

## **Children in Need of Services: Intake and Family Engagement and Service Connection**

### **Policies and Procedures**

#### **Purpose**

As mandated by H.B. 1035, the Human Service Zones (Zones) are legally responsible for youth who meet the eligibility criteria for Children in Need of Services (CHINS) (see referral policy for eligibility criteria). This policy establishes a standard set of intake and protocols that all Zones are expected to comply with in the handling of a CHINS. For referrals that do not meet the eligibility criteria, Zones should refer to the initial referral policy for the appropriate course of action.

#### **Initial Intake Procedures**

CHINS staff should acknowledge receipt of CHINS referrals and determine whether the referral is appropriate and has all necessary information within two business days of receipt for a standard referral or within 24 hours for a youth not in the home of their parent or guardian (i.e., in a certified shelter care or kinship placement). Once acceptance of the referral has been communicated to the referring entity, CHINS staff should conduct a series of initial information checks to better understand the nature of the referral, including but not limited to the following:

- A. Prior CHINS referrals including referring entity, nature, number, and resolution.
- B. Whether the youth or family is currently engaged with child welfare or the Human service Zones, other service systems, or has a history of previous system involvement.
  - 1) If the youth/family is involved with other identified systems, CHINS staff should contact the case manager and/or probation officer to gain insight into the current status of the case, services being provided, to discuss the referral, and determine appropriate next steps.
  - 2) If the youth/family has a recent history, but not current involvement with child welfare, CHINS staff will ideally review the case file and/or contact the previous case manager/service provider to determine if a CHINS referral is appropriate.
- C. If there is reason to believe the primary concern is a behavioral health issue, CHINS staff should recommend the family to the Human Service Center to conduct an integrated assessment. Upon completion of the assessment, CHINS staff will work with Center staff to determine the appropriate next steps.

#### **Determining Intensity of Family Engagement and Service Needs**

CHINS staff should use the following criteria/guidelines to inform the determination of what level of intensity and type of service intervention is required in response to different types of CHINS referrals.

CHINS staff should use these guidelines to make their informed decision with all final determination based on the professional judgement of the unit staff member, on the individual merits of any referral, level of risk youth present to themselves or others, service needs, and Zone capacity. When additional clarity is needed in determining the response level, the CHINS Unit Supervisor will support the staff member in decision-making.

### ***Truancy***

- A. **Severity:** How many days in the current school year have the youth been marked truant by the school?
- 1) If less than 15 days, consider a low intensity intervention
  - 2) If 16-30 days, consider a moderate intensity intervention
  - 3) If over 30 days, consider a higher intensity intervention
- B. **Frequency:** Is this the youth's first referral for truancy?
- 1) If this is the youth's first referral, consider a low intensity intervention
  - 2) If the youth have previous referrals, depending on severity/resolution of previous referrals, consider whether a moderate or high intensity intervention is warranted

### ***Habitually disobedient of the reasonable and lawful commands of the child's parent, guardian, or other custodian***

- A. **Severity:** Is the behavior outside of normative adolescent behavior?
- 1) Does the youth's behavior pose a substantial risk of harm to themselves? To their family? To the community?
  - 2) If the youth is engaging in primarily normative adolescent behavior, consider a low intensity intervention.
  - 3) If the youth is engaging in a pattern of extended, and significant, unruly behavior with increasing level of concern about harm, consider a moderate intervention.
  - 4) If the youth pose a substantial risk of harm\*, consider a higher intensity intervention.  
\*If there is a risk of immediate harm, a CHINS referral is not the appropriate determination for a crisis intervention and the youth should be referred to either the mobile crisis unit for behavioral health or law enforcement.
- B. **Frequency:** Is this the youth's first referral?
- 1) If this is the youth's first referral, consider a low intensity intervention.
  - 2) If the youth has had more than one referral, consider aggravating/mitigating factors to determine whether a moderate or higher intensity intervention is appropriate.
- C. **System Involvement:** Is the youth or family already involved in other service systems?

- 1) If the youth/family are not already engaged in child welfare or the juvenile justice system, consider a low intensity intervention.
  - 2) If a youth/family is involved with child welfare or are in custody or on informal or formal active probation, the referral will be screened out to avoid duplication of services.
- D. Placement: Was the youth able to stay home with a parent/guardian?
- 1) If the youth returned home to their parent/guardian, consider a low intensity intervention.
  - 2) If the youth was placed, and remains in an informal living arrangement with kin or is in certified shelter care, consider a higher intensity intervention.

### **Run-Away**

\*In all cases in which the physical safety of the youth is at risk, a CHINS referral is not the appropriate first step. Additionally, a youth is only considered a run-away once their location is known. If a youth's location is unknown, they are considered a missing youth and law enforcement should be contacted and treating the situation as a missing youth.

- A. *Severity*: How long has the youth been missing?
- 1) If the youth is just missing curfew, consider a low intensity intervention
  - 2) If the youth has been missing for a longer period, consider a moderate or high intensity intervention
- B. *Age*: How old is the child?
- 1) If the youth is over the age of 15 consider a low or moderate intensity intervention
  - 2) If the youth is between the ages of 12 to 15 consider a moderate or high intensity intervention
  - 3) If the youth is under the age of 12 consider a high intensity intervention
- C. *Frequency*: How often is the youth running away?
- 1) If this is the first time a youth has run away, consider a lower intensity intervention
  - 2) If the youth has run away before, and there was a large gap in time between incidents, consider a moderate intensity intervention
  - 3) If the youth has run away frequently, and in a short time frame, consider a high intensity intervention
- D. *Precipitating Event*: What is identified as the reason for running away?
- E. *Placement*: Was the youth able to return home to a parent/guardian?
- 1) If the youth was able to return home to their parent/guardian, consider a low intensity intervention

- 2) If the youth was placed, and remains, in an informal living arrangement with kin or is in certified shelter care for more than 7 days, consider a higher intensity intervention.
- F. *Who are they with:* Where did the youth run to?
- 1) If the youth was found at the home of a friend, known family member or trusted friend consider a low intensity intervention
  - 2) If a youth was found with no shelter or in the presence of unknown parties\* consider a moderate or high intensity intervention
- \*If there is reason to suspect possible human trafficking or exploitation, refer matter to the appropriate authorities or partners as identified in the eligibility portion of this policy. Inquire with referral source if they have reason to believe there is HT, request supporting information/documentation if not included in the initial referral. Cases of potential Human Trafficking will be diverted to Child Protection Services Intake, Youthworks, and/or Law Enforcement for screening to be completed.
- G. *System involvement:* Is the youth or family already involved in other service systems?
- 1) If the youth/family are not already engaged in child welfare or the juvenile justice system, consider a low intensity response for initial referrals.
  - 2) If the youth/family are already engaged in youth services programming at a Human Service Center (MST, case management, therapy, etc.), the referral *may be* screened out, or consider a low intensity response to avoid duplication of services.
  - 3) If a youth/family are involved with child welfare services (i.e. In Home or in custody); or on informal or formal active probation, the referral will be screened out to avoid duplication of services.

### ***Underage use of tobacco***

- A. Information will be provided directing the family and youth to local tobacco/vaping cessation education and programming.

### **Level and Type of Interventions**

#### ***Low Intensity Interventions***

For youth determined to warrant a low intensity intervention, CHINS staff should take one or more of the following actions:

- A. Send a letter to the parent/guardian and/or referral entity with acknowledgement of the CHINS referral and information on helpful resources/services.
- B. Call the referral source and/or parent/guardian of the CHINS, discuss the referral in further detail, and discuss/verbally provide information on available services/supports.

## ***Moderate Intensity Interventions***

### *Step 1: Conduct intake interview and screening/assessments as warranted*

- A. Contact the family/guardian to conduct an intake interview. Whenever possible, CHINS staff should conduct the interview with the youth and family together and in person; however, as necessary, CHINS staff can employ virtual meeting formats when transportation, resources, schedules, or other barriers exist. Conduct an interview with the youth and when possible, with the parent/guardian. As part of this interview, CHINS staff should utilize the CHINS Assessment tool which highlights and addresses key areas the youth/family life domains, and other documents such as a trauma screening or the MAYSI-2, when identified as necessary.
  - 1) CHIN staff are expected to outreach to families to schedule an intake appointment within 7 business days of accepting the referral. In the case in which a youth is not at the home of their parent/guardian, the initial appointment with the youth should occur by the next business day.
  - 2) Once contact is made, CHINS staff should strive to schedule the intake interview within two weeks of contact.
  - 3) If the family is nonengaged following a CHINS referral, CHINS staff should attempt and document at least three separate contact attempts (i.e. phone calls, text messages, letters, e-mails) referral as a failed contact in the data system.

### *Step 2: Identify appropriate intervention/service referral*

- A. Based on the intake interview and assessment findings, CHINS staff, in coordination with the youth and family, should identify the appropriate intervention, including potential services, to best meet the needs of the youth and family.

### *Step 3: Engage in warm handoff to services*

When it is identified that an external referral to services is the appropriate course of action CHINS staff should employ a warm handoff to the appropriate services. This includes:

- A. Working with the youth and family to notify them of the services being referred to, the reason for the referral and identifying any potential challenges to accessing services such as transportation issues.
- B. Pull together a packet of key information to be given to the service provider including the nature of the referral, findings of the interview and assessment, key contact information for the youth and guardian, and any findings on other systems involvement where release of information (ROI) is in place. The packet should also, with the approval of the youth and family, include a release of information to allow for CHINS staff to follow up on service engagement.
- C. Contact the agency being referred to in order to notify them of the service referral.

- D. Engage in a warm handoff that connects the youth and guardian with the service provider, either through facilitating a first phone call, engaging in a face-to-face meeting, or where appropriate, providing the agency being referred to services with the necessary contact information and notifying the youth and family to expect to be contacted.

*Step 4: Provide support*

- A. Following the referral, the CHINS staff should follow up with both the service provider as well as the youth and family monthly to identify whether services were utilized, and from the youth and family, whether the services identified were appropriate. The results of these follow ups should be tracked within the data system.
- B. If a service referral is not acted upon, a follow up with the youth/family should be attempted at least once to determine the reason for not engaging. If a family does not respond this should be marked in the file, it is not a reason alone to escalate the case or increase the response.
- C. If a referral is successfully conducted but the youth and family and/or service provider did not report successful completion of programming, an attempt should be made to determine the barriers that prevented successful completion with both the youth/family and service provider and a new service referral may be made as necessary.

***High Intensity Interventions***

For youth with potentially high service needs, CHINS staff should engage in the following process:

*Step 1: Conduct interview*

- A. Conduct an interview with the youth and when possible, with the parent/guardian. Whenever possible this interview should be conducted in person, however as necessary virtual technologies can be used as necessary given transportation or other barriers. As part of this interview, CHINS staff should utilize the CHINS Assessment tool which highlights and addresses key areas the youth/family life domains, and other documents, such as a trauma screening or the MAYSI-2, when identified as necessary.
  - 1) CHINS staff are expected to outreach to families to schedule an intake appointment within 7 business days of accepting the referral. In the case in which a youth is not at the home of their parent/guardian, the initial appointment with the youth should occur by the next business day.
  - 2) Once contact is made, CHINS staff should strive to schedule the intake interview within two weeks of contact.
  - 3) If the family is nonengaged following a CHINS referral, CHINS staff should attempt and document at least three separate contact attempts (i.e. phone calls, text messages, letters, e-mails) referral as a failed contact in the data system.

*Step 2: Identify appropriate intervention/service referral*

- A. Based on the intake interview and assessment findings, CHINS staff, in coordination with the youth and family, should identify the appropriate intervention, including potential services, to best meet the needs of the youth and family.
- B. Schedule and host a Family Centered Engagement meeting with any system partners, including service providers that are engaged with the youth and family.

*Step 3: Engage in warm handoff to services*

- A. When it is identified that an external referral to services is the appropriate course of action as part of the service plan, CHINS staff should employ a warm handoff to the appropriate services. This includes:
  - 1) Working with the youth and family to notify them of the services being referred to, the reason for the referral and identifying any potential challenges to accessing services such as transportation issues.
  - 2) Pull together a packet of key information to be given to the service provider including the nature of the referral, findings of the interview and assessment, key contact information for the youth and guardian, and any findings on other systems involvement where release of information (ROI) is in place. The packet should also, with the approval of the youth and family, include a release of information to allow for CHINS staff to follow up on service engagement.
  - 3) Contact the agency being referred to in order to notify them of the service referral.
  - 4) Engage in a warm handoff that connects the youth and guardian with the service provider, either through facilitating a first phone call, engaging in a face-to-face connection, or where appropriate, providing the agency being referred to services with the necessary contact information and notifying the youth and family to expect to be contacted.

*Step 4: Provide Support*

- A. As identified within the case plan developed with the youth and family, CHINS staff should meet with the youth and family at least two weeks after the initial contact, again at one month post initial contact, and lastly, at least monthly for the duration of the CHINS intervention to support the successful intervention of services to meet the needs of the youth and family.
- B. In instances in which a youth is referred to services in addition to high intensity engagement, conduct monthly check ins with the referred service provider to ensure connected services are working together and meeting the needs of the youth and family.
- C. If a referral is successfully conducted but the youth and family and/or service provider did not report successful completion of programming, an attempt should be made to determine the

barriers that prevented successful completion with both the youth/family and service provider and a new service referral may be made as necessary.

## **Data Collection, Quality Assurance, and Reporting**

### *Data*

CHINS staff will be responsible for tracking referrals and responses in two ways:

- 1) Completing required data entry in the Teams management system for all referrals. This will include referral information, youth and family demographics, and intake/programmatic responses.
- 2) Development and maintenance of the youth's case file.

### *Teams Management System Tracking*

Upon acceptance of a CHINS referral\*, CHINS staff are required to complete a referral tracking form, which will include, at minimum, the following demographic and intake information:

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Date of Referral
- Custodian/Guardian/Parent Information
- Referral Source
- Location (including identified addresses)
- Identified County/Zone
- FRAME information
- Juvenile Court History
- Child Welfare History
- Copy of Referral and collateral documentation
- Release of Information documentation
- Assessment Tool documentation
- Community Referrals documentation
- Case notes from discussions/meeting with youth/family

As the youth moves through the intake and intervention process, CHINS staff are required to update the form to note service needs, intensity of intervention, specific service referrals, and if warranted, follow-up contacts and status updates.

\*All CHINS referrals, including those not accepted for intake, must be entered within the Teams system, with a note that no action was taken and the reasons.

### *Case File*



A case file should be created for every youth with an accepted CHINS referral. This file should at minimum include the following documents:

- Referral form
- Intake form
- Findings of any completed assessments
- Case notes on level of intervention and outcomes

Case management files will be maintained pursuant to DHHS standards.

### *Reporting*

CHINS unit leadership will run monthly reports on identified programmatic measures to support ongoing decision making. Additionally, annual reports on total numbers and outcomes (I.e. change in custody, Foster Care, DJS, Formal Probation, youth still in school, youth working, no new referrals in 6 months post initial referral) will be run to support decisions around changes to policy and practice.

### **Quality Assurance**

To support continued best practice, CHINS staff will meet monthly to review data reports and discuss policy and practice. Additionally, there will be quarterly case file reviews. These reviews will include a look at whether the CHINS referral was appropriate, if the level of intervention identified matched the needs of the case, and how service referrals were identified.

In addition to case file reviews, CHINS unit management will solicit feedback from key partners to identify areas of opportunity to improve practice. These partners will include youth and families for feedback on the intake and services provided, schools and law enforcement for feedback on the referral process, and service providers for feedback on the service referral process.

Utilizing the findings, the quarterly case file reviews and the annual feedback from partners as well as the data findings, the CHINS staff and leadership will annually review and make updates to the policy and process as necessary.