The following are two examples of CWS/CMS case notes from a regularly scheduled visit with a youth in foster care. This is a snapshot of what appropriate documentation looks like and is an example of how a case should be documented from start to finish. Please note the first example is a common case note, but not sufficient in quality or best practice standards. The second example is based off the requirements for visitation found in the Manual of Policies and Procedures Division. 31-320.

Mr is a 13-and-a-half-year-old living in out of home placement. He has been placed in a level 10 group home for 11 months. Family Reunification services have been terminated. Priority is stepping Mr down to a lower level of care and the plan for permanency is placement with a fit and willing relative. He currently has an older sister working on completing the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process. Mr has minimal behaviors and he is not fit for a Short-Term Residential Treatment Program (STRTP) placement. The assigned worker is working on getting him into a foster home placement, but to date hasn’t been able to find an appropriate placement for him.

1. This worker met Mr at his STRTP. He was playing basketball and this worker didn’t want to interrupt. Worker didn’t see anything of concern. Worker will drop by next month.
2. This worker met with Mr at his STRTP, for an unscheduled visit. Mr was playing basketball when this worker arrived. This worker observed Mr’s interactions for a few minutes and then invited him to come into the group home to meet with this worker. Mr asked for a few more minutes of game play and then he would come in. This worker agreed.

This worker asked the supervising staff member how things had been this last week. Staff report Mr continues to struggle in school socially, but that he hasn’t AWOL’ed from school this last week. Staff also reported a decrease in aggressive behaviors towards peers in general and over time. This worker asked for Mr’s most recent grades to confirm he is still passing his classes. This worker also asked staff to confirm that Mr has been medication compliant for the month, and to provide a copy of the medication logs for the youth’s case file. Staff agreed to do so prior to this leaving the campus. This worker thanked the staff for the update and called Mr in to meet with her.

This worker and Mr met in his shared room in the STRTP, his roommate was not present, and the door remained open. This worker asked how the last two weeks have been since this worker saw him at the scheduled CFT. Mr reports he’s fine and asked this worker about joining the basketball team at school. This worker reminded Mr that that was discussed at the CFT and his team agrees that would be a good outlet for him, and that his WRAP team is working on the logistics of payment and transportation. This worker also reminded Mr that he must continue passing his classes to play basketball. Mr reports that he is passing, but that math is hard. This worker asked if he thought a tutor would help, or if some added academic support from his WRAP team would be helpful. Mr said no tutor yet, but that he would be open to help from his peer mentor if he was able to help with math homework. This worker committed to following up with WRAP regarding homework support for math, as well as the progress on the basketball logistics. This seemed to satisfy Mr and he was able to move on.

This worker asked how school has been going, and mentioned that she knows he hasn’t been AWOLing, and gave him specific praise for this. Mr said it has been better since his 6th period teacher has “backed off” and WRAP stopped coming to school. This worker asked how it was going having WRAP pick him up from school a couple times a week for visits. Mr responded he likes it better, he hated it when WRAP met with him at school. This worker reminded Mr that as long as he continued attending school, WRAP wouldn’t have to be on school campus during the day. This worker asked how it was going with his WRAP counselor. Mr reports “so far so good,” but couldn’t name anything specifically that was working well. This worker reported she would follow up with the counselor for an update. This worker did praise Mr for attending services and engaging with his team.

This worker asked Mr how things have been going at the STRTP, and if he was still having issues with one peer in particular. Mr shared things are a lot better since the peer left the STRTP. Mr reports no concerns with staff or peers at this time. This worker asked if he knew what the difference was the last few weeks, since he’s been able to stay at school and the number of incidents at home have been fewer. Mr shrugged his shoulders and said, “I’ve been taking my meds.” This worker asked how they made him feel, he reports not as angry. This worker asked if he planned on continuing the medications. Mr said yes, because he can make better choices and stay out of trouble when he is on his meds. This worker praised Mr for the progress he’s making.

This worker gave Mr an update from the assigned Family Finder and asked if he had thought any more about talking with his oldest sister. Mr got quiet and his body slumped, and he reports “I don’t know what to say.” This worker offered to make the call to his sister with him, and to meet before so we could come up with questions or make a plan for what he wanted her to know about him. Mr said that would be helpful, and agreed to make up talking points and make the call to his sister next week during our scheduled meeting. This worker updated Mr on the fact that his sister has started the RFA process and she is currently doing everything thing she needs to do to get him home with her. This worker asked how that made him feel. Mr shrugged his shoulders and said it had to be better than the STRTP.

This worker also shared that there is a potential resource home, and that this worker is coordinating with WRAP services to schedule a pre-placement visit. The potential resource home is a single parent household and there is another youth around Mr’s age that already lives there. Mr became excited about this and asked when he could go. This worker explained that getting him to a lower level of care is a priority, but that he needs to continue taking his medications, going to school and meeting with his counselor. Mr agreed and said he really wants to go. This worker reported that she would call him if she could get a visit scheduled before they meet next week for their regular meeting. Mr said “Okay” but wants this worker to “get him out.” This worker affirmed she understood but reminded Mr that it had to be a good fit, and that just because they are a potential doesn’t mean it is a done deal.

This worker asked if there was anything Mr wanted to tell this worker before they wrapped up the visit. Mr said he finally got to go to the store and buy some new jeans and a new hoodie. This worker was glad to hear that as she had requested the home get him some new jeans that fit appropriately. With these new purchases, this worker was able to confirm Mr has enough clothing that fits for one week to 10 days without doing laundry. This worker asked how much money he has remaining in his clothing allowance. Mr reports he is down to $23 after the last shopping spree, but he’s going to start saving for the Jordan’s he really wants. This worker asked how much they are and how many weeks he would have to save to earn enough extra money to cover the Jordan’s. Mr had to think about it, and says they are $198 but determined if he saved every allowance for the next 6 weeks on top of his clothing allowance, he should be able to get them.

This worker asked about his daily routine at the home, and what chores he was accountable for and what were some ways he could earn his allowance. Mr said they have a chore wheel that rotates weekly. He hates doing the dishes but doesn’t mind taking out the trash. Mr reports that he started doing his own laundry this week. The staff help but he reports he thought it would be a lot harder. This worker asked if there were opportunities to earn extra money at the home. Mr reports he can sign up to help the grounds/maintenance people for a couple hours a week and can earn extra money that way. This worker asked if he had done that yet, he said off and on, but he wants to do it more, so he can earn his Jordan’s faster. He also reported he should probably stop buying chips and soda with his allowance, so he could get his shoes faster. This worker reminded him that there are always choices, and he would have to decide each day how bad he wanted his shoes.

Mr reports he doesn’t have anything else to share and that he wanted to head out to play before dinner. This worker communicated she would be back next week as scheduled. This worker communicated she would follow up with WRAP about joining the basketball team, getting an update from the WRAP counselor and the pre-placement visit. Mr asked if next week they could go off-campus. This worker communicated that if he made it to school and stayed at school every day the next week that they could go for a walk off-campus. Mr agreed.

This worker connected with the staff member before leaving and the staff confirmed that Mr has been medication compliant for the last month. He also shared they have noticed Mr being better able to make good choices and is more easily redirected. This worker shared about the potential resource family and that she and WRAP are working on coordinating a pre-placement visit. The staff also gave a current progress report that shows that Mr is currently passing his classes. Mr also has a dentist appointment next week that the STRTP home staff will be transporting him to. This worker thanked the staff.

This social worker assessed the safety and risk factors of Mr. His well-being and physical environment indicate no major concerns at this time as evidenced by the above stated contact.