

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Child and Family Services Agency**



**Administrative Issuance: CFSA-18-2**

TO: CFSA and Private Agency Staff

FROM: Robert L. Matthews, Deputy Director of Entry Services

DATE: April 6, 2018

RE: Engagement of Kin when Parents with In-Home Cases Withhold Consent or Disengage

Although we strive to engage all parents, there are situations in which parents who have an open in-home case may not want to give CFSA the permission to engage kin in case planning or to explore them as potential placement options prior to an imminent home removal. This administrative issuance guides CFSA social workers as to the circumstances under which it is appropriate to explore and engage kin despite a parent's refusal to consent.

**Circumstances under which Kin and Extended Family Members May be Explored and Engaged**

Social workers ability to engage with families is the most powerful predictor of successful outcomes. Social work staff should be exploring family and extended support as a routine part of engagement with every family. This is particularly important when working with in-home families when additional support may be necessary to avoid a foster care placement. To the extent possible, this should be done with the consent and participation of either parent. However, if one of the following programmatic criteria has been met, then social workers need not obtain parental consent to locate and engage kin for the purpose of identifying child needs and finding resources to attend to those needs:

- 1) A child's removal from the home is pending or imminent;
- 2) CFSA scheduled a court date to community paper the case; or,
- 3) CFSA has a scheduled court date to revoke protective supervision.

Under any of these circumstances, the social worker may engage appropriate kin in safety and case planning. If necessary, the social worker should leverage the Agency's Diligent Search resources, and consult with the Family Team Meeting (FTM) unit for outreach and engagement of kin<sup>1</sup>.

**Legal Authority to Engage Kin without Parental Consent**

CFSA social workers are allowed to explore and engage kin and extended family members who may be appropriate participants on the child's case management team and/or willing and capable caretakers in the event of a home removal. District of Columbia law, specifically D.C. Official Code §4-1303.06(a)(2), governs the confidentiality of client records and provides legal authority for CFSA staff to ask family members or other persons about family resources for potential placement of children and youth alleged or found to be abused or neglected.

**Limits on the Disclosure of Information to Kin**

Social workers must be mindful that planning with kin must not infringe, in any way, on a parent's right to custody or control over his or her child(ren.) Outreach to kin is to focus on obtaining information and resources from kin to attend to child needs. Social workers are to abide the Agency's [Confidentiality Policy](#) in their

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<sup>1</sup> Without parental consent and involvement, an FTM cannot occur. However, because of its particular expertise in engaging family members, the FTM unit may provide consultative assistance to the social worker on a case by case basis.



communication with kin. CFSA is not to disclose information to kin about the nature and extent of abuse/neglect allegations against the parent, nor is there to be any disclosure of the parent's confidential medical, mental health, or other personal information. [Click here](#) for tips on how to engage parents in this discussion.

