Policy: Grievances and Appeals

ChildNet Number: CN 004.020
Original Approved Date: May 16, 2003
Policy Revised Date(s): October 30, 2009
Policy Sunset Date:
COA Standard(s): CR 3.00, RPM 2.01,

Statement of Policy:

It is the policy of ChildNet to assure the rights of all individuals are protected while they are applying for and/or being served. To facilitate such protection, ChildNet shall develop and maintain, on behalf of individuals served and their representatives, a grievance/appeals procedure. ChildNet shall not retaliate against the grievant for making said complaint.

(Note: Procedures pertaining to ChildNet subcontractors/providers dispute resolution are as per the terms of their contract.)

Board Chair's Signature: _____ **Date:** 10-29-10

Procedure: Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals

ChildNet Number: CN 004.020
Original Approved Date: May 16, 2003
Procedure Revised Date(s): October 30, 2009, September 22, 2011, July 9, 2014, March 20, 2018, April 11, 2022, October 14, 2026
Procedure Sunset Date:
COA Standard(s): CR 3.00, RPM 2.01,

Definitions (If any):

Concern: a request for clarification or information

Complaint: an informal general expression of dissatisfaction either verbal or in writing that is resolved within 30 days

Grievance: a formal, written statement of concern and/or a complaint that is not resolved within 30 days

Appeal: A formal request to a higher authority or court to review and change a decision.

Statement of Procedure:

A. Procedural Steps:

1. If a client, their family, or guardian ad litem has a difference of opinion with the Dependency Case Manager as to some aspect of the child's case, they should first discuss their concern with the Dependency Case Manager. Concerns and complaints may also be expressed through inquiries submitted through the ChildNet website.

   Client concerns and complaints are also received directly by the Chief Executive Officer or President via phone, mail, or email. All complaints are sent to a centralized email address: complaints@childnet.us.

2. If the matter cannot be, or has not previously been, resolved through consultation with the Dependency Case Manager, the complainant may request a conference with the Unit Supervisor or Director/Manager. Such a meeting will take place within **5 working days** of the request being made. The request may be verbal or in writing.

3. If the parties are still in disagreement after meeting with ChildNet staff at this level, the complaint may be advanced further to the appropriate chain of command which

may include Director/Manager, Case Management Officer, or Chief Quality Officer.

4. If the complaint is unable to be resolved through these channels within 30 days, it will be escalated to a grievance. Grievances will necessitate an in-depth review in order to be resolved and referred to the Chief Quality Officer. The Chief Quality Officer or Client Relations Coordinator will review any pertinent materials and, if necessary, meet individually or in a group with the parties involved. Telephone contacts are permissible. Within **30 days** of receiving the grievance request for intervention, the Chief Program Officer or Client Relations Coordinator will formulate a recommendation for resolution of the grievance. The Chief Program Officer will then share this recommendation for resolution of the issue in writing with the complainant and others involved, as appropriate.

5. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) submits client concerns and complaints through a Tracker system. A Tracker is sent to the Client Relations Coordinator and Chief Quality Officer to inquire as to the allegations or issues raised. These submissions are tracked by the Designee. Trackers are then sent to the appropriate ChildNet staff members (Supervisors, Director/Manager, Continuous Quality Improvement) to complete a review and a response to the issue. The response is then sent back to DCF. Clients may or may not be contacted depending upon the nature of the concern or complaint raised by the Department.

6. If necessary, ChildNet's Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee shall be the final step in the process and shall make a final determination on behalf of ChildNet.

7. Final legal authority and decision-making may rest with the courts.

B. Additional Provisions:

1. A copy of the ChildNet Client Complaint and Grievance Policy and Procedure shall be provided to all clients, and their families at intake and additionally upon request. ChildNet will encourage clients, their families, and others in the community to follow the procedure to assure that the proper attention is given to the issue in a timely fashion.

2. Every step of the Client Complaint and Grievance process must be documented in the client case record.

3. The Chief Quality Officer reviews all complaints, grievances and outcomes with the Client Relations Coordinator and assists with the development of a summary report for Performance and Quality Improvement. Summary reports are also reviewed for risk management and compliance consideration.

4. For grievances, ChildNet shall provide the grievant a decision in writing within **30 days** and advise or explain if there is any recourse, appeal (to the Department of Children and Families), or other appeals rights for the client (i.e.: Florida Statute Section 120 or other regulatory fair hearings).

5. Complaint/grievance and the outcome will be documented in the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS).

6. Complaints may also be filed externally as follows:

DCF Office of Civil Rights Headquarters
1317 Winewood Blvd., Building 1, Room 110
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700
Telephone: (850) 487-1901
Facsimile: (850) 921-8470
TDD: (850) 922-9220

DCF Regional Office of Civil Rights
111 S. Sapodilla Ave., #309-F
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
Telephone: (561) 837-5538
Facsimile: (561) 837-5563
TDD: (561) 650-6823

Federal Department of Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights Headquarters
200 Independence Ave., SW
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201

Federal HHS Regional Office of Civil Rights
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth St., SW
Atlanta, GA 30303-8909
Telephone: (404) 562-7886
Facsimile: (404) 562-7881
TDD: (404) 332-2867

President's Signature: Neila Shea **Date:** 11/13/26