



NH Department of Health & Human Services  
Division for Children, Youth & Families

## DCYF Standard Operating Procedure

### 2765.3 STORAGE AND ARCHIVING

Policy Directive: **22-18**

Effective Date: **June 2022**

Implements Policy: **2765**

Approved:

Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr., DCYF Director

This SOP defines how case records are stored in District Offices.

#### Procedure

*The following information is to support the implementation of the above referenced policy. This document shall not preclude staff from using their professional judgement based on individual circumstances, consistent with the requirements of the policy.*

- I. **CPS Assessment** records are kept in a single file folder for the family, regardless of how many children or parents are involved.
  - A. The file is labeled with the oldest child's last name, the CPS Assessment number, the date and time assigned to the District Office (DO), and the assigned response priority.
- II. **JJS Needs Assessment** records are kept in a single file folder for the child.
  - A. Files are labeled with the last name of the child, the JJS Needs Assessment case number, and the date the JJS Needs Assessment was accepted.
  - B. If there are multiple children in the home for whom a JJS Needs Assessment is being conducted, each child will have their own file.
- III. **CPS Family Services** records are maintained in one file folder for the family, no matter how many children or parents are involved.
  - A. The file tab is labeled with the name of the case (oldest child's last name) and case number.
  - B. If placement occurs, each child in placement will have an additional child-specific "well-being" folder.
    1. "Well-being" folders are labeled with the full name of the child whose information is contained within the file, their date of birth, and the case number.
    2. If JJS also has an open case and the child enters placement under the JJS case, CPS does not create a well-being folder, and all CPS information will remain in the CPS family file.
- IV. **JJS Delinquency or CHINS** records are maintained in one file folder for the child.
  - A. If more than one child in the family is involved with JJS, each child will have their own file.
  - B. The file tab is labeled with the child's full name, date of birth, and the case number.

- V. When **subsequent case files** (CPS and JJS) are necessary, the front of each file folder needs to state the start and end dates of the information contained within.
  - A. Each section of the file folder will begin and end at the same date and only have information from within the dates written on the outside cover.
  - B. Each file is numbered with the oldest chronological file folder being number one of "x" number of files.
    - 1. "X" will be determined when the case closes and will be added to all file folders at that time.
- VI. All sections Division case files are kept in chronological order.
- VII. Fiscal-generated records are scanned into the DCYF electronic information system as they are completed.
- VIII. Upon closing a CPS Assessment, JJS Needs Assessment, or case (CPS or JJS), the assigned CPSW/JJPO is responsible for preparing the folders/files for storage.
  - A. This includes securing any Fiscal, Attorney, and Adoption files and adding them to the files to be archived.
- IX. Files must be stored either in the District Office (DO) or with the NH Secretary of State (SoS), Division of Archives and Records Management, according to the timelines set by the SoS.
- X. For archiving, DO support staff enter the data in the Archive database, box, label, and submit case files for secure storage to the SoS, at the end of retention timeframes (See FAQ for timelines).
  - A. DO support staff must comply with the Archive Standards instructions and as directed by the SoS.
  - B. CPS Adoption files and Attorney files are archived with the case file(s).
  - C. Any paper fiscal files are obtained from the FSU and are archived with the case file(s).
- XI. DCYF records that have reached the end of the required retention timeframe will be handled as follows, unless the Division is subject to a litigation hold or other administrative directive to suspend record destruction:
  - A. DO support staff delete all electronic records;
  - B. DO support staff shred screened-out reports; and
  - C. The Archive Administrator processes requests to destroy paper items in archive.

1. DO Support staff do not need to keep track of records in Archive.
- D. This does not include founded or unfounded but with reasonable concerns reports, which are kept permanently.
- XII. Archived files are obtained by making a request to the Archive Administrator.
- XIII. Nothing in this section prevents the Department from retaining generic, non-identifying information which is required for state and federal reporting and management purposes.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Q1. What are the retention time frames for Child Protection files?**

- A** This chart provides the retention time frames by number of years for both the District Offices (DO) and archiving with the Secretary of State (SoS).

Record Description	Retention Timeframe		
	DO	SoS	Total
Screened-out Report*	4	0	4
Unfounded Assessments*	3	7	10
Unfounded but with Reasonable Concern Assessments	3	Perm	Perm
Founded Assessments (with or without a case)	3	Perm	Perm
Family Services Case (In-Home or Placement)	3	Perm	Perm
After Care Files	1	6	7
Adoption Files	1	Perm	Perm
Foster Home Provider Files	1	6	7

\*Pursuant to RSA 169-C:35-a, if during the retention period for a screened-out or unfounded report, the Department receives a subsequent report of abuse or neglect concerning the same alleged perpetrator or the same child, or any siblings or other children in the same household, or in the care of the same adults, the Department must retain information from the prior and subsequent reports for:

- i. An additional 4 years from the date a subsequent report is screened out for a previously screened-out report;
- ii. An additional 10 years from the date a subsequent report is screened out for a previously unfounded report;
- iii. An additional 10 years from the date a subsequent report is deemed unfounded for a previously screened-out report; or
- iv. Indefinitely if the subsequent report is deemed founded or unfounded but with reasonable concern.

**Q2. What are the retention time frames for Juvenile Justice files?**

**A** This chart provides the retention time frames by number of years for both the District Offices (DO) and archiving with the Secretary of State (SoS).

Record Description	Retention Timeframe			Comments
	DO	SoS	Total	
JJS Needs Assessment				Retained in office until minor turns 21.
CHINS In-Home	2	5	7	2 years after 18th Birthday or case closure, whichever comes last.
CHINS Placement	1	6	7	
Delinquency Cases (In-Home or Placement)	0	Perm	Perm	Retained in office until minor turns 21.
ICJ files (NH Receiving)	0	Perm	Perm	Retained at SoS in accordance with ICJ rules

**Glossary and Document Specific Definitions**

A - B    C - D    E - F    G - I    J - L    M - N    O - Q    R - S    T - V    W - Z

**Document Change Log**

PD	Modification Made	Approved	Date
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