

Definitions

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM

Abuse (In-Home) – The negligent or willful infliction of injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation, or cruel punishment with resulting physical or emotional harm or pain by a caretaker, family member, or other individual with whom the person who is elderly or disabled has an ongoing relationship.

Adult – A person 18 or older, or an emancipated minor.

Aged or Elderly Person – A person 65 or older.

Allegation (In-Home) – An assertion that a person who is elderly or who is an adult with a disability is in a state of, or at risk of, harm due to abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Allegation (MH & MR Investigations Program) – A report by an individual that a person receiving services in a state operated and/or contracted setting that serves children and adults with mental illness or mental retardation has been or is in a state of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Alleged Perpetrator – A person who is reported to have abused, neglected or exploited a person who is elderly or who is an adult with a disability.

Alleged Victim - An elderly person or an adult with a disability who has been reported to adult protective services staff to be in a state of or at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

APS – Adult Protective Services

APS In-Home – The term used to refer to investigations and service delivery related to abuse, neglect, and exploitation of persons who are elderly and adults with disabilities who generally live in non-institutional settings, that is, private homes, small foster homes, and legally unlicensed room and board facilities. APS in-home caseworkers investigate exploitation in licensed facilities when the alleged perpetrator is not affiliated with the institution. In previous years Adult Protective Services in-home counts have been referred to as “community” cases. To avoid confusion with investigations in community MH & MR centers, the title “community” is no longer used when referring to the APS in-home program area.

APS Investigation of Adult Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation – Refers to a completed investigation. Prior to FY 96, “investigations” in APS referred to initiate investigations rather than completed investigations.

Capacity to Consent – Having the mental and physical ability to understand the current problems and the services offered and to accept or reject those services, knowing the consequences of the decision.

Caretaker – A guardian, representative payee, or other person who by act, words, or course of conduct has acted so as to cause a reasonable person to conclude that he has accepted the responsibility for protection, food, shelter, or care for a person who is elderly or an adult with a disability.

Client – A person who is elderly or an adult with a disability who has been determined in a validated finding to be in need of protective services.

Confidentiality - Records relating to the department's protective clients are not open to public inspection.

Court-Authorized Entry - To carry out an investigation of reported abuse, neglect, or exploitation, the court may authorize the department to enter the premises of an elderly or disabled person.

Designated Perpetrator – A person who has been determined in a validated finding to have abused, neglected or exploited a person who is elderly or who has a disability.

Designated Victim - An elderly person or an adult with a disability for which a finding of abuse, neglect, or exploitation by a caretaker has been validated.

Developmental Disability - A severe, chronic disability of an individual that:

- results from a mental and/or physical impairment;
- begins before age 22;
- is likely to be life-long;
- results in major limitations in three or more areas of everyday functioning (self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, and economic self-sufficiency); and
- reflects the individual's need for special services that are individually planned and coordinated.

Disabled Person – A person with a physical, mental, or developmental disability that substantially impairs the person's ability to provide adequately for the person's care or protection and who is 18 years of age or older or under 18 years of age and who has had the disabilities of minority removed.

Emergency Client Services (ECS) – Emergency client services provided in accordance with §48.002(5) of the Human Resources Code, including, but not limited to, emergency shelter, medical and psychiatric assessments, in-home care, residential care, heavy housecleaning, minor home repairs, money management, transportation, emergency food, medication, and other supplies. Specific emergency client services are only available in a community if those specific services are not available through other state and local resources. To be eligible for emergency client services, a person who is elderly or an adult with disabilities must be receiving Adult Protective Services from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in accordance with §§48.002(5) and 48.021(a) of the Human Resources Code and have a service plan that has been developed by the department under these sections and that indicates that emergency client services are needed to remedy abuse, neglect, or exploitation. All other available resources must be used where feasible before emergency client services are initiated.

Emancipated Minor – A person under age 18 who has the power and capacity of an adult. This includes a minor who has had the disabilities of minority removed by a court of law or a minor who, with or without parental consent, has been married.

Emotional or Verbal Abuse (In-Home) – Any use of verbal communication or other behavior to humiliate, intimidate, vilify, degrade, or threaten with harm.

Emotional or Verbal Abuse (MH & MR Investigations Program) – Any act or use of verbal or other communication, including gestures to curse, vilify or degrade a person served by a MH & MR facility or program, or threaten a person served with physical or emotional harm. The act or communication must result in observable distress or harm to the person served by a MH & MR facility or program, or be of such nature that a reasonable person would consider it harmful or causing distress.

Exploitation (In-Home) – The illegal or improper act or process of a caretaker, family member, or other individual who has an ongoing relationship with a person who is elderly or disabled using the resources of the person who is elderly or disabled for monetary or personal benefit, profit, or gain without the informed consent of the person who is elderly or disabled.

Exploitation (MH & MR Investigations Program) – The illegal or improper act or process of using a person served by a MH & MR facility or program or the resources of a person served by a MH & MR facility or program for monetary or personal benefit, profit, or gain when the alleged perpetrator is an employee, agent, or contractor.

False Reports – A person commits an offense if the person knowingly or intentionally reports information that the person knows is false or lacks factual foundation. Such an offense is a Class B misdemeanor.

Immunity – A person filing a report, participating in an investigation, testifying, or participating in any judicial proceeding arising from a petition, report, or investigation is immune from civil or criminal liability. A person, including an authorized department volunteer, medical personnel, or law enforcement officer, who participates in an investigation or the provision of services is also immune as long as the person is acting in good faith.

Incapacitated Person – An adult individual who, because of a physical or mental condition is substantially unable to provide food, clothing, or shelter for himself or herself, to care for the individual's own physical health, or to manage the individual's own financial affairs; a missing person; or a person who must have a guardian appointed to receive funds due the person from any governmental source. (A minor is also a legally incapacitated person.)

Incidence of Maltreatment – Ratio of the number of confirmed APS in-home cases in a geographic area to the total population in that area of persons who are elderly and persons who have disabilities.

Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas (IMPACT) – The browser-based software application by which Adult Protective Services (APS) and Child Protective Services (CPS) staff document cases.

Intake Priorities (In-Home) – In establishing priorities, the department defines the time frames for beginning an investigation and for conducting a face-to-face interview with the alleged victim. Adult protective services priorities are based on the degree of severity and immediacy of the alleged harm to the individual.

Priority I – APS reports that allege the victim is in a state of serious harm or is in danger of death from abuse or neglect. The caseworker must attempt a face-to-face visit with the alleged victim within 24 hours of the department's receipt of a Priority I report, which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Serious injuries. Examples: spinal injury, fractured ribs puncturing lung, head injury, severe burns, broken hip, internal injuries.
2. Lack of life-sustaining medication.
3. Serious threats by caretaker to harm or kill alleged victim.
4. Lack of basic physical necessities severe enough to result in freezing, starvation, or dehydration.
5. Need for immediate medical attention to treat conditions that could result in irreversible physical harm, e.g., unconsciousness, acute pain, severe respiratory distress, gangrene, hemorrhaging, severe malnutrition.
6. Suicide threats or attempts unless there is clearly no immediate danger to the alleged victim.
7. Sexual abuse when there is danger of repeated abuse.
8. No caretaker is available; the alleged victim is unable to perform critical personal care activities, and his needs cannot be met by community care services.

Priority II – APS reports that allege the victim is abused, neglected, or exploited and, as a result, is at risk of serious harm. The caseworker must attempt a face-to-face visit with the alleged victim within three calendar days of the department's receipt of a Priority II report. For example, if the intake was received on 9-01, the caseworker must attempt a face-to-face visit on or before 9-04. Priority II reports may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Critical need for mental health or medical treatment. Examples: suicidal but no immediate danger, overly aggressive behavior, open bedsores or other open wounds, malnutrition, sprains, fractures, or disease or illness of an acute nature.
2. Falling or being pushed, hit, or scratched, which is reported to have resulted in bruises, other injuries, or severe mental anguish.
3. Inadequate attention to physical needs. Examples: insufficient food or medicine.

4. Illegal or improper use of alleged victim's income or resources to the degree that alleged victim is unable to meet basic subsistence needs or is threatened with substantial loss of income or resources.
5. Unreasonable confinement.
6. Sexual abuse of the alleged victim by the caretaker, but clearly no immediate danger of repeated abuse.
7. Caretaker has threatened physical violence that would cause harm to the alleged victim.
8. Living conditions that pose a serious health or safety hazard. Examples: fecal contamination, dead animals, major structural damage to shelter.
9. Imminent eviction from a nursing home because the alleged victim's representative has failed to use the alleged victim's income to pay for his care.
10. Threatened loss of caretaker when the alleged victim is dependent for basic needs.

Priority III – Consists of all other APS reports that allege the victim is in a state of abuse or neglect. The caseworker must attempt a face-to-face visit with the alleged victim within seven calendar days of the department's receipt of a Priority III report. For example, if the intake was received on September 1, the caseworker must attempt a face-to-face visit on or before September 8. Priority III reports may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Verbal or emotional abuse. Examples: harassment, cursing, degrading remarks, intimidation.
2. Marginal care or threatened withdrawal of care by caretaker when the alleged victim needs some assistance with his basic activities of daily living.
3. Falling or being pushed, hit, or scratched when such actions are not reported to result in bruises, other injuries, or severe mental anguish.
4. Need for mental health or medical treatment that is not urgent. Examples: mild depression, delusional thinking that is not dangerous to the alleged victim or others, poor nutrition, or disease or illness that is not acute.

Priority IV – APS reports that allege exploitation when there is no danger of imminent impoverishment or deprivation of basic needs. The caseworker must attempt a face-to-face visit with the alleged victim within 14 calendar days from the date the department receives a Priority IV report. For example, if the intake was received on September 1, the caseworker must attempt a face-to-face visit on or before September 15. Priority IV reports may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Lack of appropriate contribution to food and shelter expenses by household members.
2. Misuse of a nursing home resident's personal needs allowance by someone who is not affiliated with the nursing home. (If the alleged perpetrator is an employee of the nursing home, refer to the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services.)
3. Improper use of income or resources but the alleged victim's needs are still met.
4. Exploitation that is not ongoing and is not likely to recur.

Intake Priorities for MH & MR Investigations Program –

Priority I – Priority I reports have a serious risk that a delay in the investigation will impede the collection of evidence, or allege that the victim has been subjected to maltreatment by an act or omission that caused or may have caused serious physical or emotional harm. Priority I reports include, but are not limited to: death, sexual abuse, serious physical abuse injury, serious verbal or emotional abuse, or incitement to harm self or others. The investigator must attempt a face-to-face contact with the alleged victim within 24 hours of receipt of the report by the department.

Priority II – Priority II reports have some risk that a delay in investigation will impede the collection of evidence, or allege that the victim has been subjected to a maltreatment by act or omission that caused or may have caused non-serious physical injury, or emotional harm not included in Priority I. Priority II reports include, but are not limited to, the following: non-serious physical injury, non-serious verbal/emotional abuse, and/or exploitation. The

investigator must attempt a face-to-face contact with the alleged victim within three calendar days of receipt of the report by the department.

Priority III – Priority III reports allege maltreatment that would otherwise be classified as Priority I or II but the alleged incident occurred more than 30 days prior to the date of the report and there is no known or perceived risk. The investigator must attempt a face-to-face contact with the alleged victim within seven calendar days of receipt of the report by the department.

Institution – An establishment that furnishes, in one or more facilities, food and shelter to four or more persons who are unrelated to the proprietor of the establishment and provides minor treatment under the direction and supervision of a physician licensed by the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners, or other services that meet some need beyond the basic provision of food, shelter, and laundry.

Least Restrictive Alternative – An action or service that protects a client while allowing personal autonomy to the fullest degree possible.

MH & MR Facilities – State schools, state hospitals, and state centers.

MH & MR Investigations Program – Investigations conducted by APS related to abuse, neglect, or exploitation of persons with disabilities served by state operated mental health and mental retardation facilities and/or state contracted settings (state contracted Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded (ICF-MR), Home and Community-Based Services and Texas Home Living Waiver Programs).

Neglect (In-Home) – The failure to provide for one's self the goods or services, including medical services, which are necessary to avoid physical or emotional harm or pain or the failure of a caretaker to provide the goods or services.

Neglect (MH & MR Investigations Program) – When the alleged perpetrator is a mental health or mental retardation employee, agent, or contractor, neglect is defined as a negligent act or omission by any individual responsible for providing services to a person served by a MH & MR facility or program, which caused or may have caused physical or emotional injury or death to a person served or which placed a person served at risk of physical or emotional injury or death. Neglect includes, but is not limited to, the failure to:

1. establish or carry out an appropriate individual program plan or treatment plan for a person served, if such failure results in a specific incident or allegation involving a person served by a MH & MR facility or program;
2. provide adequate nutrition, clothing, or health care to a specific person served in a residential or inpatient program; or
3. provide a safe environment for a specific person served, including the failure to maintain adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff if such failure results in a specific incident or allegation involving a person served by a MH & MR facility or program.

Objection to Medical Treatment - Medical treatment may not be ordered for clients who object to treatment on religious grounds.

Physical Abuse (MH & MR Investigations Program) - When the alleged perpetrator is an employee, agent, or contractor, physical abuse is defined as:

1. an act or failure to act performed knowingly, recklessly, or intentionally, including incitement to act, which caused or may have caused physical injury or death to a person served;
2. an act of inappropriate or excessive force or corporal punishment, regardless of whether the act results in a physical injury to a person served; or
3. the use of chemical or bodily restraints on a person served not in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.

Protective Services – The services furnished by the department or by a protective services agency to a person who is elderly or who has a disability and has been determined to be in a state of abuse, exploitation, or neglect. These services may include social casework, case management, and arranging for psychiatric and health evaluation, home care, day care, social services, health care, and other services consistent with chapter 48 of the Human Resource Code.

Provider Agency (Contractor) – An agency that has contracted with the department to provide authorized services for adult protective service clients.

Reporter – A person who makes a referral to adult protective services staff about a situation of alleged abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a person who is elderly or has a disability.

Sexual Abuse (In-Home) – Any involuntary or non-consensual sexual conduct including conduct that would constitute an offense under Section 21.08, Penal Code, or Chapter 22, Penal Code.

Sexual Abuse (MH & MR Investigations Program) - any sexual activity, by a mental health or mental retardation employee, agent, or contractor, including but not limited to:

1. kissing a person served with sexual intent;
2. hugging a person served with sexual intent;
3. stroking a person served with sexual intent;
4. fondling a person served with sexual intent;
5. engaging in with a person served:
 - sexual conduct as defined in the Texas Penal Code, §43.01; or
 - any activity that is obscene as defined in the Texas Penal Code, §43.21;
6. requesting, soliciting, or compelling a person served to engage in:
 - sexual conduct as defined in the Texas Penal Code, §43.01; or
 - any activity that is obscene as defined in the Texas Penal Code, §43.21;
7. in the presence of a person served:
 - engaging in or displaying any activity that is obscene, as defined in the Texas Penal Code §43.21; or
 - requesting, soliciting, or compelling another person to engage in any activity that is obscene, as defined in the Texas Penal Code §43.21;
8. committing sexual exploitation as defined in §711.15 of this title (relating to “How is sexual exploitation defined?”) against a person served;
9. committing sexual assault as defined in the Texas Penal Code §22.011, against a person served;
10. committing aggravated sexual assault as defined in the Texas Penal Code, §22.021, against a person served; and
11. causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, videotaping, or depicting of a person served if the employee, agent, or contractor knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, videotape, or depiction of the person served is obscene as defined in the Texas Penal Code, §43.21, or is pornographic.

CHILD CARE LICENSING PROGRAM

Abuse: An intentional, knowing, or reckless act or omission by someone working under the auspices of an operation that causes or may cause emotional harm or physical injury to, or the death of, a child that the operation serves. See the Texas Family Code, [§261.401\(a\)\(1\)](#)

Administrative Review: An administrative review is an informal evaluation that Licensing staff conducts to determine whether a Licensing decision or action was appropriate.

Adverse Actions: Adverse actions are steps that the Licensing division may take to force an operation or home to close. Adverse actions are taken when an operation or home has been cited for violations that pose a risk to the health and safety of children, or if there are indications of a continued failure to comply with minimum standards, rules or law. Adverse actions may be a denial of an application to operate, a revocation, a suspension or an adverse amendment with conditions to a license, registration, certification or listing. If adverse action is taken, the operation or home has a right to request an administrative review and a hearing. If the adverse action is upheld the operation or home must close. When they receive notice from the department that an adverse action will be taken the operation or home must notify each parent, guardian, or managing conservator of the children served in their operation or family home of the actions being taken. Parents, guardians, or managing conservators must also be notified if they are seeking to enroll children after the operation has received a revocation or suspension notice.

Capacity: The maximum number of children that a permit holder may care for at one time.

Child-Care Administrator: A child-care administrator is a person who supervises and exercises direct control over a residential child-care operation that has a permit to serve seven or more children; and, is responsible for the operation's program and personnel, regardless of whether he has an ownership interest in the operation or shares his duties with anyone.

Child-Care Facility: An establishment subject to regulation by Licensing which, provides assessment, care, training, education, custody, treatment, or supervision for a child who is not related by blood, marriage, or adoption to the owner or operator of the facility, for all or part of the 24-hour day, whether or not the establishment operates for profit or charges for its services. A child-care facility includes the people, administration, governing body, activities on or off the premises, operations, buildings, grounds, equipment, furnishings, and materials. A child-care facility does not include child-placing agencies, listed family homes, or maternity homes.

Child Care Licensing (CCL): The division within DFPS that regulates child day care and residential child-care operations and other child-care activities, such as assessment services, maternity homes, child-placing agencies, and the licensing of child-care administrators. To search or inquire about a child-care operation on-line, visit http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/default.asp

Child-Placing Agency (CPA): A person, agency, or organization other than a parent who places or plans for the placement of a child in an adoptive home or other residential care setting. Child Placing Agencies verify foster family homes, foster group homes, and adoptive homes. A child-placing agency does not provide direct care for children. The agency is responsible for regulating its homes for compliance with minimum standards. Licensing inspects the CPA to ensure the CPA is meeting minimum standards. DFPS Child Protective Services is a licensed CPA.

CPA Adoptive Home: A person or persons approved by a CPA to accept adoptive placements.

CPA Foster Family Home: An operation that provides care for six or fewer children, up to the age of 18 years for 24 hours a day under the regulation of a child-placing agency.

CPA Foster Group Home: An operation that provides care for seven to 12 children, up to the age of 18 years for 24 hours a day under the regulation of a child-placing agency.

Complete Application: A packet of materials submitted by an applicant that contains all of the documentation required to apply for a permit.

Corrective Action: Corrective actions are steps that Licensing may impose upon an operation or home to assist it in becoming compliant with minimum standards, rules, and laws. These actions are imposed when an operation or home has repeated violations with standards that do not endanger the health and safety of children. Licensing staff may place the operation or home on evaluation or probation rather than taking adverse action. When an operation or home is placed on evaluation or probation, a Corrective Action Plan is developed to help the operation or home identify and correct the causes of the violations. If the Plan is followed, it will help the operation or home come into compliance and avoid adverse action.

Deficiency: Any failure to comply with a rule, including a minimum standard, law, specific term of your permit, or condition of your evaluation, probation, or suspension. Also referred to as a “violation.”

Emergency Shelter: An operation that provides short-term care (less than 30 days), for 13 or more children up to the age of 18 years for 24 hours a day.

Evaluation: Evaluation is a corrective action imposed on an operation or home when violations present a lower risk to children and the operation or home has not been able to come into compliance. Conditions may be imposed beyond the minimum standard rules and the basic permit requirements, and inspections may be conducted more frequently. The length of time for evaluation is not less than 30 days or more than six months.

Foster Family Home (Independent): An operation that provides care for six or fewer children up to the age of 18 years for 24 hours a day.

Foster Group Homes (Independent): An operation that personally provides care for seven to twelve children up to the age of 18 years for 24 hours a day.

Halfway House: An operation that provides transitional living services for no more than 24 children, ages 15 through 18 years for 24 hours a day. The purpose of this operation is to prepare older children for independent living.

Inspection: An inspection is an on site observation of an operation by Licensing staff to determine an operation's compliance with minimum standards, Licensing law and rules. Licensed and certified operations must have at least one annual unannounced inspection. Registered family homes must have at least one unannounced inspection every three years. Listed Family Homes and agency homes are inspected only if there is a report of abuse/neglect or if operating illegally. Inspections may be more frequent than the minimum required based upon a monitoring plan. After the inspection a written report is given to the operation and any violations must be discussed with the person in charge. Follow-ups done by Licensing staff ensure the corrections are made.

Investigation: When a report is received from someone alleging a violation of the minimum standards or Licensing law, an investigation is conducted to determine the validity of the allegations and to ensure the protection of children in care. When a report is received as a self-report from an operation or home an investigation is conducted to determine that the operation handled the incident in compliance with regulations that there is no future risk to children in care. An investigation may or may not require an inspection of the operation, but all reports have some degree of investigation.

Issuance: When the Licensing division determines that an operation or home has met minimum standards and may operate as a child-care center, home, or child-placing agency, a permit to operate is issued.

Licensed Child-Care Center: An operation providing care for seven or more children under 14 years of age for less than 24 hours per day at a location other than the permit holder's home.

Licensed Child-Care Home: The primary caregiver provides care in the caregiver's own residence for children from birth through 13 years. The total number of children in care varies with the ages of the children, but the total number of children in care at any given time, including the children related to the caregiver, must not exceed 12.

Listed Family Home: A caregiver at least 18 years old that provides care in her own home for compensation, for three or fewer children unrelated to the caregiver, birth through 13 years, for at least four hours a day, three or more days a week, and more than nine consecutive weeks. The total number of children in care, including children related to the caregiver, may not exceed 12.

Maternity Home: An operation that provides care for four or more minor and/or adult women and her children during pregnancy and/or during the six-week postpartum period for 24 hours a day.

Minimum Standards: Minimum requirements for permit holders, which are enforced by PRS to protect the health, safety and well-being of children.

Monitoring Plan: A monitoring plan is a schedule of the frequency of inspections at a home or operation. Various criteria are evaluated before selecting the monitoring plan for an operation. Some of them include: (1) Number and type of violations (2) Repetition or pattern of violations (3) whether corrections are made in a timely manner (4) Interaction between caregiver and children (5) Level of supervision given to children in care as well as staff and (6) In residential child-care operations only, the treatment and programming for the children in care.

Neglect: Neglect is an act or omission that is a breach of a duty by a person working under the auspices of an operation that causes or may cause substantial emotional harm or substantial physical injury to a child. See the Texas Family Code [§261.401](#)

Operation: A person or entity offering a program that may be subject to Licensing regulation. An operation includes the building and grounds where the program is offered, any person involved in providing the program, and any equipment used in providing the program. An operation includes a child-care facility, child-placing agency, listed family home, or maternity home.

Operation Serving Children With Mental Retardation: An operation that provides care for 13 or more children up to the age of 18 years for 24 hours a day. The children in care are significantly below average in general intellectual functioning and also have deficits in adaptive behavior.

Operation Providing Basic Child Care: An operation that provides care for 13 or more children up to the age of 18 years for 24 hours a day. The care does not include specialized care programs.

Permit: A permit (license, registration, certificate, or listing) is granted by Licensing allowing the operation or home to legally care for children. This also includes a child-care administrator's license.

Probation: Probation is a corrective action imposed on an operation or home when a specific incident or pattern of violations could lead to adverse action. The length of time for probation is not less than 30 days or more than one year.

Registered Child-Care Home: The primary caregiver provides care in the caregiver's own residence for not more than six children from birth through 13 years, and may provide care after school hours for not more than six additional elementary school children. The total number of children in care at any given time, including the children related to the caregiver, must not exceed 12. The child in care does not live at the caregiver's home.

Registration: A type of permit issued by licensing to provide child day care in a registered child-care home.

Regulation: The enforcement of statutes and the development and enforcement of rules, including minimum standards. Regulation includes the licensing, certifying, registering, and listing of an operation or child-care administrator.

Report: A report is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern about an operation, received by Licensing staff involving possible risk to children in care. A report may be a self-report from an operation informing Licensing staff of the occurrence of a serious incident at the operation. A report may also come from anyone alleging a violation of minimum standards, Licensing law or rules, or abuse and neglect. Regardless of the source, all reports receive some level of investigation.

Residential Care: Residential Care is care provided to children 24 hours a day outside the child's own home in the absence of a child's parent. The operation becomes the child's residence. Residential Operations include operations such as emergency shelters, foster homes, residential treatment centers, half-way houses, and therapeutic camps.

Residential Treatment Center: An operation that provides care and treatment for 13 or more emotionally disturbed children up to the age of 18 years for 24 hours a day.

Self-Report: A "self-report" is an account from an operation of a serious incident that occurred at the operation or home. All regulated operations are required to make reports to Licensing about certain types of incidents such as serious illness or injury to a child, criminal activity, unsafe building, grounds or equipment and other incidents that could pose a risk to children in care. Licensing staff is required to investigate all self-reports of serious incidents.

Serious Incident: Any non-routine occurrence that has an impact on the care, supervision, or treatment of a child or children. This includes, but is not limited to, suicide attempts, injuries requiring medical treatment, runaways, commission of a crime, and allegations of abuse or neglect or abusive treatment.

Technical Assistance: Assistance that licensing staff give to a permit holder, applicant, and operation employees to help them comply with applicable law and the minimum standard rules.

Therapeutic Camp: An operation that provides a camping program for 13 or more children, ages thirteen to eighteen for 24 hours a day. It is designed to provide an experiential therapeutic environment for children who cannot function in their home school or community.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM

Children in Foster Care – All children in DFPS’ legal responsibility who are in a placement paid by DFPS or other public facility. These placements include foster homes, foster group homes, institutions, residential treatment facilities, and juvenile facilities. This is a subset of Children in Substitute Care.

Children in Substitute Care – Children under 18 years of age in DFPS’ legal responsibility who are placed outside their own home (home of origin). This includes foster homes, institutions, foster group homes, residential treatment facilities, hospitals, adoptive homes, juvenile facilities, relative home placements, and independent living arrangements. Also included are the youth who age out of DFPS’ legal responsibility and continue in foster care placements to complete vocational training by age 19 or to graduate from high school before they turn 20 years old.

Children in the Legal Responsibility of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services – All children for whom the courts have appointed the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services legal responsibility by temporary or permanent managing conservatorship or other court ordered legal basis. These children may be residing in an out-of-home placement or may have been returned to their own home (home of origin). When there is an immediate danger to the physical health or safety of a child, the Texas Family Code(TFC) provides three options for intervention by DFPS into a family: (1) emergency removal of the child from the home prior to obtaining a court order; (2) removal of the child after obtaining an ex parte order; or, (3) removal of the child after notice and hearing. Within 14 days from the date the child is taken into possession, a Full Adversary Hearing is held at which time the child is either returned home or if there is a continuing danger, temporary orders for managing conservatorship are issued. Within 12 months from the order appointing DFPS as the child’s temporary managing conservator, the court must either return the child to the parent and dismiss the suit, appoint a parent, relative, or DFPS as managing conservator on a permanent basis, or grant a one-time extension of the lawsuit, not to exceed 180 days.

CPS Investigations of Child Abuse and Neglect – The agency is required by state law to conduct civil investigations of reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. The objectives of the investigation are to ensure child safety, determine whether abuse or neglect occurred, determine whether children are at risk for abuse or neglect in the future, provide child or family needed safety services and refer the family to services available in the community, if needed. At the conclusion of the investigation, staff must assign a disposition to each allegation to specify conclusion regarding the occurrence of abuse or neglect. The dispositions that staff must use are: Reason to Believe, Ruled Out, Unable to Complete, or Unable to Determine.

Intake Priorities – To establish time frames for investigations, CPS assigns each report of child abuse and neglect to one of two priority groups. The level of identified risk and child safety concerns determine the priority assigned. Initial assessment regarding the immediacy of risk and severity of harm to the child are based on information provided by the reporter and other available information about the alleged perpetrators, child vulnerability, prior history, specific nature of the harm, and whether the harm has occurred.

The two priority groups are as follows:

Priority I – Intake reports that concern children who appear to face an immediate risk of abuse or neglect that could result in death or serious harm. CPS must initiate the investigation within 24 hours of receiving a Priority I report.

Priority II – All reports of abuse or neglect that are not assigned as Priority I are assigned as Priority II. These are reports that contain allegations of abuse or neglect in which there does not appear to be an immediate threat of serious harm or death. CPS must initiate the investigation within 10 days of receiving a Priority II report.

The initial priority may be changed if information gathered during the intake stage indicates that the abuse or neglect is either more or less serious than originally reported.

Service Level – DFPS seeks to place each child in the department’s conservatorship with a foster caregiver who is well qualified to meet the child’s needs. To achieve this, the department participates in a statewide system for classifying the needs of children and the capabilities of foster caregivers in four Service Levels:

a) What is the description of the Basic Service Level?

The Basic Service Level consists of a supportive setting, preferably in a family, that is designed to maintain or improve the child's functioning, including:

- (1) routine guidance and supervision to ensure the child's safety and sense of security;
- (2) affection, reassurance, and involvement in activities appropriate to the child's age and development to promote the child's well-being;
- (3) contact, in a manner that is deemed in the best interest of the child, with family members and other persons significant to the child to maintain a sense of identity and culture; and
- (4) access to therapeutic, habilitative, and medical intervention and guidance from professionals or paraprofessionals, on an as-needed basis, to help the child maintain functioning appropriate to the child's age and development.

b) What is the description of the Moderate Service Level?

(a) The Moderate Service Level consists of a structured supportive setting, preferably in a family, in which most activities are designed to improve the child's functioning including:

- (1) more than routine guidance and supervision to ensure the child's safety and sense of security;
- (2) affection, reassurance, and involvement in structured activities appropriate to the child's age and development to promote the child's well-being;
- (3) contact, in a manner that is deemed in the best interest of the child, with family members and other persons significant to the child to maintain a sense of identity and culture; and
- (4) access to therapeutic, habilitative, and medical intervention and guidance from professionals or paraprofessionals to help the child attain or maintain functioning appropriate to the child's age and development.

(b) In addition to the description in subsection (a) of this section, a child with primary medical or habilitative needs may require intermittent interventions from a skilled caregiver who has demonstrated competence.

c) What is the description of the Specialized Service Level?

(a) The Specialized Service Level consists of a treatment setting, preferably in a family, in which caregivers have specialized training to provide therapeutic, habilitative, and medical support and interventions including:

- (1) 24-hour supervision to ensure the child's safety and sense of security, which includes close monitoring and increased limit setting;
- (2) affection, reassurance, and involvement in therapeutic activities appropriate to the child's age and development to promote the child's well-being;
- (3) contact, in a manner that is deemed in the best interest of the child, with family members and other persons significant to the child to maintain a sense of identity and culture; and
- (4) therapeutic, habilitative, and medical intervention and guidance that is regularly scheduled and professionally designed and supervised to help the child attain functioning appropriate to the child's age and development.

(b) In addition to the description in subsection (a) of this section, a child with primary medical or habilitative needs may require regular interventions from a caregiver who has demonstrated competence.

d) What is the description of the Intense Service Level?

(a) The Intense Service Level consists of a high degree of structure, preferably in a family, to limit the child's access to environments as necessary to protect the child. The caregivers have specialized training to provide intense therapeutic and habilitative supports and interventions with limited outside access, including:

- (1) 24-hour supervision to ensure the child's safety and sense of security, which includes frequent one-to-one monitoring with the ability to provide immediate on-site response.
- (2) affection, reassurance, and involvement in therapeutic activities appropriate to the child's age and development to promote the child's well-being;
- (3) contact, in a manner that is deemed in the best interest of the child, with family members and other persons significant to the child, to maintain a sense of identity and culture;
- (4) therapeutic, habilitative, and medical intervention and guidance that is frequently scheduled and professionally designed and supervised to help the child attain functioning more appropriate to the child's age and development; and

(5) consistent and frequent attention, direction, and assistance to help the child attain stabilization and connect appropriately with the child's environment.

(b) In addition to the description in subsection (a) of this section, a child with developmental delays or mental retardation needs professionally directed, designed and monitored interventions to enhance mobility, communication, sensory, motor, and cognitive development, and self-help skills.

(c) In addition to the description in subsection (a) of this section, a child with primary medical or habilitative needs requires frequent and consistent interventions. The child may be dependent on people or technology for accommodation and require interventions designed, monitored, or approved by an appropriately constituted interdisciplinary team.

e) **Level E3** – Emergency care in an emergency shelter institution.

Permanency Goal Definitions – Permanency goals for children must be one of the following:

1) Family Preservation – identifies a child's own home as the safe and permanent living situation toward which CPS services are directed, without removing the child from the home.

2) Family Reunification – identifies that the child was removed from his or her home and that with CPS assistance, the family appears able and willing to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect enough for the child to return home and live there safely for the foreseeable future.

3) Alternative Family Placement with Long Term Commitment – indicates that the child has been removed from the home, family reunification is not appropriate, and a family has been found or is being sought as follows:

- (A) adoption and care by a relative;
- (B) permanent conservatorship and care by a relative;
- (C) adoption and care by an unrelated family;
- (D) permanent conservatorship and care by an unrelated family;
- (E) care by a foster family with DFPS having permanent conservatorship;
- (F) care in some other family arrangement with DFPS having permanent conservatorship;

4) Another Planned Living Arrangement with Support of a Family – indicates that the youth has been removed from the home, family reunification or another higher ranking permanency goal is not appropriate, and CPS will provide services directed toward:

- (A) preparation for independent living, for youth who are at least 16 years old and have no developmental disability; or
- (B) Preparation for adult living with community assistance in the most integrated setting, for youth who are at least 18 years old and who have a developmental disability.

Recidivism – Refers to the re-occurrence of child abuse or neglect involving confirmed victims where the second incidence occurs within one year of the first incidence.

Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect – The agency receives many reports of children who are in situations that are not optimal for their growth or development, but do not appear to involve child abuse or neglect as defined by law. Only the reports that appear to meet the statutory definition of abuse or neglect are required by state law to be investigated by the agency.

Risk Assessment of Child Abuse/Neglect – CPS workers investigate allegations of abuse and neglect and make assessments regarding risk. The terms "at risk" and "not at risk" are conclusions regarding whether there is a reasonable likelihood that the child will be abused or neglected in the foreseeable future. The decision to provide services is based on the assessment of risk, not on the disposition of the allegations. Risk assessment is a casework process in which the worker explores individual

and family functioning associated with the recurrence of abuse or neglect, and individual and family strengths and resources associated with protective capacities. There are four possible risk findings:

- No Significant Risk Factors – No significant risk factors were identified in the family’s current situation or history.
- Risk Factors Controlled – Risk factors were identified; however, family strengths and available resources are sufficient to provide for the safety of the child without CPS assistance.
- Risk Indicated – Risk factors were identified, and there are not sufficient family strengths and available resources to manage the risk conditions without CPS assistance.
- Risk Assessment Not Applicable- this finding is documented if the investigation involved school personnel or an only child who died, or the investigation was administratively closed or given a disposition of “unable to complete”.

By using a risk-based system for provision of services, CPS is able to identify children in need of protection and direct its resources to those most in need.