

Policy Critique

Longwood University

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Abstract

The paper will discuss first the policy itself and the description of the policy. Next will be the effectiveness and the use of the policy at the agency. Then the paper will lead into the pros and cons and how that can impact the client, faculty, and the staff at UFMS. Next will be the benefits and potential modifications that could be additions to the policy to further enhance its effectiveness. Finally, the paper concludes with the overall understanding of the benefits for the child, family, and social worker.

Keywords: policy, foster care, visitation.

Policy Critique

This paper will explore the author's ideas of the effectiveness, benefits, and potential modification to a policy at UMFS. The paper will present the description and pros and cons. Understanding the impact of the policy on the agency and client is important because this can lead to a better understanding of the policy while allowing for the re-opening of potential modifications that could be made to the policy. The policy impacts those who UMFS cares for but also the faculty members as well. There will be specifically a breakdown of a policy revolved around visitations and the amount of visitation a Social Worker must conduct in a specific time span.

Policy and Description

“A face-to-face contact with the child no less than twice each month. There shall be at least seven days between face-to-face contacts unless contraindicated by the child's service or treatment plan. The frequency for determining additional contacts with the child shall be based on his treatment and service plan and occur as often as necessary to ensure the child is receiving safe and effective services; 2. At least one of the face-to-face contacts made during a calendar month shall take place in the foster home to assess the relationship between the child and the foster parents and the contact shall include the child and at least one treatment foster parent; 3. The contacts shall assess the child's progress, provide training and guidance to the foster parents, monitor service delivery, and allow the child to communicate concerns; and 4. Children who are capable of participating in an interview shall be interviewed privately at least one time each month” (Standards for licensed child-placing agencies, 2019). UMFS staff conducts home visits once every week of the month.

Policy's Use and Effectiveness

The policy is used to make sure the child is comfortable in the home, while also building the relationship with the social worker and the child. The policy can allow for frequent contact and making sure the foster parents' concerns are addressed as well. The policy has proven to be effective because those concerns or issues are addressed early than later. This would exclude extreme cases where it needs to be addressed immediately. The situations that are usually addressed later include the progress a child may have made in all areas that include, mental, physical, and emotional progress.

During the home visits, there are individual discussions. These will include the social worker talking privately with the child and then the foster parent, then one conversation together. There are variations in the duration of conversation depending on the child's needs or the placement they are in. Some children may need more resources or discussion due to certain actions or events that may have occurred or need to occur.

Policy's Pros and Cons and the Impact on Clients, Faculty, and Staff

Pros for the policy include the level of trust and relationship that are developed from the multitude of visits. The frequency of the checks allows for the child to get their needs met and the foster parents' needs met as well, as stated prior. The policy required that the workers check/monitor the environment the child could be in. As some home visits are unannounced ones and since they are weekly, that one unannounced visit that occurs could bring forth those issues that may have been hidden. Most importantly, as stated previously it helps build that relationship between the social worker and the child. Children may feel more inclined to tell a social worker

something that could potentially be happening solely due to the frequency of the visits. If there is an issue the child may have with themselves or the foster parent, could allow for a more comfortable environment for them down the line, but also allow for actual progress to happen in a safe environment.

Cons for the policy could potentially be the indications of conversations being private or meaningful, or more so making sure to get the most out of home visits that are conducted. One could write a report stating that our requirements are met, but how could UMFS ensure that the child is realistically getting the conversations they want and need. An example that has happened is a foster parent had once listened in on a conversation during a private conversation with the child and social worker. They later found out because the foster parent had said something to the child about what was said. This was a step back in the child's progress, as this lowered their level of trust and privacy in the home that is supposed to be secure and safe. The child's life was not in danger, but the trust and the relationship that was built up had broken down.

Another con could be the amount of traveling a social worker has to do in a week. As this is only a small con, this could affect the social worker's work. During home visits, the most time was spent traveling in comparison to the visit itself. Visits that were considered "quick" were about a 14-hour day in total. That could be mental and potential physical training to spend that amount of time on the road.

Policy's Benefits and Modifications

The most beneficial part of the policy is its frequency in the visits and the relationship that is built between all party's to better the child's progress. However, with a few potential modifications, it could be perfect. For example, making sure that the conversation that is

conducted are private when they are needed to be. As the visits may vary on what type of conversation is going to happen, it is important to make sure that the conversation that the child has with the social worker is private and confidential. Confidential between social worker and the child is important because it builds trust and integrity in the child. Another potential modification could be which social worker receives the case. The amount of driving that social worker drive, in comparison to the amount of time conversation with the family and child, seems to be hugely different. However, as that would be a small modification, it could be mentally draining to conduct all those visits weekly and driving more than 12 hours a day. However, as long as the child's and family's needs are met it seems to not bother most social workers at the agency.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the policy is overall beneficial to the agency and to whom they provide services to. As every policy is bound to have some cons, the pros for this policy do outweigh those cons. The benefit to the child and the family can significantly help in mediating conflicts or enhancing the relationships between the caregiver and the child. The number of visits can also allow for greater communication between the social worker and the family in acknowledging those difficult conversations that may potentially need to be had together.

References

Standards for licensed child-placing agencies. (2019, October 17). Retrieved from Virginia Department of Social Services:
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