

September 20, 2013

TO: Children's Administration All Staff

FROM: Randy Hart, Deputy Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: **NEW PROCEDURES FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY**

The purpose of this memo is to clarify when fingerprint and name/date of birth background checks are completed. Fingerprint checks are completed through a federal data base. They are required by federal and state law for approval of the placement of children. Name/date of birth background checks are run through the Washington State Patrol database and do not require access to the federal system.

**What background checks are needed for emergent placement?**

A Purpose Code X criminal history check is an emergency check that is *specific to that child and the placement*. Fingerprint checks are required. If other children are placed by CA in the household, another fingerprint check for adults is required for the placement of that child. If adults (18 and older) subsequently join the family, fingerprint checks are required for that adult when they join the household. (Individuals who are 16 and 17 years of age have name/date of birth checks only.)

**What background checks are needed for planned placements or a home study?**

Upon placement of a child in out-of-home care or upon approval of a home study, (whichever comes first), a fingerprint background check will be completed. As long as the home remains open for services to children, another fingerprint background check is not needed.

**Are background checks resubmitted if a family with existing background checks later decides to get licensed or adopt?**

If the family later decides to get licensed or adopt, and that approval process is concluded less than a year after an initial fingerprint check for licensing or placement purposes, nothing more is needed. If it has been more than a year, a name/date of birth check for all individuals in the household 16 years of age and older is required. For adoption purposes,

the adoption social worker will submit the name/date of birth background check for all those 16 and older in the household and include the results with the information provided to the area administrator with the request to sign the consent for adoption.

**Do I need to resubmit administrative approvals or waivers for criminal history or negative actions?**

Once an administrative approval has been completed for a specific crime or negative action, this is not required again unless there has been a change in circumstances (i.e., repeat of behavior, a subsequent conviction or concerns about the placement). If there are subsequent negative actions or criminal activity, a new administrative approval must be submitted including the prior information.

**Are there other times I need to submit a fingerprint background check?**

If an adult in a home approved for care of children spends a significant amount of time out-of-state (i.e., more than brief vacations or visits), a fingerprint background check should be requested for that individual if one has not been completed within the year prior to the approval of the new home study or consent to adoption.

If there are concerns about an individual's behavior or indications that there may be additional criminal history activity, a fingerprint background check may be requested at any time.

**Who do I contact for more information?**

Please direct all questions to Chris Parvin for all of Children's Administration. He can be reached at 360-902-0770.