

County of Santa Clara

Social Services Agency



353 West Julian Street
San Jose, California 95110-2335

DATE: May 7, 2024

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Damion Wright, Director, Department of Family and Children's Services

SUBJECT: Changes Made to DFCS's Operational Policies and Procedures (OPP)

At its February 6, 2024 meeting, at the request of Supervisor Arenas, the Board of Supervisors (Board) requested the Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) Operational Policies and Procedures (OPP) report be categorized by subject area to support a furthered understanding of reason for policy changes or updates previously made. The prior report to BOS provided an overall summary of the types of changes made to the DFCS Operational Policies and Procedures. The Board also requested that the revised report should include previous and current policies, showing the revision made, and that changes relating to the assessment of either risk or safety and/or the correct actions for staff to take should be identified. Due to the large scope of this specific request to provide all prior versions of the policies to show revisions made, this report provides an overview of the types of policies and procedures contained in the OPP as well as the types of changes that are made to the OPP at a high level. DFCS is working on preparing a detailed summary of changes made to the OPP and will bring that back at a later date.

Operational Policies and Procedures

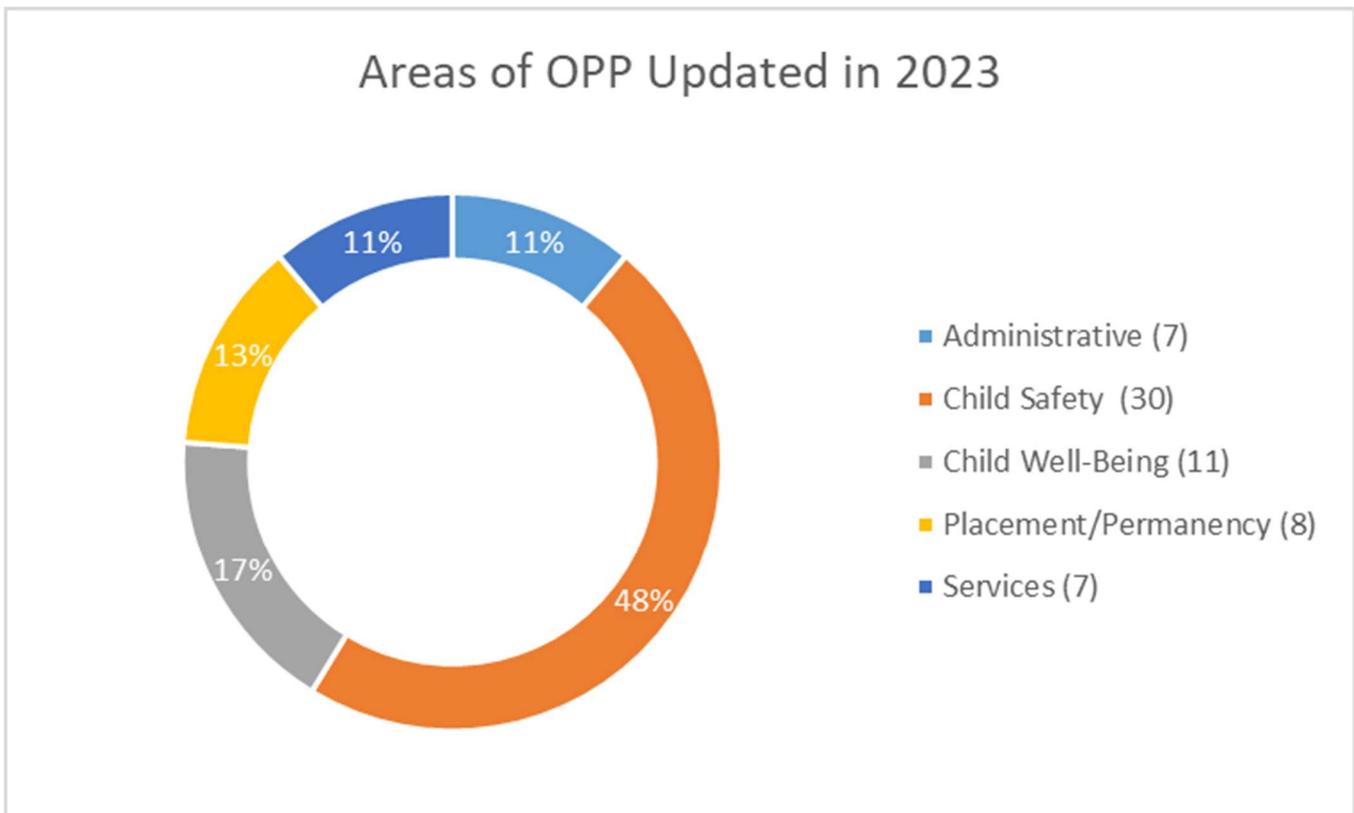
The OPP guide is a resource to support department staff in the execution of their assigned duties. Policies and procedures shift and change over time with practice, day-to-day operations, state directives, or legislative changes. These changes lead to the need for regular revisions. Updates, modifications, and additions to the OPP reflect changes to DFCS or court policies and procedures, newly implemented or previously omitted programs and processes, regulatory or legislative changes or updates, and practice alignment.

The areas of DFCS's existing OPP are categorized in Table 1. See Attachment A – Policy Updates by Categorization for a breakdown of OPP changes in 2023 by distinct categories.

Table 1: Categorization Definitions

Child Safety	Includes policies and procedures related to managing and responding to allegations of abuse and neglect, including investigation, assessment, interventions, and the court process.
Child Well-being	Includes policies and procedures related to physical, mental, behavioral, cultural, and social domains and/or needs.
Placement/ Permanency	Includes policies and procedures related to foster care, guardianship, and/or adoption requirements.
Services	Includes policies and procedures related to case management and/or the provision of services that do not fall into child safety, child well-being and/or placement/permanency.
Administrative	Includes policies and procedures related to processes that primarily guide record keeping, tracking, financial information, and data collection.

The OPP areas updated in 2023 as defined above are as follows:



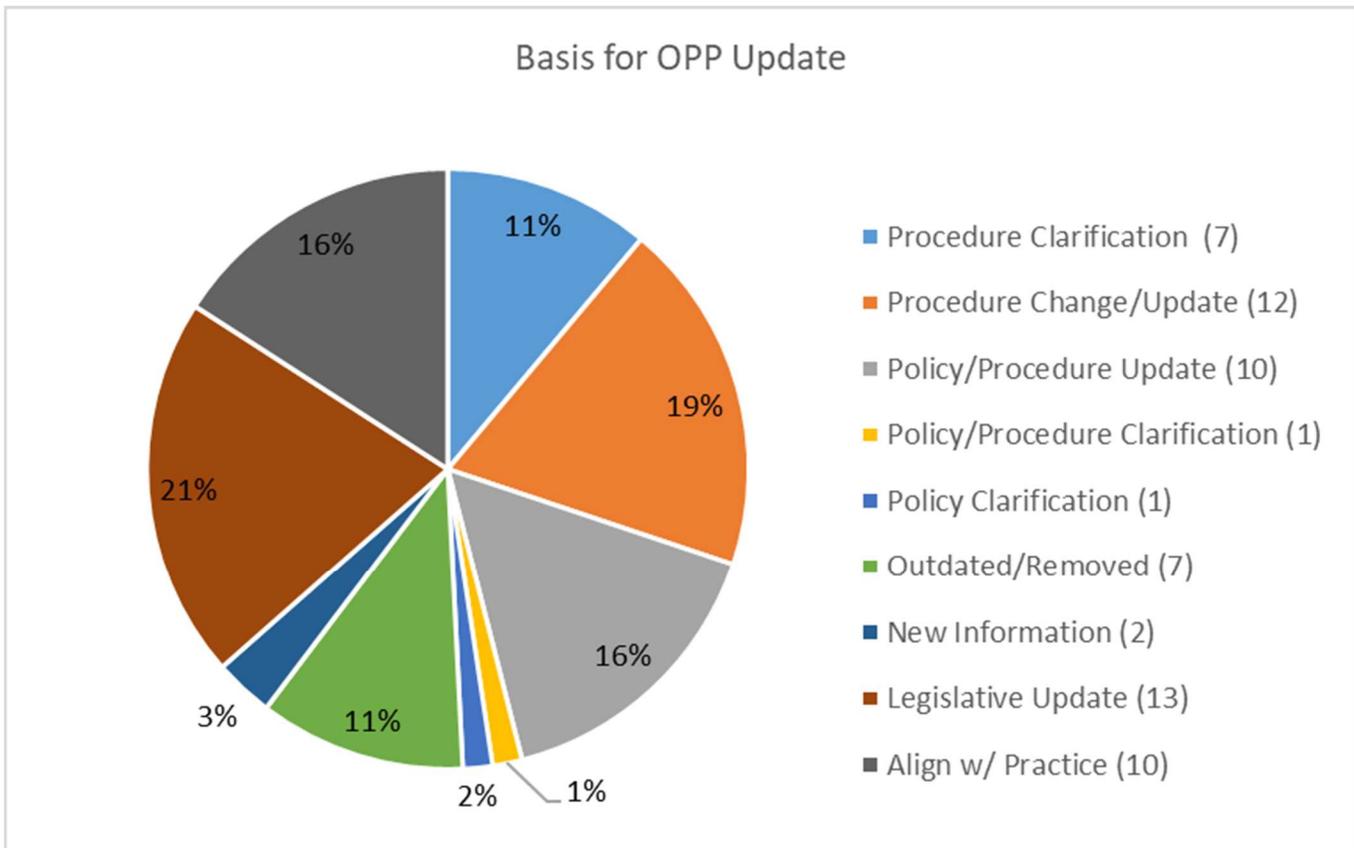
The types of changes made to the OPP are explained by the following:

Legislative Updates	Updates to state statutes (i.e., Welfare and Institutions Code) and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Manual of Policies and Procedures
New Information	New programs or information not previously in OPP

Procedure Update*	Existing procedure is modified or changed
Procedure Clarification*	Upon review and/or feedback from staff it is determined existing OPP directions need to be revised to clarify procedure for staff
Policy Clarification*	Upon review and/or feedback from staff it is determined existing OPP policy statements need to be revised to clarify policy direction for staff
Policy Update*	Existing policy statement or guidance is modified or changed to provide different guidance to staff
Outdated/Removed	Program/service is no longer available or existing OPP section is significantly outdated and removed until update is completed
Align w/Practice	Over time, practice changes impact policies and procedures requiring significant modification of the OPP to be in alignment

* May occur in combination

In 2023, the types of changes to the OPP were completed for the following:



Additionally, in 2023, DFCS' Policy Unit collaborated with program staff to complete large-scale reviews of OPP chapters in several key areas including Emergency Response, placement services, transition age youth (TAY) services, and administrative processes within the Program Audit division. Those chapters supporting Emergency Response and

TAY services, which needed updating and were completed. As there is continuous work required to keep the OPP updated, the work with Emergency Response has resumed supporting a review of all Emergency Response-related chapters. Work also continues with program staff to make the necessary updates to those OPP chapters supporting placement services and the administrative processes within the Program Audit division.

DFCS and the Policy Unit strive to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date OPP guide, however due to ongoing changes to policies, procedures, and practices as well as individual circumstances of families, not every situation will be covered or fit precisely into an existing policy and procedure. As a result, managers, supervisors, and staff need to utilize critical thinking skills, clinical assessments, and consultation/supervision to determine the best course of action for a particular situation.

While DFCS has a Policy Unit tasked with drafting updates to the OPP, the responsibility for the maintenance of the OPP is a shared endeavor. To ensure accuracy, timely updates, and clear written guidance for workers, collaboration between the Policy Unit and DFCS staff at all levels is necessary. That collaboration requires transparency, effective and timely communication, and staff review and feedback when requested.

Attachment A –
Policy Updates by
Categorization

Administrative	Intimate Partner Violence: Assessing Lethality
Legislative Update	Missing from Care
Child Support Referral Determination	Protective Custody Warrants
New Information	Safely Surrendered Baby Protocol
Social Worker Safety	Procedure Clarification
Procedure Change/Update	Initial Case Plan
DFCS (Electronic) Sign In	Reporting to the Department of Justice (DOJ)
How to Enter Race/Ethnicity into CWS/CMS	Safety Planning
Security and Incident Reporting	Child Well-Being
Procedure Clarification	Legislative Update
Contact Requirements	ICWA Inquiry: Outreach, Noticing & Documentation
Emergency Assistance (EA1-CWS) Application	Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Inquiry : Outreach, Noticing and Documentation
Child Safety	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Children and Youth
Align w/ Practice	Psychotropic Medication
Case Consultations	Reproductive and Sexual Health
Conducting an Emergency Response Assessment	School of Origin Transportation
DFCS Referral for Probate Court	Transitional Independent Living Program (TILP)
Investigating Allegations of Physical Injury	Outdated/Removed
Investigating Referrals Involving Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)	System of Care
Referrals from Probate Court	Policy/Procedure Update
Legislative Update	Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)
Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA): Who Must Report	Procedure Clarification
Home Entry	Education Travel Reimbursement
Initial Case Plan	Presumptive Transfer of Mental Health
Non-Reunification (Bypass) Cases	Placement/Permanency
Outdated/Removed	Align w/ Practice
Investigative Medical Examinations	Adoption Finalization Case Closing
Staffing Required when Assessing Physical Injury	Placement Stabilization Services
Policy/Procedure Update	Transitions To and From Placement
Assessment Guide: Hazardous Residences and Lack of Adequate Shelter	Legislative Update
Assessment Guide: Health/Medical Maltreatment	Placement Stabilization Services
Assessment Guide: Mental/Emotional Maltreatment	Outdated/Removed
Assessment Guide: Parent Incapacity/Absence/Lack of Supervision	Family Finding Resources
Assessment Guide: Physical Maltreatment	Intensive Treatment Foster Care
Assessment Guide: Substance Use Disorders	Service Referrals for Placement Stabilization
How to Obtain a Court Order to Interview a Child	Policy Clarification
Reporting to the Department of Justice (DOJ)	Home-Based Family Care
Procedure Change/Update	Services
Assessment Guide: Parent Incapacity/Absence/Lack of Supervision	Align w/ Practice
Assessment Guide: Sexual Maltreatment	Bringing Families Home
DI: Investigations and Assessments	

New Information

Flex Funds

Outdated/Removed

Transporting Children

Policy/Procedure Clarification

Case-Related Transportation

Policy/Procedure Update

DFCS CalWORKS Partnership: Common Cases Under Family Maintenance

Procedure Change/Update

Case-Related Transportation

DFCS Special Funds (SCZ 414z)

