



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis  
Governor

Chad Poppell  
Secretary

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**DATE:** June 21, 2019

**TO:** Regional Managing Directors  
Community-Based Care (CBC) Lead Agency CEOs

**THROUGH:** Patricia Babcock, Deputy Secretary *Patricia Babcock*

**FROM:** Patricia Medlock, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare *PM*  
Scott Stewart, Assistant Secretary for Operations *SS*

**SUBJECT:** 60-Day Independent Review by Qualified Evaluators  
**Upon final action by the Governor, effective July 1, 2019**

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this memorandum is to provide updates to independent reviews conducted by qualified evaluators.

**BACKGROUND:** The Department of Children and Families has existing policy that outlines the process for assessing children in out-of-home care who are being considered for placement into residential treatment centers, including therapeutic group homes. Department guidelines have been consistent with s. 39.407, F.S., which documents timeframes of initial reviews and timeframes associated with the independent review of a child's progress while in a residential treatment center or therapeutic group home by a qualified evaluator. At the beginning of each month, a written report is submitted to the court having jurisdiction over the child regarding the child's progress towards achieving the goals specified in the individualized plan of treatment. The court previously had requirements to conduct a hearing to review the status of the child's residential treatment plan no later than three-months after the child's admission to a residential treatment program. In addition, an independent review of the child's progress towards achieving the goals and objectives of the treatment plan was completed by a qualified evaluator and submitted to the court before the three-month review.

**NEW INFORMATION:** Upon final action by the Governor, effective July 1, 2019, House Bill 7099 will require the courts to conduct a hearing to review the status of a child's residential treatment plan no later than 60-days after the child's admission to the residential treatment program. In addition, a qualified evaluator must complete an independent review of the child's progress towards achieving the goals and objectives associated with the treatment plan and submit to the court before its 60-day review. After the initial 60-day review, the court must conduct a review of the child's residential treatment plan every 90 days.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please share this memorandum with all child protective investigators, sheriff's offices that conduct child protective investigations, case management providers, and other service providers as appropriate.

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

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Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

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**CONTACT INFORMATION:** If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Jessica Johnson, Out-of-Home Case Management Specialist, Office of Child Welfare, at 850-717-4491 or [Jessica.Johnson@myflfamilies.com](mailto:Jessica.Johnson@myflfamilies.com)

cc: Regional Family and Community Services Directors  
Sherriff's Offices Conducting Child Protective Investigations  
Grainne O'Sullivan, Director of Child Welfare Legal Services  
Center for Child Welfare