school
 - 6 Therapeutic milieu
 - 7 Psychotropic medication management
 - 8 Other (write in) _____
- CDSS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- L. SERVICES NEEDS OF CHILD**
- 1 Counseling (individual/group/family)
 - 2 Short term diagnostic assessment/stabilization
 - 3 Mental health treatment/service
 - 4 Alcohol/drug treatment
 - 5 Other (write in) _____
- CDSS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- M. OTHER NEEDS/CONSIDERATIONS**
- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Proximity/location | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Siblings |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/baby | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Educational |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Medical |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Emancipation/independent living | 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Family services |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Special ethnic/cultural services | 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Language |
| | 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Religion |
| | 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Gay/lesbian program |
| 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (write in) _____ | |
- CDSS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

N. GENERAL COMMENTS/ADDITIONAL PLACEMENT NEEDS:

ASSIGNED WORKER:

TELEPHONE #:

DATE:

- O. PLACEMENT INFORMATION**
- 1 ____ / ____ / ____ Date of placement
- Child placed in:
- 2 Relative's home
 - 3 Guardian's home
 - 4 Other "approved" or unlicensed home
 - 5 Licensed foster family home
 - 6 Licensed small family home
 - 7 Licensed foster family agency
 - 8 Name: _____
 - 9 Rate program #: _____
 - 10 Licensed group home
 - 11 Name: _____
 - 12 Rate program #: _____
 - 13 Rate Classification Level: _____

P. COUNTY USE ONLY:

F. MENTAL HEALTH SECTION DEFINITIONS

1. **Psychiatric hospitalization:** List as much information as possible about any psychiatric hospitalization within the past 12 months, including one or two day stays. Indicate if hospitalization is current or in the past.
2. **Psychotropic medications:** List as much information as possible about any medication prescribed, at present or in the past, to control emotion(s), behavior(s), or psychotic symptom(s).
3. **Frequent and persistent depressed behavior/withdrawal:** Exhibits frequent and persistent feelings or beliefs that life is not worth living; markedly increased or decreased sleep; markedly increased or decreased appetite; abnormally long or frequent crying; isolation/withdrawal from others; markedly diminished interest in life activities; or distinctly non-verbal unless pressed to communicate.
4. **Frequent and persistent mood swings:** Exhibits euphoria alternating with marked depression.
5. **Suicide attempts: Suicidal ideation with plan:** Potentially lethal suicide attempts.
6. **Suicidal ideation with plan:** Suicidal thoughts which include a plan.
7. **Violence/harm towards self:** Consistently involved in self-jeopardizing situations with others or when alone. Consistently engages in self-injurious behavior, e.g., skin pricking, head banging, skin burning, skin slicing, striking self.
8. **Hallucinations/delusions/bizarre thoughts:** Hears, sees, smells, tastes or feels things which are not in the child's external environment. Holds a false belief and firmly sustains it in spite of what most others believe and/or evidence to the contrary. Has thoughts that others would regard as totally implausible.
9. **Violence/harm towards others or property destruction grossly out of proportion to provocation:** Frequently and persistently acts out anxiety or frustrations with serious assault towards others or destruction of property which is grossly out of proportion to provocation. Frequent and persistent irrational behavior or verbal outbursts without any discernable precipitating events. Lashes out indiscriminately with no apparent purpose or gain.
10. **Inappropriate sexualized behavior:** Forced sexual behavior with others; sexual behavior with animals; exhibitionism; excessive masturbation in public. Does NOT include having been sexually abused, molested or raped unless other specified behaviors are present.
11. **Sexual offenses, e.g., rape, molesting others:** Adjudicated sexual abuse of persons or animals, including rape.
12. **Frequent and persistent conflict with sexual identity:** Frequent and persistent gender identification problems; wishes to be opposite sex.
13. **Fire setting:** Exhibits deliberate intent; disregard for safety of others or property; hoards fire setting materials.
14. **Cruelty to animals:** Tortures or kills animals.
15. **Bizarre behavior:** Consistently and frequently commits unexpected or unbelievable acts; eats or drinks things that are not food (pica), hoards feces, etc.
16. **Other:** Exhibits severe, persistent or pervasive clusters of behaviors, any one of which could be managed alone, but together create severe chaos and serious disruption in current environment. Does NOT include truant behavior, gang association or drug/alcohol involvement unless there is severe, persistent or pervasive disruption in school, community and placement (or home).