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	Index No: 98-3	Issuance Date: March 16, 1998
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	Distribution: Department and Private Agency Child Welfare Staff	
	Key Words: Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol (CERAP)	
	Approved by:	

Interpretation

Applicable to: Child Welfare Staff

Policy Citation: Procedures 305, Appendix K (D): The Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol must be completed on the CFS 1441, Safety Determination Form, minimally at the following times:

2. For child welfare services (follow-up):
 - o within five working days after case assignment.

Question: Staff have interpreted the requirement to conduct a CERAP after case assignment as applying to the assignment of new cases following case opening. The Office of Quality Assurance interprets case assignment as also meaning the assignment of a case to a new worker following a case transfer. Since the procedures do not define case assignment, what is the correct interpretation?

A related question raised by a private agency is whether the requirement to conduct a CERAP within five working days applies to all cases or only to intact family cases.

Discussion: If the case transfer was due to a move by the family, changes may have occurred in the home affecting the health and safety of the child(ren). If the transfer is due only to a change in workers, (the former worker left, transferred to a new position, new office, etc), there is value to the new worker not only in engaging the family as quickly as possible, but also in getting his or her own assessment of the safety issues in the case as soon as possible. The new worker cannot assume that he or she agrees with the assessment or that some change affecting the child=s safety may not have occurred since the last safety check.

If the case is a placement case and all the children have been removed from the home, the caseworker assigned, would as part of the assessment process, determine whether any of the safety factors that led to the child=s placement had changed thereby affecting a possible opportunity for early reunification. For example, a person in the home, who posed the greatest risk to the child, may have moved out; or environmental factors that led to the removal of the child may have changed.

Response: A CERAP must be conducted within five days after initial case assignment or after a new worker receives a case that has been transferred. A CERAP must be conducted within five days after initial case assignment on both placement cases and intact family cases.