



PROCEDURE

Title/Subject: Diversion Services			
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Approved By:		Title: President/Chief Executive Officer	
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The Florida Center for Child and Family Development (The Florida Center) adheres to all contractual and best practice standards for Intake, Eligibility and Service Provision Criteria for Community Based Care Diversion Services. Diversion services are provided to children and families who are at risk of removal and placement in out-of-home care but whose cases do not meet criteria for immediate removal to ensure the safety and well being of the children. These cases are referred to Diversion Services by Child Protective Investigator Services with the Department of Children and Families and/or contract providers for Child Protective Investigation Services or the Community Based Care Safe Children Coalition.

The Florida Center utilizes the following criteria for determining the eligibility of clients who participate in the agency's Diversion program. To be eligible for Diversion Services families must meet the following criteria:

- Live in Desoto, Sarasota, or Manatee counties.
- Children are at risk of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.
- Children are determined to be at risk of out-of-home placement due to the occurrence of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.
- Families are Florida residents and are TANF eligible; residents with incomes less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Each individual served must be a United States citizen or qualified non-citizen, as defined in Section 414.095(3) Florida Statutes.
- Each head of household must complete and sign the Request for TANF Funds/Eligibility Determination form.

The following referral and intake process will be utilized by the Diversion program/staff:

- Referrals are initiated by the Child Protective Investigator or the Community Based Care Coalition case manager and sent to the Diversion Program Director.

- Since there is an investigator or a case manager working the case it is not necessary for Diversion staff to be available to respond to referral 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Referrals are accepted Monday through Friday and assigned to a therapist with a master's degree in Social Work, Mental Health or a related field.
- Cases are assigned primarily based on county of residence, case load size and identified needs of the family.
- Diversion therapists work a flexible schedule, including evening appointments, in order to meet the needs of the families serviced.
- If a Diversion therapist has an opening on his/her caseload, the case will be assigned. If there is no opening, a Diversion therapist or Program Director will inform the referral source and, if appropriate, assist in any referrals for services.
- The assigned therapist will make every effort to contact the family within 48 hours of receiving a completed referral. All attempts to contact the family will be documented in the client file.
- If the initial contact with the family is made by telephone, every attempt will be made to make a face-to-face contact with the family in their home within 48 hours of the initial contact.
- The potential risk to the child/family is assessed, and the appropriateness of Diversion services is determined, during the initial face-to-face contact visit
- Consents for treatment are signed by the caregiver if the family voluntarily agrees to participate in Diversion services during the initial face-to-face contact with the family.
- If the family cannot be engaged, the therapist may, if appropriate, seek the assistance of the referring investigator or case manager.

Service Provision:

- Each full-time Diversion therapist carries an average caseload of 10 families in order to adequately meet the needs of the families.
- The assigned therapist will complete an assessment of the child and family's needs within 14 days of the initial face-to-face contact.
- The assigned therapist will work with the family to develop an intervention/treatment plan that describes the services needed, identifies the provider/providers of the services and how the services will be provided. This treatment plan will be completed within 30 days of the initial face-to-face contact with the family.
- The assigned therapist will provide and/or make all referrals for services identified in the plan.
- Ongoing assessment and treatment planning occurs throughout the duration of the case.
- Progress notes will be completed and filed in the chart within 48 hours of the contact.
- The Diversion therapist serves multiple roles including that of case manager, consultant, and agent of change. The therapist collaborates with the family and other service providers to provide timely resolution of the presenting problems.

- In addition to resolving the initial presenting problems, the therapist and family identify and work together to address/resolve any additional issues and/or crises that may occur throughout the duration of the case.
- Diversion therapists are experienced in the provision of mental health and crisis intervention services, and therefore exercise discretion and latitude in the provision of appropriate interventions.
- Ongoing supervision is provided to Diversion therapists at least twice a month by the Program Director. In addition, the Program Director is available by cell phone/radio to assist the Diversion therapists in providing clinical assistance to the children and families. The Program Director receives the referrals, and ongoing supervision of the Diversion therapist ensures that someone familiar with the family's needs is available when the therapist is not.
- The program director/supervisor provides training as needed for the therapist to provide Diversion services.
- The therapist will monitor the family's participation and progress throughout the duration of the case.
- Initial and ongoing risk assessment occurs at the initial intake and on subsequent contacts with the family. Documentation is completed and kept in the client files. Based on the risk assessment, a safety plan is developed and implemented with the family when appropriate.
- A comprehensive systems approach is utilized in the provision of services. Services needed for Diversion families include but are not limited to: direct service provision, mental health therapy, case management, and assistance in accessing and linking to financial and other concrete resources.
- The average duration of services provided to Diversion families actively participating in the program is three to six months
- Services may be extended to meet the needs of the family.
- The family is educated on the services provided, the limitations of the program and the assistance they will be provided in identifying resources that will aid them in meeting their needs on an on-going basis.
- Services are provided primarily in the home. However, if the situation warrants, services are provided in the daycare/school, and/or the office.