

MEMO

June 18, 2012

To: Multnomah County Circuit Court Chief Family Law Judge, Hon. Maureen McKnight

From: Multnomah County Family Court Services Manager, Janice Garceau

Re: Suspension of Custody and Parenting Time Evaluation Referrals effective June 18, 2012

Beginning July 1, 2012, Family Court Services will have two full time counselor positions vacant. One position is permanently eliminated due to revenue reductions. The other will be vacant until October 2012, also due to budget shortfalls. Mediation referrals remain at previous high levels. In addition, ten custody and parenting time evaluations currently await assignment.

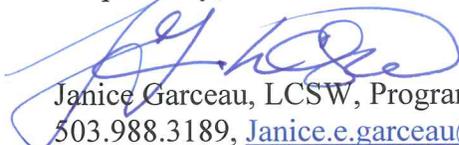
In order to prevent families from remaining in limbo without evaluation services for six months or longer, FCS must close referrals until a new counselor is hired and ready to receive cases.

We recognize the importance of the evaluation service to families and the impact this decision will have on families and the Court. We recognize that in light of other system-wide reductions the timing for families and Courts is not good. We deeply regret the dilemmas this will cause in certain family law cases.

During this time, we encourage parents to use our mediation service wherever possible to negotiate temporary or permanent arrangements for children in the absence of the option of evaluation. We hope to be able to begin receiving evaluation referrals again by late October. We will also explore new, emerging interventions that may offer faster and more positive problem-solving options for families.

Please contact our office if you have any questions about the current status of evaluations.

Respectfully,


Janice Garceau, LCSW, Program Manager
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6/18/2012