

Subdivision (o) of section 441.2 is added to read as follows:

(o) Parent advocate means a person who has previously been a recipient of child welfare services, has successfully addressed the issues which brought the family to the attention of child welfare, has been reunified with his or her children, if applicable, and has subsequently been trained as a parent advocate to work within the child welfare system. A parent advocate is employed by or under contract with an authorized agency, or is employed by an agency that is under contract with an authorized agency, for the purpose of providing support and advocacy to parent(s) or relative(s) through a variety of activities, including, but not limited to, engaging parent(s) or relatives(s) and assisting them to understand the child welfare and family court process; attending case conferences; coaching for productive visitation between parents and their children in foster care; accompanying parent(s) or relative(s) to court, school, public benefits offices, and health centers; assisting parent(s) in advocating for themselves; providing assistance in accessing community services; facilitating appointments; and working as a liaison between parent(s) or relative(s), caseworkers, foster parents, and other service providers.

#### **§ 441.21 Casework Contacts**

**Paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (b) of section 441.21 are amended to read as follows:**

(b) Casework contact with parent or relatives. (1) Casework contacts with the child's parents or relatives is defined as individual or group face-to-face contacts between one or more of the [case planner, or assigned caseworker, as directed by the case planner, or the case manager] persons listed in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph and the child's parents or relatives. Casework contacts are for the purpose of assessing whether the child would be safe if he or she was to return home, and the potential for future risk of abuse or maltreatment if he or she was to return home. Such contacts are also for the purpose of guiding the child's parents or relatives towards a course of action aimed at resolving problems or needs of a social, emotional, developmental or economic nature that are contributing to the reason(s) why such child is in foster care. In the case of children with the permanency planning goal of another planned living arrangement with a permanency resource or adult residential care, such contacts are for the purpose of mobilizing and encouraging family support of the youth's efforts to function independently, and to increase his/her capacity to be self-maintaining; evaluating the ability of the parents or relatives to establish or reestablish a connection with the youth and serve as a resource to the youth; and, where appropriate, encouraging an ongoing relationship between the parents or relatives and the youth. For purposes of this section, a case planner is defined as the person who is responsible for assessing the need for, providing or arranging for, coordinating and evaluating the provision of services to children in foster care and services to parents of children in foster care and such additional responsibilities as set forth in section 428.2(c) of this Title.

(i) For the purposes of this section, casework contacts must be made by the following:

- (a) the case manager;
- (b) the case planner;
- (c) a caseworker assigned to the case, as directed by the case planner; or
- (d) a parent advocate as defined in section 441.2 (o) of this Part.

(ii) A parent advocate may be considered for the purpose of making casework contacts with the child's parent or relatives, as defined in subdivision (b) of this section, when the contacts are directed, arranged, or otherwise coordinated by the case planner. A parent advocate providing casework contacts is permitted access to such child's foster care case file only if the parent advocate is employed by or under contract with an authorized agency, or employed by an agency under contract with an authorized agency, as defined in section 441.2 (d) of the Part. Casework contacts between a parent advocate and the child's parent or relative can be made for the purposes set forth in section 441.21 (b)(1), except that they can not be used for the purposes of assessing whether the child would be safe if he or she was to return home, or the potential for future risk of abuse or maltreatment if he or she was to return home. The case planner is responsible for all assessments and case planning decisions; however, the parent advocate may be asked to provide their input. Parent advocates will be trained in risk and safety assessment, and parent advocates need to be prepared to provide any feedback to the case planner regarding any safety and risk issues they discover during case work contacts. Casework contacts made by a parent advocate must be recorded in accordance with Parts 428 and 466 of this Title.

(2) Frequency of casework contacts with parents or relatives.

- (i) During the first 30 days of placement, casework contacts are to be held with the child's parents or relatives as often as is necessary but at a minimum, must occur at least twice unless compelling reasons are documented why such contacts are not possible. Such initial casework contacts within 30 days of placement must be made by the case manager, the case planner or a caseworker assigned to the case, as directed by the case planner.
- (ii) After the first 30 days of placement, casework contacts are to be held with the child's parents or relatives at least once every month unless compelling reasons are documented why such contacts are not possible. Such monthly casework contacts made after the first 30 days of placement must be made by one of the persons set forth in subparagraph (i) of paragraph (1) of this subdivision. .
  - (a) No more than two of the monthly casework contacts in any six-month period may be made by a parent advocate.