ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES #31

Taking and Uploading Case Photos in SACWIS and A.S.K. Mobile App
September 29, 2020 – PT 2020.16

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Section 31.1   Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to provide a protocol for taking photos in the course of casework, and uploading and storing photos in SACWIS and the A.S.K. mobile app. Both SACWIS and A.S.K allow "Identification", "Child" and "Home/Environment" photos to be uploaded and stored in a family and/or child case.

This Administrative Procedure applies to all Department Child Protection Specialists, and Department and Purchase of Service agency (POS) Intact Family Workers and Permanency Workers and their supervisors.

Section 31.2   Case Photo Features in SACWIS and A.S.K.

DCFS and POS workers can capture and upload case related photos by using the A.S.K. mobile app. Photo types are case member specific and are available for all case members, including adult case members when appropriate. Photos can also be uploaded directly into SACWIS from the A.S.K. mobile app. Workers can also upload photos acquired from other sources into SACWIS (see Section 31.5, Acquiring Photos Taken by Others).

All Department and POS casework staff who take case related photos with Department issued or personal phones must:

- **have the A.S.K. app <u>on that phone</u>; and**

- **take the photo <u>only</u> while working in the A.S.K. app.**

To ensure the confidentiality of case information, <u>Department and POS casework staff shall take photos only when using the A.S.K. mobile app.</u>

Department and POS staff <u>shall not take</u> case related photos using their regular iPhone camera feature <u>or store</u> case related photos in the iPhone photo gallery. Just as personal photos taken with an iPhone camera and stored in the gallery are not secure, case related photos taken and stored this way would also not be secure.

The Department does not authorize Department or POS staff to use any app other than the A.S.K. mobile app for taking case related photos.

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All photo functions are accessed through the "Photos" link in SACWIS. SACWIS Release 5.21 (at D-Net Links>OITS>SACWIS) contains detailed instructions and screen shots to instruct staff on how to categorize and upload photos.

The A.S.K. app has a Photo page in Family and Child Cases. The "Working with Case Photos" tip is available in the A.S.K. menu to instruct staff on how to capture and upload these photos to SACWIS.

Section 31.3   Categorizing Photos

Each photo uploaded in SACWIS and A.S.K. must be categorized as one of the following:

- **"Identification" photo**. This is a case member-specific photo. Workers must ensure that an accurate, current "identification photo" of <u>each youth in care</u> is in SACWIS. Identification photos must be a frontal view of the youth's face, neck and shoulders only. The youth should be standing in front of a plain or solid background (so the background does not distract from the subject). All identification photos should be taken indoors and updated annually or sooner if the child's appearance significantly changes. (See **Procedure 301.150, Identification Procedures for Children in Placement**.)

  The identification photo is the only <u>required</u> photo for each child in DCFS custody or guardianship.

- **"Condition" photo**. This is a case member-specific photo. This includes any photo of a child or adult that is taken to document marks, scars, bruises and other visible injuries to the child or adult. (Example: the child or adult has a bruise on a visible part of the body); or

- **"Home/Environment" photo**. This includes any photo taken when there is a condition of the home or environment that is relevant to a concern that the worker is documenting. Home/Environment photos may be uploaded and used as needed on intact family and placement cases.

When an injury to a child or an unsanitary or unsafe condition of the home/environment requires a call to SCR, and Call Floor Worker informs the Intact Family/Permanency Worker that a report is being taken, the assigned Child Protection Specialist will photograph the child or scene as part of the child protection investigation.

Section 31.4   Labeling Photos

SACWIS and A.S.K. automatically apply known information (such as name, CYCIS or investigation or ID number, and date/time) as part of the photo capture process in the A.S.K. app and photo upload process in SACWIS. The following additional information must be provided for each identification, condition and home/environment photo:

- for identification photos, the child's height, weight, scars, tattoos and any other distinguishing marks are documented in the "Description" field and in a contact note;

- identify any non-case member in the photo;

- identify where the photo is taken with detailed information. State the primary person involved (e.g., Mary Smith's bedroom, Frank Smith's kitchen), address of the home, etc.;

- identify what is being documented in the photo in detail (e.g., stack of dirty dishes in sink, rodent damage in hallway, exposed wiring within reach of children); and

- the name(s) of all persons present when the photo was taken.

Section 31.5   Acquiring Photos Taken by Others

All photos provided to the Department by other sources, (e.g., schools, hospitals, law enforcement) become the property of the Department, shall be labeled by the worker as noted in Section 31.4 and uploaded into the SACWIS family and/or child case.

For photos acquired from another party (e.g., law enforcement, medical staff), the worker must document the date and time the photo was taken in the "Description" field. If uploaded in SACWIS, the date/time stamp will record only the time <u>uploaded</u>. The worker shall enter any relevant information (who-what-where-when) provided by the sender when uploading the photo.

> Example: The child's doctor, Anthony Doe, emailed this worker 5 photos taken during his examination of the child at the DeKalb County Hospital Emergency Room when the child presented with a broken left arm and left leg on 12-6-19 at 5:00 p.m. Per Dr. Doe, Image 1 shows … Image 2 shows … Images 3, 4 and 5 are a collage. The top left image shows… The top right image shows … The bottom right image shows ….

Workers continue to remain responsible to thoroughly document their observations in contact notes. The ability to take and upload these photos in the case record does not change that requirement.

Section 31.6   Notification and Consent Requirements

a)   **Child Protection Investigations.** A Child Protection Specialist is required to <u>notify</u> a parent or legal guardian that the Department has the right to take or obtain photos during an investigation and document this notification in a contact note. Notification can be made by phone. <u>Notification is not required</u> to take a photo of a <u>youth in care</u> in an assigned investigation. <u>Consent is not required</u> to take photos in Child Protection Investigations.

b)   **Placement Cases.** A Permanency Worker must ask a parent, legal guardian or substitute caregiver for <u>verbal consent</u> to take a "condition" photo of a child <u>not</u> in DCFS custody or guardianship who is living in the home of parent/guardian/substitute caregiver. A Permanency Worker must also obtain verbal consent before taking any "home/environment" photos of their home or property. Consent is documented in a contact note. <u>Consent is not required</u> to take a photo of a <u>youth in care</u> assigned to his/her caseload.

c)   **Intact Family Service Cases.** An Intact Family Worker must ask a parent or legal guardian for <u>verbal consent</u> to take an "identification", "condition" or "home/environment" photo. Consent shall be documented in a contact note.

Section 31.7   Use of Photos in Documentation

a)   **Child Protection Specialists**

Photos of a child's injuries may be taken and used to support the descriptive documentation contained on the **CANTS 2A** or **2B**. Photos shall **never** be used as a substitute for completing the **CANTS 2A** or **2B**.

To ensure the confidentiality of case information, <u>Department and POS casework staff should take photos using the A.S.K. app.</u>

When the parent/guardian is available, the Child Protection Specialist shall notify the parent/guardian that the Department has the right to obtain photos. This notification may be provided by phone and shall be documented in a contact note.

A Child Protection Specialist shall take an identification photo of each child taken into protective custody as soon as possible after the child has been removed from the home.

The Child Protection Specialist may take or obtain photos of the alleged child victim and the child's environment as a part of the investigative process. Photos shall be taken as a part of gathering inculpatory and exculpatory evidence of abuse or neglect or the lack of abuse or neglect.

Photos can be used to document a child's injuries or the absence of injuries. When taking photos of a child, the Child Protection Specialist must ensure that the safeguards described in **Procedures 300.150(c)(5), Observation of the Alleged Victim** are followed.

If the alleged child victim is in the hospital, the Child Protection Specialist shall request assistance from hospital staff in obtaining photos of the child's injuries and/or acquire photos of the child taken by hospital staff.

When a child is screened into court but protective custody was not taken, the Child Protection Specialist or Intact Family Worker screening the child into court shall take an initial identification photo of the child.

Photos taken by a Child Protection Specialist shall be uploaded into the SACWIS investigative file within 48 hours of taking the photo.

When uploading a photo, the Child Protection Specialist shall enter the descriptive information in **Section 31.4, Labeling Photos** about each photo in the "Description" field.

During the handoff staffing, the Child Protection Specialist shall provide the Permanency Worker with the child's identification photo.

b)   **Permanency Workers**

To ensure the confidentiality of case information, <u>Department and POS casework staff should take photos using the A.S.K. app.</u>

The Permanency Worker shall update the child's identification photo in the SACWIS case annually or sooner if the child's appearance has significantly changed. (See **Procedures 301.150, Identification Procedures for Children in Placement**.)

> Example: The child just added homemade tattoos (describe) to her face and changed her hair color.

Condition and home/environment photos may be uploaded and used as needed in placement cases. When appropriate, the Permanency Worker may take an identification or condition photo of the child or a photo documenting the condition of the home or environment.

When appropriate and with consent of a parent or guardian, the Permanency Worker may take an identification or condition photo of a non-youth in care with connection to the case (e.g., living in home of parent; sibling of youth in care living with non-parent).

When appropriate and <u>with appropriate consent</u>, the Permanency Worker may take an identification or condition photo of the parent or another adult with connection to the case (e.g., household member), or a photo documenting the condition of the home or environment.

> **** When an injury to a child or an unsanitary or unsafe condition of the home or environment requires a call to SCR, and Call Floor Worker states that a report is being taken, the assigned Child Protection Specialist will photograph the child or scene as part of the investigation.**

When uploading the photo, the Permanency Worker shall enter the descriptive information in **Section 31.4, Labeling Photos** about each photo in the "Description" field.

The Permanency Worker remains responsible to thoroughly document his/her observations in a contact note. The ability to take and upload these photos in the case record does not change that requirement.

c) **Intact Family Workers**

When completing each CERAP safety assessment and <u>with consent of the parent or guardian</u>, the Intact Family Worker shall take an identification or condition photo of a child or adult and, if applicable a photo documenting the condition of the home or environment in open intact cases. The Intact Family Worker shall update an identification photo of each child in the family in the SACWIS case record.

To ensure the confidentiality of case information, <u>Department and POS casework staff should take photos using the A.S.K. app.</u>

Condition and Home/Environment photos may be uploaded and used as needed in intact family cases.

> **** When an injury to a child or an unsanitary or unsafe condition of the home or environment requires a call to SCR, and Call Floor Worker states that a report is being taken, the assigned Child Protection Specialist will photograph the child or scene as part of the investigation.**

When uploading the photo, the Intact Family Worker shall enter the descriptive information in **Section 31.4, Labeling Photos** about each photo in the "Description" field.

The Intact Family Worker remains responsible to thoroughly document his/her observations in a contact note. The ability to take and upload these photos in the case record does not change that requirement.

Section 31.8 Emailing Photos

When emailing case and investigation photos from SACWIS to authorized external recipients, #ILEncrypt# will automatically appear in the subject line of the email. When #ILEncrypt# is in the Subject line of any Outlook email, it triggers the encryption service.

DCFS and POS workers should not remove #ILEncrypt# from the subject line.

The sending DCFS and POS workers will receive a read receipt and automated notifications when an email is opened or when an email expires. The recipient will receive a special message to log into our system with secure credentials to review the message. The message will be available on the server for 2 years.

Appendix A - Tips for Taking High Quality Photos with a Smart Phone

a)   **iPhone-specific Photo Tips**

   1)   **Snap photos with the volume up button**

   Did you know that when you're taking photos with your iPhone, the shutter doesn't release until you remove your finger from the button? Combined with the slim size of your phone and the way you hold it to get a good shot, that makes for a good amount of camera shake, resulting in blurry photos. Here is an easy solution. Your iPhone's **volume up button** acts as an additional camera shutter.

   2)   **Use the iPhone camera shortcut for quick access**

   To conveniently access the camera, swipe up from the bottom of the screen to launch Control Center and tap on the Camera button.

   3)   **Turn off your flash**

   Recent generations of the iPhone flash are much better than their predecessors but at the end of the day, the flash is still just an LED light and it can occasionally emit a strange hue onto your photographs. One of the easiest ways to get better pictures is to light your subject well. With phones, this typically requires turning off the flash. This isn't always an option - sometimes the setting is too dark to not use a flash.   Generally, the flash tends to be too harsh and results in blown out (overexposed) photos or bright spots on people's faces.

   To get better lighting, try framing your photo with your iPhone and then tapping the area where your subject appears. This helps your phone assess optimum lighting around your subject.

   4)   **Slide the exposure meter to brighten or darken photos**

   If you're shooting at night or in rooms that are not well-lit, use the Camera app's exposure slider to boost light in the photo.

   To find the exposure slider: launch the Camera app from your Home screen or Lock screen. Tap anywhere on the live preview in order to bring up the focus point (a yellow box). Tap and hold on the "exposure button" that appears next to the yellow box. (In the photos below, it looks like a Sun to the right of the yellow box.) A slider bar will appear that allows you to slide the Sun up and down to adjust the exposure.
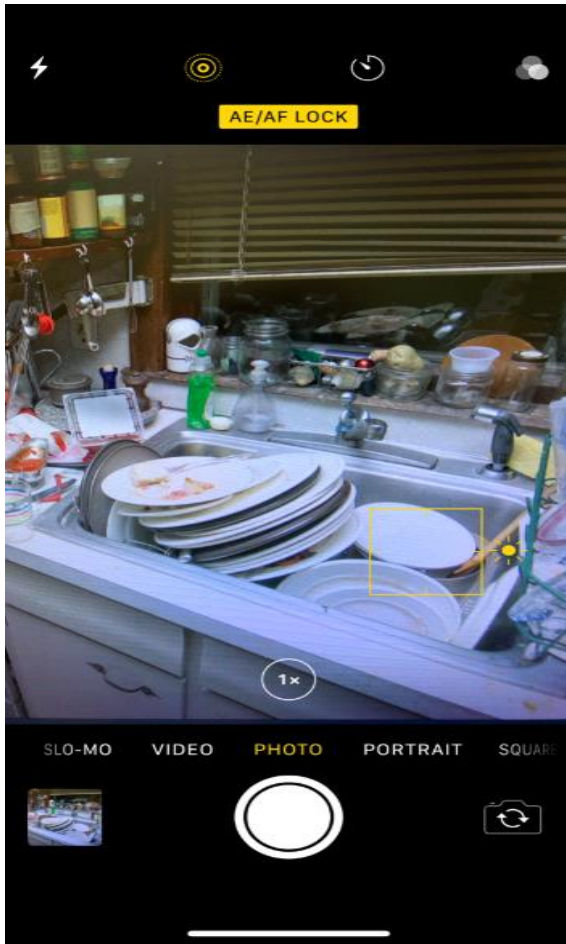
Enlarged view of yellow box and Sun
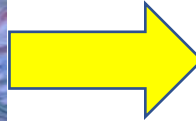
5)   **Understand HDR Auto**

Your iPhone comes with a software feature called High Dynamic Range, or HDR: This lets you snap photos that may have high contrast light sources (a TV powered on in the foreground of a darkened living room) and still capture a nice image without distorting either the light or the dark area of the picture. Your iPhone automatically does this by snapping several pictures in quick succession at different exposures, then merging them together to create a unified image.

HDR uses information from your iPhone's sensor as you point your device at a subject to determine when an image might need HDR correction, and only then does it turn on HDR mode. You'll know HDR is enabled by the yellow "HDR" box that appears at the top or bottom of the screen. This can save storage space on your device and prevents shooting HDR unnecessarily.

iPhones with iOS 8 and later feature HDR Auto.

b)   **Photo Tips for all Smart Phone Users**

1)   **Clean the lens!**

Clean the glass that covers the camera just like you would the screen around front. A microfiber cloth is good for wiping away fingerprints and body oils, or you can use a cleaning fluid designed for electronic screens.

2)   **Steady Yourself!**

Try leaning against a hard object (like a wall) when taking a photo to reduce shaking.

3)   **Use the light you have correctly**

Never point your camera at the light. Try to have the lighting behind you and above you, ideally pointing towards whatever it is you're taking a picture of. That's not always possible (especially indoors) but you should still move your feet and try the best angle you can use if possible.

Some Android cameras do better with less light than others, but you still need *some* illumination. And use light to your advantage. Try shooting photos in areas with adequate natural lighting sources.

4)   **Don't use the zoom**

Your smart phone camera has no optical (using the lens) zoom. Instead, when you use the zoom feature, it's doing the same thing as blowing an image up in an editor and cropping out the edge. This generally makes for grainy, pixelated pictures that are sub-par.

If you need to get a closer view of that thing your photographing, moving closer to it is *always* better than using your zoom.

5)   **Resist using the flash**

Camera flash in smart phones is getting better, but flash is still best left turned off or used for a flashlight. Flash sits too close to the sensor and creates harsh, washed out pictures.

Sometimes you *must* use it, and sometimes it works fine, but most times you won't like what you see when you use it.

6)   **Capture Close-Up Detail**

One of the biggest photography mistakes is not getting close enough to the subject. This is particularly important when photographing objects with intricate details. Moving in close is also a good technique to use with portrait photos. Getting close

lets you capture your subject's facial features and emotions. This gives your portrait photos far more impact.

7)   **Take Several Photos**

Don't be afraid to take multiple photos to get a good one. No one can replicate the same circumstances so it's essential to capture that moment of time. Upload the photo that best depicts the person or environment and delete the rest.