

**Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF)
Current as of January 2015**

Terms in blue ink are defined herein

CYF 00B – Glossary

Alleged perpetrator – Can be any of the following:

- A parent of the child.
- A spouse or former spouse of the child's parent.
- A paramour or former paramour of the child's parent.
- A person 14 years of age or older and 'responsible for the welfare of a child'.*
- An individual 14 years of age or older who resides in the same home as the child.
- An individual 18 years of age or older who does not reside in the same home as the child but is related within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity by birth or adoption to the child.

Additionally, the following may be considered a perpetrator for failing to act:

- A parent of the child.
- A spouse or former spouse of the child's parent.
- A paramour or former paramour of the child's parent.
- A person 18 years of age or older and responsible for the child's welfare.
- A person 18 years of age or older who resides in the same home as the child.

*Person who provides permanent or temporary care, supervision, a mental health diagnosis or treatment or training or control of the child in lieu of parental care, supervision and control.

Alternative planning – Simultaneous planning for two different Permanent Placement Goals for a child. (see Permanent Placement Goals below) This usually occurs because of legally mandated timeframes to ensure a permanent home for a child.

Aggravated physical neglect – any omission in the care of a child which results in a life-threatening condition or seriously impairs the child's functioning

Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR) – The AMR is an agreement that is developed between a person receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and their County Assistance Office (CAO) Caseworker as a condition of eligibility. The AMR outlines the steps that the person agrees to take to build a path toward self-sufficiency, while meeting the work requirement and parental responsibilities.

Case parties – The child's parents, the parents' attorneys, the attorney for the child, contracted service providers currently involved with the family, the placement provider, the child, if s/he is over 14 years of age and noncontracted providers (if there is a properly written release of information form that has been signed within the past six months by all parents and children over 14).

Certified medical practitioner – A licensed physician (M.D.), a licensed physician's assistant or a certified registered nurse practitioner (CRNP).

Child – a person under 18 years of age.

Child Abuse (from 55 PA Code 3490.4) See CYF 003 – Child Abuse

Child care service – child day care center, a group or family day care home or a residential facility.

ChildLine – the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Office of Children, Youth and Families' ChildLine and Abuse Registry

Child Permanency Plan (CPP) – a document that addresses the child-specific needs and plans for a child who is in court-ordered placement. This includes documentation of the child's ongoing need for out-of-home placement, the appropriateness of the placement and the child's permanent placement goal. The Initial CPP is completed at the time of the child's removal from home and is updated and/or modified at regular intervals (a minimum of every 6 months or when a child's placement changes.)

Child Protective Service (CPS) – Investigation of ChildLine reports of alleged child maltreatment and the provision of related services. Every CPS investigation will include a full General Protective Services (GPS) assessment.

Dependent child – According to the Pennsylvania Juvenile Act (42 Pa.C.S. Sec. 6302), a person under the age of 18 may be adjudicated "dependent" if he/she:

- is without proper parental care or control, subsistence, education as required by law or other care or control necessary for his/her physical, mental or emotional health or morals. A determination that there is a lack of proper parental care or control may be based upon evidence of conduct by the parent, guardian or other custodian that places the health, safety or welfare of the child at risk, including evidence of the parent's, guardian's or other custodian's use of alcohol or a controlled substance that places the health, safety or welfare of the child at risk
- has been placed for care or adoption in violation of law
- has been abandoned by his/her parents, guardian or other custodian
- is without a parent, guardian or legal custodian
- while subject to compulsory school attendance is habitually and without justification truant from school
- has committed a specific act or acts of habitual disobedience of the reasonable and lawful commands of his/her parent, guardian or other custodian and who is ungovernable and found to be in need of care, treatment or supervision
- is under the age of ten years and has committed a delinquent act
- has been formerly adjudicated dependent and is under the jurisdiction of the court, subject to its conditions or placements and who commits an act which is defined as ungovernable in paragraph (6)
- has been referred pursuant to § 6323 (relating to informal adjustment) and who commits an act which is defined as ungovernable in paragraph (6): or
- is born to a parent whose parental rights with regard to another child have been involuntarily terminated under 23 Pa. C.S.A. §2511 (relating to grounds for involuntary termination) within three years immediately preceding the date of birth of the child and conduct of the parent poses a risk to the health, safety or welfare of the child

Expunge – to strike out, obliterate entirely or completely remove, so that information cannot be stored, identified or later retrieved by any means (mechanical, electronic, etc.)

Failure to act – when the person knowingly allowed the child to be abused by another person; or the person placed the child in a situation where they knew the child would be at risk of abuse and abuse occurred.

Family Service Plan (FSP) – the document lists family strengths and needs, service objectives for the family and changes needed to protect children in the family from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The document also identifies the actions to be taken by the parents, children, CYF and other agencies.

Field screening – A field screening will consist of a field visit to assess each child in the family and an observation of environmental factors of the child(ren)'s place of residence to evaluate for immediate safety. If the preliminary evaluation warrants further assessment, the Caseworker will conduct a full Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigation and/or General Protective Services (GPS) Assessment as assigned.

Founded report – a report if there has been any judicial adjudication based on a finding that a child who is a subject of the report has been abused, including the entry of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere or a finding of guilt to a criminal charge involving the same factual circumstances involved in the allegation of child abuse.

General Protective Service (GPS) – Assessment of current safety and potential risk of harm to children, (including children living in the home and the mother's children living outside the home, within Allegheny County) and the provision of services to prevent the potential for harm to a child.

High risk situations – Those requiring immediate consultation with the Call Screening Supervisor:

- All fractures;
- Splash/scalding burns and other burns of suspicious or unexplained origin;
- Retinal or intra-cranial hemorrhaging;
- All suspected or diagnosed cases of failure to thrive;
- Any alleged sexual abuse;
- Any serious injuries or medical conditions suspected of having been caused by abuse or neglect;
- Any serious injuries or medical conditions of questionable, unclear or unknown origin;
- Any question about the risk of harm to a child;
- All reports of child abuse/neglect that present the risk of imminent harm to a child (i.e. being accessible to a
- known maltreater of sexual abuse and/or serious physical harm);
- Children under 10 years of age who are believed to be without supervision;
- Children living in a home without utilities; and
- Allegations of deplorable living conditions.

Immediate danger of serious harm – implies present threat(s) to a child's life or health, as a result of conditions, acts of commission or omission by the child's parent(s) or caretaker(s), which represents the potential for serious harm or injury to the child. This includes when children are at immediate risk or have sustained serious physical injury or death, sexual abuse and/or emotional damage, as a result of abuse or neglect.

Imminent risk – A recent act, failure to act or series of the acts or failures to act by a perpetrator which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child.

Indicated report – a report of child abuse if an investigation by CYF or PA Department of Human Services determines that substantial evidence of the alleged abuse exists based on any of the following:

- Available medical evidence (Photographs or x-rays may be used, but injuries do not have to be visible or current);
- The Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigation (statements of the child, parents, etc.); or
- An admission of the acts of abuse by the perpetrator.

Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights – (from 23 PA C.S. §2511 Grounds for Involuntary Termination)

General rule – The rights of a parent in regard to a child may be terminated after a petition filed on any of the following grounds:

- The parent by conduct continuing for a period of at least six months immediately preceding the filing of the petition either has evidenced a settled purpose of relinquishing parental claim to a child or has refused or failed to perform parental duties.
- The repeated and continued incapacity, abuse, neglect or refusal of the parent has caused the child to be without essential parental care, control or subsistence necessary for his/her physical or mental well-being and the conditions and causes of the incapacity, abuse, neglect or refusal cannot or will not be remedied by the parent.
- The parent is the presumptive but not the natural father of the child.
- The child is in the custody of an agency, having been found under such circumstances that the identity or whereabouts of the parent is unknown and cannot be ascertained by diligent search and the parent does not claim the child within three months after the child is found.
- The child has been removed from the care of the parent by the court or under a voluntary agreement with an agency for a period of at least six months, the conditions which led to the removal or placement of the child continue to exist, the parent cannot or will not remedy those conditions within a reasonable period of time, the services or assistance reasonably available to the parent are not likely to remedy the conditions which led to the removal or placement of the child within a reasonable period of time and termination of the parental rights would best serve the needs and welfare of the child.
- In the case of a newborn child, the parent knows or has reason to know of the child's birth, does not reside with the child, has not married the child's other parent, has failed for a period of four months immediately preceding the filing of the petition to make reasonable efforts to maintain substantial and continuing contact with the child and has failed during the same four-month period to provide substantial financial support for the child.
- The parent is the father of a child conceived as a result of a rape or incest.
- The child has been removed from the care of the parent by the court or under a voluntary agreement with an agency, 12 months or more have elapsed from the date of removal or placement, the conditions which led to the removal or placement of the child continue to exist and termination of parental rights would best serve the needs and welfare of the child.

Other considerations – The court in terminating the rights of a parent shall give primary consideration to the developmental, physical and emotional needs and welfare of the child. The rights of a parent shall not be terminated solely on the basis of environmental factors such as inadequate housing, furnishings, income, clothing and medical care if found to be beyond the control of the parent. With respect to any petition filed pursuant to subsection (a)(1), (6) or (8), the court shall not consider any efforts by the parent to remedy the conditions described therein which are first initiated subsequent to the giving of notice of the filing of the petition.

Right to file personal and medical history information – At the time the decree of termination is transmitted to the parent whose rights have been terminated, the court shall advise the parent, in writing, of his or her continuing right to place and update personal and medical history information, whether or not the medical condition is in existence or discoverable at the time of adoption, on file with the court and with the PA Department Human Services pursuant to section 2905(d) (relating to impounding of proceedings and access to records).

Law enforcement official – The Attorney General, a County District Attorney, a State Police Officer, a County Sheriff, a County Police Officer, a County Detective or a Local or Municipal Police Officer.

Mandated reporter – see CYF 005 – Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse

Medical neglect – Withholding of medically indicated treatment (including appropriate nutrition, hydration and medication) or failure to seek appropriate medical or dental care, which results in a condition or impedes functioning.

Pending court activity – When status determination of a ChildLine Report could not be made within 30 calendar days because of pending Juvenile (for juvenile alleged perpetrators) or Criminal Court charges.

Permanent placement goals (also known as Permanent Placement Objectives) are mandated by Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act, pursuant to the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997. If a child cannot remain with a parent, these five placement goals must each be ruled out in turn by the Court before the next goal can be considered.

- Return home – If a child cannot remain home; this is the primary permanent goal. In order to achieve this goal, services must be such that the child can return home safely. Completion of the goal to return home is time limited by law.
- Adoption – The second most desirable permanency goal. It reflects the mandated premise that children need a permanent home. There must be a compelling, thoroughly documented reason that the goal of adoption does not serve the child's "physical, mental or emotional health, safety or morals" in order for the Court to rule out this goal.
- Permanent Legal Custodianship – The third most desirable permanency goal. This goal entails awarding legal custody of a child to an individual whom the Court finds in the child's best interest.
- Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative – The fourth most desirable permanency goal. It can only be considered when a child cannot return home safely in a timely manner and each of the first three permanency goals have been ruled out by the Court. This goal emphasizes the importance of prior positive and ongoing relationships children have with extended family members and reflects the necessity of preserving families whenever possible. A relative can be considered a placement resource for a child if they meet all the background and safety requirements for providing foster care.
- Other planned placement that is intended to be permanent – The least desirable permanency goal. The Court must rule out each of the other goals before this goal can be considered.

Person responsible for the child's welfare – Person who provides permanent or temporary care, supervision, a mental health diagnosis or treatment or training or control of the child in lieu of parental care, supervision and control.

Potential for harm – Situation that, if permitted to continue, is likely to have a detrimental effect on the child's health, development or functioning.

Privileged communication – (55 Pa Code § 3490.14)

Except with respect to confidential communications made to an ordained member of the clergy which are protected under 42 Pa.C.S. § 5943 (relating to confidential communications to clergymen), privileged communication between a required reporter and the person's patient or client does not apply to situations involving child abuse and may not constitute grounds for failure to report as required by the chapter.

Protective factors – Strengths within or resources available to the parent(s), caregiver(s) and/or the family as a whole, that can provide for the child(ren)'s safety.

Recent act or failure to act – An act or failure to act committed within two years of the date of the report of suspected child abuse.

Risk assessment – A formalized evaluation of impending threats of harm to a child as described in the PA Risk Assessment Model.

Safety – The condition of being free from immediate harm or the threat of danger. Safety, like health, is a set of conditions that positively or negatively describe the physical and emotional well-being of children. A child may be considered safe when there are no threats of immediate harm present or when protective factors can adequately manage foreseeable threats of harm.

Safety assessment – A systematic evaluation of immediate threats of harm to a child at a specific point in time to determine whether the child(ren) can safely remain in the environment in which they are living. Caseworkers must identify existing and potential problems in the child(ren)'s immediate environment that pose a threat to the child(ren)'s safety, while considering environmental resources and caregiver strengths. Safety Assessment information drives development of the case Safety Plan.

Safety plan – A plan developed in collaboration with the child(ren)'s parent or caregiver and all other parties to the case, which outlines the least restrictive step-by-step actions or interventions necessary to assure the continued safety of the child(ren). This must be completed at the time of the initial in-person child contact during the referral process and is modified as needed by the Caseworker in collaboration with the parties to the case.

Serious bodily injury – Bodily injury which creates a substantial risk of death or causes serious permanent disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ.

Serious mental injury – A psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate treatment, that:

- Renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened; or
- Seriously interferes with a child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.

Serious physical injuries – Those injuries which:

- Cause a child severe pain or

- Significantly impair the child's physical functioning (either temporarily or permanently)

Serious physical neglect – a physical condition caused by the act or failure to act of a perpetrator, which endangers the child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning; and is the result of prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or failure to provide essentials of life, including adequate medical and dental care.

Sexual abuse or exploitation of a child – any described below:

- Employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in or assist another individual to engage in sexually explicit conduct, which includes the following acts that arouse or gratify sexual desire in any individual:
 - Looking at the sexual or other intimate parts of a child or another individual
 - Participating in sexually explicit conversation either in person, by telephone, by computer or by a computer-aided device
 - Actual or simulated sexual activity or nudity
 - Actual or simulated sexual activity for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming

This does not include consensual activities between a child who is 14 years or older and another person who is 14 or older and whose age is within four years of the child's age.
- Any of the following offenses committed against a child, as defined in state law: Rape; statutory sexual assault; involuntary deviate sexual intercourse; sexual assault; institutional sexual assault; aggravated indecent assault; indecent assault; indecent exposure; incest; prostitution; sexual abuse; unlawful contact with a minor; sexual exploitation.

Student – An individual enrolled in a school who is under 18 years of age.

Student abuse – Serious bodily injury and/or sexual abuse or exploitation when committed by a school employee against a student.

Substantial evidence – Evidence which outweighs inconsistent evidence and which a reasonable person would accept as adequate to support a conclusion.

Substantiated child abuse report – A report of child abuse and/or neglect that is filed when findings of an investigation are that child abuse HAS occurred.

Termination of Parental Rights – (see Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights)

Third Degree of Consanguinity – parents, brothers/sisters; half brothers/half sisters; grandparents; uncles/aunts; great-grandparents; step mothers/fathers; step brothers/sisters; step grandparents; step uncles/step aunts; step great-grandparents

Unfounded report – A report is unfounded when findings of an investigation are that the report of abuse is not true, cannot be proven or does not meet the legal definition of a substantiated child abuse or student abuse report.