

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

ABUSE: Non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries resulting in serious physical harm or risk of serious injury to a child. Also, includes sexual abuse, which is any sexual behavior with a child.

ACTION MEETING: A meeting designed to bring family members, service providers, community members, schools personnel and other involved family support persons together to develop a plan that preserves families and/or facilitates a permanent plan for a child.

AT RISK CASE MANAGEMENT (ARCM): A Medicaid program where a case manager helps locate, coordinate and monitor appropriate services for an individual. A child must be eligible for Medicaid to receive this service. This service is voluntary.

ADJUDICATORY HEARING: A court hearing in which information is presented regarding the abuse, neglect, or dependency of a child. The judge then decides if this information is true.

ADOPTIONS AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT OF 1997 (ASFA): This act, passed in 1997, provides guidance to public child welfare practice. Some of the basic ideas in this law are

Placement in foster care is temporary

A permanent plan should begin to be sought as soon as a child enters foster care.

Reunification is ideal but not when it jeopardizes the safety of the child.

Results and accountability are imperative to children and family services.

The child welfare system should utilize innovative strategies to achieve permanence, safety, and well being for children.

CHILD FAMILY TEAM MEETING: A meeting designed to bring family members, service providers community members, schools personnel and other involved family support persons together to develop a plan that preserves families and/or facilitates a permanent plan for a child.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS): North Carolina state law mandates that the Department of Social Services receive reports of child abuse and neglect, investigate these reports, and if abuse or neglect is found, provide necessary services to ensure the safety of children. These services are referred to as Child Protective Services.

COUNSELING: A professional relationship that helps an individual assess his or her situation, plan steps for dealing with it and to take appropriate action.

DEPENDENCY: A juvenile has no parent/guardian to provide for care, or the parent/guardian is unable to provide for care.

DISPOSITIONAL HEARING: A hearing that occurs after a child has been deemed abused, neglect, or dependent by the court. This hearing identifies the needs and best

interest of the child.

EMANCIPATION: Occurs when a youth leaves DSS custody upon turning 18 years old or when he or she is otherwise deemed legally independent.

FAMILY IN-HOME SERVICES: Is provided to families who have had a Substantiation of abuse, neglect, dependency, or a finding of Services Needed. The purpose of CPS In-Home Services is to maintain the safety of the child while helping the parent/caretaker to learn more effective parenting practices.

GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL): A representative appointed by the court who determines and offers recommendations regarding the best interest of the child independently of DSS.

LEGAL CUSTODY/GUARDIANSHIP: The legal right given to an adult to care for, supervise, and make important decisions for a child without the involvement of social services. The biological parent/s may visit the child unless the court has stated otherwise.

MANDATED SERVICES: Services that the law requires. Child Protective Services are mandated and a family's participation in these services is non-voluntary.

NEGLECT: A parent or legal caretaker's failure to provide proper care, supervision and/or discipline to a child.

NON-VOLUNTARY SERVICES: Those services that are required by DSS and may be mandated by the court.

PERMANENCE: A legal home for a child that promotes belonging and a lasting family relationship.

PERMANENT PLAN: The ultimate goal of CPS services for a child. This plan may be family preservation, reunification, legal custody, legal guardianship, adoption, or emancipation.

PETITION: A legal document presented to the court that requests a hearing in regard to allegations of the abuse, neglect, or dependency of a child.

PREVENTION: Services to prevent family problems and to strengthen a family's capacity to raise their children to become healthy and self-sufficient adults.

REASONABLE EFFORTS: The use of preventive or reunification services by DSS to help keep a child safely at home or to return home safely within a reasonable amount of time.

REUNIFICATION: The return of a child to the child's original family from which he or she was removed because of abuse or neglect.

RISK ASSESSMENT: A determination made by a social work supervisor based on multiple factors in the family situation to continually evaluate child safety and the

family's progress toward correcting problems. This assessment occurs throughout the time that a family receives Child Protective Services.

SERVICE AGREEMENT: An agreement reached by the DSS social worker and the parents to set goals and services to help meet the goals, in order for children to remain safely at home, or to return home safely. Goals are specific, time-limited, and address problems leading to DSS involvement with the family.

SOCIAL WORK: A focus on the relationship between individuals and their environment. The social work process first defines and then intervenes to resolve problems that develop in the interaction between an individual and his or her environment.

SUBSTANTIATION: When DSS determines, based upon a thorough investigation, that abuse/neglect and/or dependency has occurred.

VOLUNTARY SERVICES: Those services to strengthen families that are available and optional to individuals.