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**Memorandum** | 8 June 2018 | D’Adre Cunningham | dadre@defensenet.org  
CHILD WELFARE GLOSSARY OF TERMS

[**Abandonment**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossarya/)

A situation in which the child has been left by the parent(s), the parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child suffers serious harm, as a result of his/her desertion, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or to provide reasonable support for a specified period of time.

**[Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)](https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/federal/search/?CWIGFunctionsaction=federallegislation:main.getFedLedgDetail&id=4)**

Passed by the U.S. Congress in 1997, this federal act has multiple provisions, which together were intended to increase and expedite the adoptions of children in state child welfare systems. The act affects children both within foster care placements and children who are never placed in foster care but who have been removed from their parents under court order in child welfare proceedings. There are also several subsequent amendments to this bill, including the application of the federal rules to tribal child welfare agencies who receive federal reimbursement funds under these statutes.

**[Adoption assistance](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossarya/)**  
Federal (title IV-E of the Social Security Act) or State benefits granted to adoptive families to offset the short- and long-term costs of adopting eligible children who have special needs (defined differently in each State). Benefits vary by State but commonly include monthly cash payments, medical assistance, social services, and nonrecurring adoption expenses.

[**Adoption disruption**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossarya/)  
An adoption that is terminated prior to finalization, often after the child is placed in the adoptive home, necessitating in a new placement plan for the child.

[**Adoption dissolution**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossarya/)  
Describes an adoption in which the legal relationship between the adoptive parents and adoptive child is severed, either voluntarily or involuntarily, after the adoption is legally finalized. This results in the child's return to (or entry into) foster care or placement with new adoptive parents.

**[Age Out](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "141)**

Also known as ‘age of majority’ or 'aging out,' age out refers to the termination of court jurisdiction over children residing in foster care. All states have established an age between 18 and 21, after which a foster care youth reaching that age is no longer eligible for any services or support. In Washington, youth may age out when they turn 18 if they are not eligible for the extended foster care program or do not elect to participate in the program. Otherwise, they age out when they are no longer eligible, leave the program, or turn 21. See Extended Foster Care Program in Washington State’s programs for youth aging out of foster care.

[**http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/crcl/vol43\_1/183-212.pdf**](http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/crcl/vol43_1/183-212.pdf)

[**Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossarya/)  
Stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect. They may also include household dysfunction such as witnessing domestic violence or growing up with family members who have substance use disorders. ACEs are strongly related to the development and prevalence of a wide range of health problems throughout a person’s lifespan, including those associated with substance misuse. ([Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/practicing-effective-prevention/prevention-behavioral-health/adverse-childhood-experiences))

[**Alternatives for families - cognitive behavioral therapy (AF-CBT)**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossarya/)  
An evidence-supported intervention that targets (1) diverse individual child and caregiver characteristics related to conflict and coercion in the home and (2) the family context in which aggression or abuse may occur. This approach emphasizes training in intra- and interpersonal skills designed to enhance self-control and reduce violent behavior. (See [Alternatives for Families: A Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT)](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/cognitive/))

[**Attachment**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossarya/)  
Child's connection to a parent or other caregiver that endures over time, establishes an interpersonal connection, and aids in the development of a sense of self.

[**Background check**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossaryb/)  
An investigation of prospective kinship caregivers, foster and adoptive parents, and all adults residing in prospective foster and adoptive households. In most states, the background investigation includes a fingerprint check of federal and state criminal records and child abuse and neglect registries. These records checks are also part of the home study process used to assess the suitability of these homes for placement of foster or adoptive children.

[**Behavioral health**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossaryb/)  
A state of mental/emotional being and/or choices and actions that affect wellness. Substance abuse and misuse, as well as serious psychological distress, suicide, and mental illness, are examples of some behavioral health problems that can be far-reaching and exact an enormous toll on individuals, their families and communities, and the broader society. ([U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](http://www.samhsa.gov/capt/sites/default/files/resources/behavioral-health-factsheet.pdf))

**[Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "146)**

The 2012 Washington Children's Administration's BRS Handbook (link below) states that BRS is a temporary, intensive, wraparound out-of-home support and treatment program for youth with extreme, high level, service needs. Children's Administration contracts with community agencies for care and treatment for children and youth with serious emotional, behavioral or medical difficulties who cannot be adequately served in regular family foster homes. BRS is used to safely stabilize youth and assist in achieving a permanent plan or a less intensive service. The desired outcomes for Behavioral Rehabilitation Services are to increase the child’s: behavioral stability; school stability; placement stability; and potential to reach permanency. A wide array of services can be provided under a BRS contract, ranging from Short-Term/Emergent Care to longer term On-going Services. On-going services are expected to last only as long as needed with a goal for the child to transition on or before 12 months. These services can be provided in an array of settings including the child’s legal guardian or permanent resource home, a treatment foster home, or facility.

[**Best interests of the child**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossaryb/)  
The deliberation that courts undertake when deciding what type of services, actions, and orders will best serve a child as well as who is best suited to take care of a child. "Best interests" determinations are generally made by considering a number of factors related to the circumstances of the child and the circumstances and capacity of the child's potential caregiver(s), with the child's ultimate safety and well-being as the paramount concern.

**[Biological Parents](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "147)**

The biological parents, as opposed to adoptive parents, caregivers, or guardians, are the person(s) who gave birth to, or fathered the child; also called birth parents, natural parents, or genetic parents.

[**http://www.mppi.org/resources/glossary**](http://www.mppi.org/resources/glossary)

[**Birth mother**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossaryb/)  
The woman who gave birth to a child (the biological mother). Before the adoption, the biological mother of a child is an "expectant mother" or "the mother."

[**Birth parent**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossaryb/)  
The child’s biological mother or father. Sometimes called a birth mother or birth father.

[**Bonding**](https://www.childwelfare.gov/glossary/glossaryb/)  
The process of forming an emotional attachment. It involves a set of behaviors that will help lead to a close personal bond between the parent/caregiver and their child. It is seen as the first and primary developmental achievement of a human being and central to a person's ability to relate to others throughout life. ([The ChildTrauma Academy](http://www.childtraumaacademy.com/bonding_attachment/index.html)[external link](https://www.childwelfare.gov/disclaimer/))

**[Braam Settlement Agreement](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "148)**

The Braam vs. State of Washington State lawsuit was filed in 1998 on behalf of a class of foster children who had three or more placements while in foster care. The lawsuit alleged that the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) did not provide constitutionally required care to foster children. In 2004, a settlement agreement was reached and an independent five member panel of experts (the Braam Oversight Panel), in collaboration with DSHS/CA and with substantial input from the plaintiffs' attorney, was formed. In 2011, the DSHS/CA and the plaintiffs' attorneys agreed to continue to monitor the Children’s Administration’s performance on 21 outcomes, which include monthly visits, sibling placement, sibling visits, annual mental health and substance abuse screens, and others. CA issues data twice yearly on its performance in the 21 Outcomes in the Revised Settlement and Exit Agreement and the Braam Oversight Panel then determines if the Department is in full compliance.

**[Case Management](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "150)**

In Washington State, case management  means: 1) convening family meetings, developing, revising,, and monitoring implementation of any case plan or individual service and safety plan; 2) coordinating and monitoring services needed by the child and family, caseworker-child visits, and family visits;  and 3) the assumption of court-related duties, excluding legal representation, but including preparing court reports, attending judicial hearings and permanency hearings, and ensuring that the child is progressing toward permanency within state and federal mandates (including the Indian child welfare act).

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=74.13B.010**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=74.13B.010)

**[Case Plan](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "151)**

As defined by Washington State Children’s Administration, a case plan is a written plan, developed by the caseworker with the family, of the anticipated activities related to the case, including service agreements.

**[Child Abuse and Neglect (CA/N)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "153)**

Washington State Administrative Code ([**WAC 388-15-009(1)**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-15-009)) defines child abuse or neglect as the injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or injury of a child by any person under circumstances which cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety, or the negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or providing care to the child.” The Revised Code of Washington ([**RCW 26.44.020(14)**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.020)) defines negligent treatment or maltreatment means “an act or a failure to act, or the cumulative effects of a pattern of conduct, behavior, or inaction, that evidences a serious disregard of consequences of such magnitude as to constitute a clear and present danger to a child's health, welfare, or safety, ….When considering whether a clear and present danger exists, evidence of a parent's substance abuse as a contributing factor to negligent treatment or maltreatment shall be given great weight. The fact that siblings share a bedroom is not, in and of itself, negligent treatment or maltreatment. Poverty, homelessness, or exposure to domestic violence [see [**RCW 26.50.010**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.50.010)] that is perpetrated against someone other than the child does not constitute negligent treatment or maltreatment in and of itself.”

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-15-009**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-15-009)  
[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.020**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.020)  
[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.50.010**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.50.010)

**[Child Safety](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "160)**

In Washington State, providing for child safety is part of Children’s Administration’s core mission. Safety is the primary and essential focus that informs and guides all decisions made from intake to case closure.

**[Child Welfare System](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "161)**

The Child Welfare System receives and investigates reports of possible child abuse and neglect; provides supportive services to families to help ensure child safety; arranges for children to live with kin or with foster families; and arranges for family reunification, adoption, or other permanent family connections for children living in foster care/other out-of-home placements. The child welfare system provides services to some of the most vulnerable and troubled children and families.

**[Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "165)**

In general, CBT is a form of treatment that focuses on examining the relationships between thoughts, feelings and behaviors. In child welfare work, trauma-focused CBT is an evidence-based treatment approach shown to help children, adolescents, and their caretakers overcome trauma-related difficulties. It is designed to reduce negative emotional and behavioral responses following child sexual abuse and other traumatic events. Alternative for Families is an example of an evidence-supported CBT intervention that targets individual child and parent characteristics related to the abusive experience, and the family context in which coercion or aggression occurs.

[**http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=About\_Treatments\_and\_Supports&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=7952**](http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=About_Treatments_and_Supports&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=7952) [**http://www.afcbt.org/**](http://www.afcbt.org/) [**http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/trauma/**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/trauma/) [**http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/cognitive/**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/cognitive/)

**[Concurrent Planning](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "167)**

In child welfare, concurrent planning is an approach that seeks to eliminate delays in attaining permanent families for children in the out-of-home care. Concurrent planning attempts to consider all reasonable options for permanency at the earliest possible time following a child’s entry into out-of-home care. For example, reunification with the child’s family of origin may be pursued simultaneously with the consideration of an alternative permanency goal (e.g., adoption).

[**http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue\_briefs/concurrent\_evidence/concurrent\_evidence.pdf**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue_briefs/concurrent_evidence/concurrent_evidence.pdf)

**[Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "168)**

Assigned by a court, CASA volunteers are responsible for studying and protecting the best interests of a child/youth in a dependency or termination proceeding. In Washington State, CASA volunteers investigate case facts, recommend a course of action to the court, facilitate the resolution of problems, and monitor progress towards establishing permanency for the child.

[**http://www.mppi.org/resources/glossary**](http://www.mppi.org/resources/glossary)

[**Department of Children, Youth, & Families (DCYF)**](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/)

Starting July 1, 2018, Washington State’s agency serving children, youth, and families, needing protection and reunification services, early learning, and other juvenile court-mandated rehabilitation services.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**[Child and Family Welfare Services (CFWS)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "156)**

Both permanency planning and court-ordered services are provided by Children’s Administration’s CFWS to children and families to mitigate the risk of abuse or neglect so that children are able to safely return to their home of origin. CFWS oversees the health and well-being of children in out-of-home placements and provides ongoing assessments of child safety and risk factors. Children served by CFWS are dependents of the state (in-home services or out-of-home care) or legally free for adoption.

**[Child Protective Services (CPS)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "159)**

Washington State, CPSprovides 24 hour, seven days a week intake, screening and investigative services for reports of alleged child abuse and neglect. CPS investigators assess allegations of child abuse and neglect to determine the safety and protection needs of children. Law enforcement, courts, tribes, and community teams also provide an important component of the child protection system. When it appears that a child is in danger of being harmed or has already been seriously abused or neglected, CPS, with a police officer or court order putting the child in protective custody, places the child with a relative or in foster care. If the child is not returned to the parents or some other voluntary arrangement made within 72 hours, the matter must be reviewed by a court. If risk warrants ongoing placement, dependency petitions must be filed in court within 75 days.

**[Children's Administration (CA)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "162)**

Washington State’s Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Children’s Administration (CA) is divided into [**three geographic regions**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ea/DSHSRegMap.pdf) managed by Washington State’s Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Regional Administrators. DCFS provides client services through its 46 field offices (plus the Office of Indian and Child Welfare) with nearly 2,500 direct service staff. Children and families become CA clients through four primary program areas: Child Protective Services (CPS), Family Voluntary Services (FVS), Child and Family Welfare Services (CFWS), and Family Reconciliation Services (FRS). These programs are responsible for the investigation of child abuse and neglect complaints, child protection, family preservation, family reconciliation, foster care, group care, in-home services, independent living, and adoption services for children under the age of 18. CA also provides services to eligible older youths between 18 and 21 years of age with developmental needs or who are pursuing post-secondary education. CA uses both paid personnel and community-based, contracted service providers throughout the state. In 2010, more than three percent of Washington State residents used CA services.

**[Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "179)**

In Washington State, Children’s Administration DCFS provides client services through 46 statewide offices in four primary areas: Child Protective Services (CPS), Family Voluntary Services (FVS), Child and Family Welfare Services (CFWS), and Family Reconciliation Services (FRS). DCFS also provides services and supports to families at the request of the family or as directed by the courts. The Office of Indian Child Welfare (ICW) independently collects data on tribal members who receive child protective services, foster care, dependency guardianship, termination of parental rights, and adoption proceedings.

**[Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "173)**

Starting July 1, 2018, Washington State’s social service agency for addressing the basic human needs of Washingtonians is the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Each year, DSHS serves more than 2.2 million children, families, and vulnerable adults who require protection, food assistance, financial aid, medical/behavioral health care, and other social services.

[**http://www.dshs.wa.gov/**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/)

**[Division of Licensed Resources (DLR)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "180)**

DSHS’s Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) licenses, supports, and monitors foster homes/out-of-home care facilities forchildren, and conducts CPS investigations regarding allegations of child abuseand neglect to children in licensed, certified and DSHS-operated facilities. DLR also licenses child-placing agencies, and provides assistance to thoseagencies that certify private agency foster homes. Licensing staff are charged with ensuring thehealth, safety, and quality of care for children in high quality foster family homes, group care facilities, and child placing agencies.

**[Dependency](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "175)**

Also referred to as a ‘dependency proceeding,’ a ‘dependency action,' or a ‘dependency case,’ a dependency is a temporary legal status of a child during which a parent may remedy his or her parenting deficiencies, or the court may order a different permanent plan than return home.  A dependent child is one who was abandoned, abused or neglected, or whose parents are incapable of adequately parenting such that the child is in danger of serious harm. If a child is removed from his or her parent’s care, a shelter care hearing must be held within 72 hours of the removal. If the court finds a child dependent, the court will decide where the child will be placed, what contact the child will have with parents and siblings, what services the parent must complete in order to remedy his or her parental deficiencies, and what permanent plan will be adopted for the child.

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=13.34.025**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=13.34.025)

**[Dispositional Hearing](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "177)**

After a child has been found dependent, a dispositional hearing is held by the juvenile and family court to determine the disposition of children. The child will either return home under agency supervision, or be placed in the custody of the state child welfare agency (legal custody) and then placed with a relative, with a suitable other person who has a relationship to the child, or in licensed foster care. The judge will also determine what services the children and parents should receive and will likely review the children’s case plan in which the agency has indicated which requirements the parents need to meet in order to have the children returned to their home.

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?Cite=13.34.130**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?Cite=13.34.130) [**http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/cwandcourts.pdf**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/cwandcourts.pdf)

**[Domestic Violence Services/Program](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "181)**

In Washington State, the Domestic Violence Program provides support for community-based shelters, emergencycounseling and legal advocacy for children and families who have experienced domesticviolence. A statewide toll-free hotline is available to link victims with services in theircommunities. Children’s Administration also sets minimum standards for domestic violence perpetrator treatment programsand certifies these programs.

**[Emancipation](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "294)**

A youth who is legally declared an adult (by a court) priorto age 18 is referred to as being emancipated. Emancipation determinations are rarely based on age alone, but typically require a showing of a minimum level of self-sufficiency.This should be distinguished from emancipation from out-of-home care, which occurs when a foster youth turns 18 and leaves the foster care system by "aging out."

[**http://www.cafosteringconnections.org/pdfs/fostercareprotocol.pdf**](http://www.cafosteringconnections.org/pdfs/fostercareprotocol.pdf)

**[Ex Parte](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "187)**

An action on behalf of or involving only one party to a legal matter and in the absence of and usually without notice to other parties is referred to as being *ex parte*. For example, an emergency removal of a child from an unsafe home situation may be done through an *ex parte*order.

[**http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/courts/courts.pdf**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/courts/courts.pdf)

**[Extended Foster Care Program](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "188)**

In Washington State, the Extended Foster Care Program provides eligible youth ongoing placement and foster care services from age 18 to age 21 for those wishing to pursue their High School Diploma, General Equivalency Diploma, College Degree, or Vocational Certification. Eligible youth electing to participate in the program will: 1) remain in placement and receive foster care services; 2) have an open dependency, with an attorney assigned and court reviews every six months; and 3) receive monthly visits by a public child welfare worker and continued visitation with siblings. Eligible youth who do not elect to participate in the Extended Foster Care program on their 18th birthday will have six months from their 18th birthday to re-enter foster care to participate in the program.

**[Family Assessment](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "189)**

The process of gathering information on a family to gain a greater understanding of how a family's strengths, needs, and resources affect child safety, well-being, and permanency is called a Family Assessment. The assessment is completed in partnership with the family to understand what everyday life challenges and individual caregiver behaviors contribute to child safety threats to be addressed in case planning.

[**http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs\_fund/wa\_waiver\_proposal.pdf**](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/wa_waiver_proposal.pdf)

**[Family Assessment Response (FAR)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "190)**

In March 2012, [**SB 6555**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=6555&year=2011) was signed into Washington State law. It requires Children’s Administration (CA) to implement a differential response system (called Family Assessment Response in Washington) that provides an alternative pathway for accepted reports of low-to-moderate risk of child maltreatment. FAR is designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of child safety, risk of subsequent child abuse or neglect, and family strengths and needs. Reports of low-to-moderate risk where children are not in danger or the information being reported does not place children at high risk of maltreatment, will be directed to the FAR pathway. Families, in collaboration with CA’s caseworkers, will assess their needs and strengths and may accept services or concrete resources to address issues of child maltreatment. CA workers will continue to investigate reports of abuse or neglect, when children are determined to be unsafe. Serious physical abuse and sexual abuse intakes are not eligible for FAR. The FAR implementation plan was submitted to the legislature, as required in statute by December 31, 2012. Implementation of FAR will begin no later than December 1, 2013.

[**http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs\_fund/wa\_waiver\_proposal.pdf**](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/wa_waiver_proposal.pdf)

**[Family Preservation Services (FPS)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "191)**

In Washington State, preservation services include FPS and Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS). Family Preservation Services are available to families whose children face substantial likelihood of being placed outside of the home or to reunify a child in out-of-home care with their family. Family Preservation Services are available to families within 48 hours of referral and are offered for a maximum of six months by a contracted service provider. IFPS are available through a contracted community agency when a family has a child who DSHS believes is at imminent risk of foster care placement. IFPS is a voluntary service that provides up to 20 hours of in-home therapist time each week, for approximately forty days.

**[Family Reconciliation Services (FRS)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "192)**

In Washington State, FRS is a voluntary program serving runaway adolescents and youth in conflict with their families. The program targets adolescents between the ages of 12 through 17. FRS services are not long-term services; rather they are meant to resolve crisis situations and prevent unnecessary out-of-home placement. FRS services may include, but are not limited to: short-term family counseling; Crisis Residential Center (CRC) services; and referrals for substance abuse treatment, counseling, mental health services, short-term placements, and Family Assessments in conjunction with juvenile court services.

**[Family Reunification](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "193)**

In child welfare, family reunification (also reunification) refers to the process of returning children in temporary out-of-home care to their families of origin. Reunification is both the primary goal for children in out-of-home care as well as the most common outcome. Family engagement, individualized needs assessment and case planning, and delivery of cognitive-behavioral, multi-systemic, skills-focused services—among other interventions—are critical reunification strategies.

[**http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue\_briefs/family\_reunification/family\_reunification.pdf**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue_briefs/family_reunification/family_reunification.pdf)

**[Family Setting](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "194)**

POC defines three types of out-of-home placement in a 'family setting': 1) state foster homes, 2) private foster homes, and 3) kin placement. State foster homes include: adoptive homes, court ordered unlicensed placements, family crisis residential centers, foster homes/receiving homes, and therapeutic foster homes. Private foster homes include foster care through a child placing agency. Kin placement includes: licensed foster homes (godparents, support networks, Tribal relatives, and other elative care. Non-family placements include: group homes; group care (staff residential); detention centers; group, secured, and regional crisis residential centers; juvenile rehabilitation centers; regional assessment centers; supervised independent living arrangements; and all other.

**[Family Team Decision-Making (FTDM)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "195)**

One of four core strategies within the Annie E. Casey Foundation [**Family to Family (F2F)**](http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/Family%20to%20Family.aspx) initiative, Family Team Decision-Making (FTDM) meetings bring together family members, relatives, and representatives from other support systems to consider placement decisions about children in state custody.

**[Family Voluntary Services (FVS)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "196)**

In Washington State, FVSsupport families on a voluntary basis to help prevent chronic or serious problems that interfere with the family’s ability to protect or parent children. This program serves families where the children are safe to remain in the home while the family engages in services through a Voluntary Service Agreement (VSA) or for children who are temporarily placed in an out-of-home setting through a Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA).

**[Foster Care](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "201)**

Also referred to as a foster home, foster care is defined by the federal government as is a planned, goal-directed service for children who cannot live with their birth families for some period of time. Children in foster care may live with unrelated foster parents, with relatives, with families who plan to adopt them, or in group homes or residential treatment centers. Foster care is designed primarily as a temporary service that responds to crises in the lives of children and families. The general expectation is that children who enter care will either return to their parents as soon as possible, or will be provided with safe, stable and loving families through placement with relatives or adoption. Some children, however, remain in foster care for extended periods of time. See also out-of-home care. The term out-of-home care or foster care is often used interchangeably with foster care with a relative/kinship care or group/residential care.

[**http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cwpm/programs/cb/laws\_policies/laws/cwpm/policy\_dsp.jsp?citID=207**](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cwpm/programs/cb/laws_policies/laws/cwpm/policy_dsp.jsp?citID=207)

**[Foster Care to 21](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "202)**

Foster Care to 21will be phased out by June 2015, and is being replaced by Extended Foster Care.

**[Founded](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "203)**

The determination following an investigation by CPS that, based on available information, it is more likely than not that child abuse or neglect did occur. "Unfounded" means a determination that, more likely than not, child abuse or neglect did not occur, or that there is insufficient evidence for the department to determine whether the alleged child abuse or neglect did or did not occur.

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=26.44.020**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=26.44.020)

**[Group Home](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "204)**

Also referred to as residential or congregate care, a group home is a licensed facility that provides out-of-home care for a group of children who have physical or behavioral needs that require the structure and services of residential or group settings.

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-148**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-148) [**http://www.childwelfare.gov/outofhome/types/group.cfm**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/outofhome/types/group.cfm)

**[Guardian ad Litem (GAL)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "205)**

A lawyer or lay person assigned by the court to represent a child in juvenile or family court is referred to as Guardian ad Litem (GAL). Usually, this person considers the best interest of the child and may perform a variety of roles, including those of independent investigator, advocate, advisor, and guardian for the child. A lay person who serves in this role is sometimes known as a court appointed special advocate or CASA.

[**http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/foundation/foundationm.cfm**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/foundation/foundationm.cfm)

**[Guardianship](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "206)**

Also referred to as legal guardianship, guardianship is established by court order and grants custody to someone who is not the child's parent. Caregivers can assume legal guardianship of a child in out-of-home care without termination of parental rights, as is required for an adoption. The guardian is granted full custody of the child with the right to make most decisions regarding the child’s health, education, and care until the child is 18 years old. Legal guardianship is more durable but more complex than transfer of custody to caregivers. Guardianship is most frequently used by relative caregivers who wish to provide a permanent home for the child and maintain relationships with extended family members. See also subsidized guardianship and Relative Guardianship Assistance (RGAP).

[**http://www.childwelfare.gov/permanency/guardianship.cfm**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/permanency/guardianship.cfm) [**http://www.uwcita.org/chapter-21-guardianship.html**](http://www.uwcita.org/chapter-21-guardianship.html)

**[Independent Living Services (ILS)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "207)**

The 1999 federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) requires states to identify youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18 and to provide those youth with a variety of Independent Living Services. Services include education, training, and support in the areas of educational stability and achievement, vocational training, career exploration, mentoring, employment placement and retention, daily living skills and skills in the avoidance of high risk behavior. In Washington State young adults in foster care can receive Independent Living Services to help prepare them for independence before they leave foster care due to having reached legal adulthood. Throughout the state, community-based agencies and federally recognized Tribes contract with DCFS to provide skills-based services in the areas of education, employment, housing, and life skills to youth 15 and older.

[**http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/cfsp10\_2.pdf**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/cfsp10_2.pdf) [**http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/services/srvadlsfaq.asp#ILS**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/services/srvadlsfaq.asp#ILS) [**http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/08-12-3903.pdf**](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/08-12-3903.pdf)

**[Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "208)**

The ICWA is a federal and state law requiring specific protections to Indian children: who are removed from their homes; whose parents’ rights are being terminated; and who are being adopted. If a child is and Indian child under the law, the tribe has the right to intervene in proceedings or to request that the legal case is transferred to tribal court.

[**http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/courts/courts.pdf**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/courts/courts.pdf) [**http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/25C21.txt**](http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/25C21.txt)  
[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=13.38**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=13.38)

**[Legally Free](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "214)**

A child is legally free for adoption if the child has no legal parent, either because the parent has died or because parental rights have been terminated (through relinquishment or involuntary termination) by a court order.

[**https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adoption-and-adoption-support/adoption**](https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adoption-and-adoption-support/adoption)

**[Mandated Reporting](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "215)**

In Washington State, anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect can, in good faith, report. Mandated reporters are required by law to report concerns to the local Children’s Administration office, [**Child Abuse Hotline**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/endharm.shtml) or law enforcement. A partial list of mandated reports includes: medical practitioners, professional school personnel, social services workers, coroners, medical examiners, licensed pathologists, registered pharmacists, licensed or certified child care providers, Department of Social and Health Services employees, Department of Early Learning employees, juvenile probation officers, law enforcement personnel, Department of Corrections, staff of responsible living skills programs, Guardians ad litem (GALs), and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs).

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.030**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.030)

**[Neglect](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "217)**

Defined by Washington State code as an act or a failure to act, or the cumulative effects of a pattern of conduct, behavior, or inaction that constitutes a clear and present danger to a child's health, welfare, or safety, Neglect is also referred to as negligent treatment or maltreatment When considering whether a clear and present danger exists, evidence of a parent's substance abuse as a contributing factor to negligent treatment or maltreatment must be given great weight. Poverty, homelessness, or exposure to domestic violence that is perpetrated against someone other than the child does not constitute negligent treatment or maltreatment in and of itself. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ([**Child Welfare Gateway Information)**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/courts/appenda.cfm) defines neglect as the failure to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect can be physical, educational, or emotional. Physical neglect can include not providing adequate food or clothing, appropriate medical care, supervision, or proper weather protection (from heat or cold). Educational neglect includes failure to provide appropriate schooling, failure to address special educational needs, or allowing excessive truancies. Psychological neglect includes the lack of any emotional support and love, chronic inattention to the child, exposure to spousal, drug, or alcohol abuse.

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=26.44.020**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=26.44.020) [**http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/courts/appenda.cfm**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/courts/appenda.cfm)

**[Physical Abuse](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "219)**

Defined by Washington State regulation as the non-accidental infliction of physical injury on or physical mistreatment of a child, physi­cal abuse may include, but is not limited to, such actions as: throwing, kicking, burning, or cutting a child; striking a child with a closed fist; shaking a child under age three; interfering with a child’s breathing; threatening a child with a deadly weapon; or doing any other act that is likely to cause bodily harm greater than transient pain or minor temporary marks or which is injurious to the child’s health, welfare, and safety.

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-15-009**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-15-009)

**[Placement Setting](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "220)**

POC uses the [**University of Chicago, Chapin Hall**](http://www.chapinhall.org/about) placement definitions. The POC match to Children's Administration's placement setting terminology is as follows: 1) a 'shelter' placement setting includes group, secured, family, or regional crisis residential centers; 2) a 'foster' placement setting includes adoptive homes, foster homes/receiving homes, and therapeutic foster homes; 3) a 'group' placement setting includes group homes, group care (staff residential), detention centers, juvenile rehabilitation centers, supervised independent living arrangements, and short term detention; 4) a 'kin' placement setting includes relative placement, licensed foster homes (godparents, support networks, Tribal relatives, or relatives of specified degree or not) and relatives of specified degree (not receiving foster care payments); and 5) 'other' placement settings include court ordered unlicensed placements, regional assessment centers; hospitals, and all other (e.g., children on the run, birth/adoptive).

**[Placement Stability](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "221)**

The number of times a child in out-of-home placement changes their place of residence is a measure of placement stability. Because of the seriousness of long term consequences for children, placement stability within 12 months of entry into foster care was one of the three outcome measures established in the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR).

[**http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/Braam0312SemiAnnualPerfReport.pdf**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/Braam0312SemiAnnualPerfReport.pdf) [**http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info\_services/Placement\_Stability\_Info\_Pack.htm**](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/Placement_Stability_Info_Pack.htm) [**http://www.braampanel.org/DecisionsCompPlan0711\_App.pdf**](http://www.braampanel.org/DecisionsCompPlan0711_App.pdf)

**[Protective Custody](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "333)**

In an emergent situation (i.e., when a child is at risk of imminent risk or has already been seriously injured or neglected) a police officer can place a child in protective custody for no more than 72 hours. The police officer transfers custody to CPS, which places the child either in a licensed foster home or with a relative.

[**http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/Publications/22-484.pdf**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/Publications/22-484.pdf) [**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.050**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.050)

**[Reasonable Efforts](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "336)**

The federal government requires state agencies to demonstrate that reasonable efforts have been made to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of a child from his or her home and to make it possible for a child who has been placed in out-of-home*care* to be reunited with his or her family. Reasonable efforts must also be made to achieve permanent plans for the child in care.

[**http://www.joinhandsforchildren.org/pdf/Service%20Array%20Definitions0910.pdf**](http://www.joinhandsforchildren.org/pdf/Service%20Array%20Definitions0910.pdf) [**http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/safe2010draft.pdf**](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/safe2010draft.pdf)

**[Safety Assessment](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "340)**

Used throughout the life of the case, a safety assessment identifies impending danger and determines whether a child is safe or unsafe. Assessments are based on comprehensive information gathered about the family.

[**http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/pubs/mnl\_pnpg/chapter1.asp**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/pubs/mnl_pnpg/chapter1.asp)

**[Safety Plan](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "341)**

A casework document developed when it is determined that the child is in imminent or potential risk of serious harm is referred to as a safety plan. In the plan, the child welfare caseworker targets the factors that are causing or contributing to the risk of imminent serious harm to the child, and identifies, along with the family, the interventions that will control them and ensure the child's protection. In Washington State, the safety plan is a written agreement between a family and CA that identifies how safety threats to a child will be immediately controlled and managed. The safety plan is implemented and active as long as threats to child safety exist and caregiver protective capacities are insufficient to protect the child.

[**http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/cps/cpso.cfm**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/cps/cpso.cfm) [**http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/pubs/mnl\_pnpg/chapter1.asp**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/pubs/mnl_pnpg/chapter1.asp)[**http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/pubs/mnl\_pnpg/chapter4.asp**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/pubs/mnl_pnpg/chapter4.asp)

**[Sexual Abuse](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "343)**

Defined by DSHS as committing—*or allowing to be committed*—any sexual offense against a child as defined in the Washington State criminal code, sexual abuse is the intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the sexual or other intimate parts of a child or allowing, permitting, compelling, encouraging, aiding, or otherwise causing a child to engage in touching the sexual or other intimate parts of another for the purpose of gratifying the sexual desire of the person touching the child, the child, or a third party. In general, to be considered child abuse that CPS will investigate, these acts have to be committed by a person responsible for the care of a child (e.g., a daycare provider, a parent, or a licensed foster parent). If a person not responsible for the care of the child commits these acts, it may be considered sexual assault and would be investigated solely by the police.

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-15-009**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-15-009) [**http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/neglect/appenda.cfm**](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/neglect/appenda.cfm) [**http://www.aasa.dshs.wa.gov/APS/training/mistreatments.htm**](http://www.aasa.dshs.wa.gov/APS/training/mistreatments.htm)

**[Shelter Care Hearing](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "234)**

When a child is removed from her parent’s care, the court must hold a shelter care hearing within 72 hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. The primary purpose of the shelter care hearing is to determine whether the child can be immediately and safely returned home while the adjudication of the dependency is pending. The court will order removal from the parents’ care if it finds reasonable cause to believe that reasonable efforts were made to prevent removal and either the child has no parent to care for her or release of the child to the parent would present a serious threat of substantial harm to the child.

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=13.34.065**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=13.34.065)

**[Sibling](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "235)**

A brother or sister is a child’s sibling. The Children’s Administration is supposed to keep siblings placed into out-of-home care together whenever possible. When siblings are not laced together, they have the right to visitation with each other separate from their rights to visit with their parents.

[**http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=13.34&full=true#13.34.130**](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=13.34&full=true#13.34.130)

**[Solution Based Casework (SBC)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "237)**

A component of Washington State’s practice model, solution based casework (SBC)  is a family-centered practice model that identifies the safety threats to the child and builds on a family's strengths to alleviate the threat. Caseworkers are taught engagement skills, interviewing techniques, family life cycle development frameworks, and relapse prevention techniques. In their work with families, caseworkers: 1) quickly build a consensus with the family and service providers on what needs to happen to reduce threats, protect children, and set achievable goals; 2) help the family identify cycles of maltreatment and utilize relapse prevention techniques to prevent further maltreatment; 3) document and offer encouragement for improvements; 4) focus on every day challenges the family faces; 5) work with the family to document where specific risk factors and safety threats have or have not been managed. The three basic goals of SBC are: case plans specific to safety threats; respectful partnership; and focus on pragmatic everyday family life tasks. See Practice Model.

[**http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/APSR2010-2011.pdf**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/APSR2010-2011.pdf)

**[Transitional Living Services (TLS)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "240)**

The federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program was amended in 2001 and directs states to delivertransitional living services to former foster care recipients between the ages of 18 and 20. In Washington State, CAsTLS services include assistance in accessing safe and stable housing,employment training, placement and retention services, and support toward the attainmentof either a high school diploma or General Education Development certificate.

[**http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/cfsp10\_2.pdf**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/cfsp10_2.pdf)

**[Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA)](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/glossary" \l "241)**

Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA).  VPAs are time-limited plans for a short-term removal and placement in out-of-home care for a child (0-17) who cannot remain safely in the parents' or legal guardian's home. Children’s Administration limits the use of VPAs in order to support parents and encourage the provision of in-home services to keep children safely at home. VPAs up to seven days must be approved by a supervisor; VPAs beyond seven days, up to a maximum of 30 days, must be approved by the Regional Administrator. VPAs must be signed by both parents or by legal guardians of the child unless unable to locate other parent/legal guardian. VPAs for children under age 18 may **only** be approved in the following circumstances: 1) following a safety assessment, a determination that in-home safety plan cannot control the identified safety threats, and a Family Team Decision Meeting (FTDM) verification that a short term VPA is needed; 2) after business hours when a safety threat exist and the child has not placed in protective custody by law enforcement; 3) when a parent or legal guardian needs care for the child while the parent receives medical care/treatment and they have no one available to provide basic care for the child; or 4) when the other parent or legal guardian is out-of-state or out-of-country, and not immediately available to provide care for the child.

[**http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/pubs/mnl\_pnpg/chapter4\_4300.asp#4307**](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/pubs/mnl_pnpg/chapter4_4300.asp#4307)

1. Other juvenile court mandated rehabilitation services may include truancy, at-risk youth, child in need of placement petitions, and starting July 1, 2019, children and youth adjudicated and held in custody pursuant to juvenile court offender proceedings. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)