



DOCUMENTATION

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF DOCUMENTATION?

- Ensures an adequate foundation to make good decisions throughout the case.
- Provides necessary information to support case decisions.
- Serves as the source for legal, fiscal, and practice accountability.
- Supports the reasons for making practice decisions.

DOCUMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Include information about the nature and extent of the referral/report.
- Document that the family was informed of agency confidentiality policies.
- Include the initial assessment (of the child and the family) as well as any diagnostic procedures that took place.
- Clearly document initial decisions made regarding substantiation of alleged maltreatment.
- Include a safety plan if one was developed, and document referral to other agencies/services.
- Document any involvement in criminal, juvenile, or family court.
- The case plan should include intervention outcomes and measurable goals to achieve child safety.
- Inform on the progress and achievement of these goals.

RECORDING OBSERVATIONS

Describe — write clearly and concisely by focusing on important details and using quotes.

- What was said?
- What was heard?
- What was the physical environment like?
- What was the client's body language?
- What was the emotional atmosphere?
- What were the interactions between family members like?

TIMELY DOCUMENTATION

- Use the time you have.
- Be creative with your time.
- Make daily and weekly appointments to complete documentation.
- Ask your supervisor and colleagues for tips to complete documentation.

“Quality record-keeping is an integral part of professional CPS practice. When the case record is used as an opportunity to organize the worker’s thinking and to integrate an approach to measuring the results of CPS work, it becomes an important part of the CPS process rather than something that only documents the process.”

— Effective Communication chapter, Child Protective Services: A Guide for Caseworkers.

