

## National Child Abuse and Neglect Glossary

**ADOPTION SERVICES:** Services or activities provided to assist in bringing about the adoption of a child.

**ADOPTIVE PARENT:** A person with the legal relation of parent to a child not related by birth, with the same mutual rights and obligations that exist between children and their birth parents.

**AGE:** Age calculated in years at the time of the report of abuse or neglect, or as of December 31 of the reporting year.

**ALCOHOL ABUSE:** Compulsive use of alcohol that is not of a temporary nature. Applies to infants addicted at birth, or who are victims of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, or who may suffer other disabilities due to the use of alcohol during pregnancy.

**ALLEGED PERPETRATOR REPORT SOURCE:** An individual who reports an alleged incident of child abuse or neglect in which he/she caused or knowingly allowed the maltreatment of a child.

**ALLEGED VICTIM:** Child about whom a report regarding maltreatment has been made to a CPS agency.

**ALLEGED VICTIM REPORT SOURCE:** A child who alleges to have been a victim of child maltreatment and who makes a report of the allegation.

**AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE:** A person having racial origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal or community affiliation.

**ANONYMOUS OR UNKNOWN REPORT SOURCE:** An individual who reports a suspected incident of child maltreatment without identifying himself or herself; or the type of reporter is unknown.

**ASIAN:** A person having racial origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian sub-continent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, Guam, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**ASSESSMENT:** A process by which the CPS agency determines whether the child and/or other persons involved in the report of alleged maltreatment is in need of services.

**BEHAVIOR PROBLEM:** Behavior of the child in the school and/or community that adversely affects socialization, learning, growth, and moral development. May include adjudicated or non-adjudicated behavior problems. Includes running away from home or a placement.

**BIOLOGICAL PARENT:** The birth mother or father of the child rather than the adoptive or foster parent or the stepparent.

**BLACK/AFRICAN-AMERICAN:** A person whose ancestry is any of the black racial groups of Africa.

**CARETAKER:** A person responsible for the care and supervision of the child who was reported.

**CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES:** Activities for the arrangement, coordination, and monitoring of services to meet the needs of children and their families.

**CHILD:** A person less than 18 years of age or considered to be a minor under State law.

**CHILD DATE OF BIRTH:** The month, day and year of the child's birth. If the child is abandoned or the date of birth is otherwise unknown, approximate date of birth.

**CHILD DAY CARE PROVIDER:** A person with a temporary caretaker responsibility for the child who is not related to the child, such as a day care center staff member, a family day care provider, or a baby-sitter. Does not include persons with legal custody or guardianship of the child.

**CHILD ID:** A unique identification assigned to each child. This identification is not the State child identification but is an encrypted identification assigned by the State for the purposes of the NCANDS data collection.

**CHILD VICTIM:** A child for whom an incident of abuse or neglect has been substantiated or indicated by an investigation or assessment. A State may include some children with other dispositions as victims.

**CHILDREN/FAMILIES IN NEED OF SERVICES:** Disposition by a child welfare agency after an assessment; children or families with this assessment are generally not considered to be victims of maltreatment.

**CLOSED WITHOUT A FINDING:** Disposition that does not conclude with a specific finding because the investigation could not be completed for such reasons as: the family moved out of the jurisdiction; the family could not be located; or necessary diagnostic or other reports were not received within required time limits.

**COUNSELING SERVICES:** Beneficial activities that apply the therapeutic processes to personal, family, situational or occupational problems in order to bring about a positive resolution of the problem or improved individual or family functioning or circumstances.

**COURT ACTION:** Legal action initiated by a representative of the CPS agency on behalf of the child. This includes, for instance, authorization to place the child, filing for temporary custody, dependency, or termination of parental rights. It does not include criminal proceedings against a perpetrator.

**COURT-APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVE:** A person required to be appointed by the court to represent a child in a neglect or abuse proceeding. May be an attorney or a court-appointed special advocate (or both) and is often referred to as a guardian ad litem. Makes recommendations to the court concerning the best interests of the child.

**COUNTY OF REPORT:** The geopolitical substate jurisdiction from which the report of child maltreatment originated. The unique identification number assigned to the county under the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) guidelines is preferred.

**COUNTY OF RESIDENCE:** The geopolitical substate jurisdiction in which the child subject of a report was residing at the time of the report. The unique identification number assigned to the county under the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) guidelines is preferred.

**DAY CARE SERVICES:** Beneficial activities provided to a child or children in a setting that meets applicable standards of State and local law, in a center or in a home, for a portion of a 24-hour day.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:** Incidents of inter-spousal physical or emotional abuse perpetrated by one of the spouses or parent figures upon the other spouse or parent figure in the child victim's home environment.

**DRUG ABUSE:** Compulsive use of drugs that is not of a temporary nature. Applies to infants addicted at birth.

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES:** Beneficial activities provided to improve knowledge or daily living skills and to enhance cultural opportunities.

**EDUCATION PERSONNEL:** An employee of a public or private educational institution or program; includes teachers, teacher assistants, administrators and others directly associated with the delivery of educational services.

**EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED:** A condition, which must be clinically diagnosed, exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree: an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal problems. Includes persons who are schizophrenic or autistic.

**EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:** Beneficial activities provided to assist individuals in securing employment or acquiring learning skills that promote opportunities for employment.

**FAMILY:** A group of two or more persons related by birth, marriage, adoption, or emotional ties.

**FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES:** Educational, comprehensive medical or social activities which enable individuals, including minors, to determine freely the number and spacing of their children and to select the means by which this may be achieved.

**FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES:** Activities designed to protect children from harm and to assist families at risk or in crisis, including services to prevent placement, to support the reunification of children with their families, or to support the continued placement of children in adoptive homes or other permanent living arrangements.

**FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES:** Community-based preventative activities designed to alleviate stress and promote parental competencies and behaviors that will increase the ability of families to successfully nurture their children, enable families to use other resources and opportunities available in the community, and create supportive networks to enhance child-rearing abilities of parents.

**FINANCIAL PROBLEM:** A risk factor related to the family's inability to provide sufficient financial resources to meet minimum needs.

**FOSTER CARE:** Twenty-four-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, family foster homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes regardless of whether the facility is licensed and whether payments are made by the State or local agency for the care of the child, or whether there is Federal matching of any payments made.

**FOSTER CARE SERVICES:** Beneficial activities associated with 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility.

**FOSTER PARENT:** Individual licensed to provide a home for orphaned, abused, neglected, delinquent or disabled children, usually with the approval of the government or a social service agency. May be a relative or a non-relative.

**FRIEND:** A non-relative acquainted with the child, the parent, or caretaker including: landlords, clergy, or youth group workers (e.g., Scouts, Little League coaches), etc.

**HEALTH-RELATED AND HOME HEALTH SERVICES:** Activities provided to attain and maintain a favorable condition of health.

**HISPANIC OR LATINO:** A Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American person, or person of other Spanish cultural origin, regardless of race. Whether a person is Hispanic is determined by how others define him or by how he defines himself.

**HOME-BASED SERVICES:** In-home activities provided to individuals or families to assist with household or personal care and improve or maintain adequate family well-being. Includes homemaker, chore, home maintenance, and household management services.

**HOUSING SERVICES:** Beneficial activities designed to assist individuals or families in locating, obtaining or retaining suitable housing.

**INADEQUATE HOUSING:** A risk factor related to substandard, overcrowded, or unsafe housing conditions, including homelessness.

**INDEPENDENT AND TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES:** Beneficial activities designed to help older youth in foster care or homeless youth make the transition to independent living.

**INDICATED OR REASON TO SUSPECT:** An investigation disposition that concludes that maltreatment cannot be substantiated under State law or policy, but there is reason to suspect that the child may have been maltreated or was at risk of maltreatment. This is applicable only to States that distinguish between substantiated and indicated dispositions.

**INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES:** Resources or activities designed to provide facts about services made available by public and private providers, after a brief assessment of client needs (but not a diagnosis and evaluation) to facilitate appropriate referral to these community resources.

**INITIAL INVESTIGATION:** Face-to-face contact with the alleged victim, when this is appropriate, or contact with another person who can provide information essential to the disposition of the investigation or assessment.

**INTENTIONALLY FALSE:** Unsubstantiated investigation disposition about which it has been concluded that the person reporting the alleged incident of maltreatment knew that the allegation was false.

**INVESTIGATION:** The gathering and assessment of objective information to determine if a child has been or is at risk of being maltreated. Generally includes face-to-face contact with the victim and results in a disposition as to whether the alleged report is substantiated or not.

**INVESTIGATION DISPOSITION:** A determination made by a social service agency that evidence is or is not sufficient under State law to conclude that maltreatment occurred.

**JUVENILE COURT PETITION:** A legal document filed with the court of original jurisdiction overseeing matters affecting children requesting that the court take action regarding the child's status as a result of an investigation; usually a petition requesting the child be declared a dependent or delinquent child, or that the child be placed in an out-of-home setting.

**LEARNING DISABILITY:** A disorder in basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or use mathematical calculations. The term includes conditions such as perceptual disability, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

**LEGAL, LAW ENFORCEMENT, OR CRIMINAL JUSTICE PERSONNEL:** A person employed by a local, State, tribal, or Federal justice agency including law enforcement, courts, district attorney's office, probation or other community corrections agency, and correctional facilities.

**LEGAL SERVICES:** Beneficial activities provided by a lawyer, or other person(s) under the supervision of a lawyer, to assist individuals in seeking or obtaining legal help in civil matters such as housing, divorce, child support, guardianship, paternity and legal separation.

**LIVING ARRANGEMENT:** The environment, e.g., family or foster care, in which a child was residing at the time of a report.

**MALTREATMENT:** An act or failure to act by a parent, caretaker, or other person as defined under State law which results in physical abuse, neglect, medical neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a child.

**MALTREATMENT DEATH:** Death of a child as a result of abuse or neglect, because either: (a) an injury resulting from the abuse or neglect was the cause of death; or (b) abuse and/or neglect were contributing factors to the cause of death.

**MALTREATMENT DISPOSITION LEVEL:** The disposition of an alleged maltreatment. The disposition level may be substantiated, indicated (reason to suspect), unsubstantiated, closed (no finding), other, or unknown.

**MALTREATMENT TYPE:** A particular form of child maltreatment determined by investigation to be substantiated or indicated under State law. Types include physical abuse, neglect or deprivation of necessities, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional maltreatment, and other forms included in State law.

**MEDICAL NEGLECT:** A type of maltreatment caused by failure by the caretaker to provide for the appropriate health care of the child although financially able to do so, or offered financial or other means to do so.

**MEDICAL PERSONNEL:** A person employed by a medical facility or practice, including physicians, physician assistants, nurses, emergency medical technicians, dentists, dental assistants and technicians, chiropractors and coroners.

**MENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL:** A person employed by a mental health facility or practice, including psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, etc.

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:** Beneficial activities which aim to overcome issues involving emotional disturbance or maladaptive behavior adversely affecting socialization, learning, or development. Usually provided by public or private mental health agencies and includes both residential and non-residential activities.

**MENTAL RETARDATION:** Significantly subaverage general cognitive and motor functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior that adversely affect socialization and learning; must be clinically diagnosed.

**MILITARY FAMILY MEMBER:** A person who is the legal dependent of an individual on active duty in the Armed Services of the United States.

**MILITARY MEMBER:** A person on active duty in the Armed Services of the United States, including Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps; excludes Inactive Reserve, National Guard, and retired.

**NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER:** A person having racial origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

**NEGLECT OR DEPRIVATION OF NECESSITIES:** A type of maltreatment that refers to the failure by the caretaker to provide needed, age-appropriate care although financially able to do so, or offered financial or other means to do so.

**NEIGHBOR:** A person living in close geographical proximity to the child or family.

**NON-CARETAKER:** A person who is not responsible for the care and supervision of the child, including school personnel, friends, neighbors, etc.

**NOT SUBSTANTIATED:** Investigation disposition that determines that there is not sufficient evidence under State law or policy to conclude that the child has been maltreated or is at risk of being maltreated.

**NOTIFICATIONS:** Mandated or courtesy contacting of other agencies with overlapping or potentially overlapping jurisdiction concerning a report of child maltreatment.

**OTHER:** The State coding for this field is something other than the codes in the NCANDS record layout.

**OUT-OF-COURT CONTACT:** Contact, which is not part of the actual judicial hearing, between the court-appointed representative and the child victim. Such contacts enable the court-appointed representative to obtain a first-hand understanding of the situation and needs of the child victim, and to make recommendations to the court concerning the best interests of the child.

**PARENT:** The birth mother/father, adoptive mother/father, or step mother/father of the child.

**PERPETRATOR:** The person who has been determined to have caused or knowingly allowed the maltreatment of the child.

**PERPETRATOR AGE AT REPORT:** Age of an individual determined to have caused or knowingly allowed the maltreatment of a child. Age is calculated in years at the time of the report of child maltreatment.

**PERPETRATOR ID:** A unique identification assigned to each perpetrator. This identification is not the actual State perpetrator identification but is an encrypted identification assigned by the State for purposes of the NCANDS data collection.

**PERPETRATOR MALTREATMENT:** Type of substantiated maltreatment a specific perpetrator was involved in the on the record for a specific child.

**PERPETRATOR PRIOR ABUSER:** Perpetrator with previous substantiated or indicated incidents of child maltreatment.

**PERPETRATOR RELATIONSHIP:** Primary role of the perpetrator with a child victim of maltreatment.

**PETITION DATE:** The month, day, and year that a juvenile court petition was filed.

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** Type of maltreatment that refers to physical acts that caused or could have caused physical injury to the child.

**PHYSICALLY DISABLED:** Having a physical condition that adversely affects the day-to-day motor functioning, such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis, orthopedic impairments, and other physical disabilities.

**POST- INVESTIGATION SERVICES:** Beneficial activities provided or arranged by the child protective services agency, social services agency, and/or the child welfare agency for the child/family as a result of needs discovered during the course of the investigation. Include such services as Family Preservation, Family Support, and foster care provided as a result of the report of alleged child maltreatment, or offered prior to the report and continued after the disposition of the investigation. Post-investigation services are delivered within the first 90 days after the disposition of the report.

**PREGNANCY AND PARENTING SERVICES FOR YOUNG PARENTS:** Beneficial activities for married or unmarried adolescent parents and their families to assist them in coping with social, emotional, and economic problems related to pregnancy and to plan for the future.

**PREVENTIVE SERVICES:** Beneficial activities aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect. Such activities may be directed at specific populations identified as being at increased risk of becoming abusive and may be designed to increase the strength and stability of families, to increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities, and to afford children a stable and supportive environment. They include child abuse and neglect preventive services provided through Federal funds such as the Child Abuse and Neglect State Grant, the Community-Based Family Resource and Support Grant, the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (title IV-B, subpart 2), Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, Social Services Block Grant (title XX), and State and local funds. Such activities do not include public awareness campaigns.

**PRIOR VICTIM:** A child victim with previous substantiated or indicated incidents of maltreatment.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL OR EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT:** Type of maltreatment that refers to acts or omissions, other than physical abuse or sexual abuse, that caused, or could have caused, conduct, cognitive, affective, or other mental disorders. Includes emotional neglect, psychological abuse, mental injury, etc. Frequently occurs as verbal abuse or excessive demands on a child's performance and may cause the child to have a negative self-image and disturbed behavior.

**PUBLIC ASSISTANCE:** Any one or combination of the following welfare or social services programs: AFDC, General Assistance, Medicaid, SSI, Food Stamps, etc.

**RACE:** The primary taxonomic category of which the individual identifies himself or herself as a member, or of which the parent identifies the child as a member.

**RECEIPT OF REPORT:** The log-in of a call to the agency from a reporter alleging child maltreatment.

**REMOVAL DATE:** The month, day, and year that the child was removed from the care and supervision of his parents or parental substitutes, during or as a result of an investigation by the child protective services or social services agency. If a child has been removed more than once, the removal date is the first removal in concert with the investigation.

**REMOVED FROM THE HOME:** The removal of the child from his/her normal place of residence to a substitute care setting by a CPS or social services agency.

**REPORT:** Notification to the CPS agency of suspected child maltreatment; can include one or more children

**REPORT DATE:** The month, day, and year that the responsible agency was notified of the suspected child maltreatment.

**REPORT DISPOSITION:** The conclusion reached by the responsible agency regarding the report of maltreatment pertaining to the child.

**REPORT DISPOSITION DATE:** The month, day, and year that a decision was made by the child protective services agency or court regarding the disposition of a report or investigation of alleged child maltreatment.

**REPORT ID:** A unique identification assigned to each report of child maltreatment. This identification is not the actual State report identification but is an encrypted identification assigned by the State for the purposes of the NCANDS data collection.

**REPORT SOURCE:** The category or role of the person who makes a report of alleged maltreatment.

**REPORTING PERIOD:** The 12-month period for which data are submitted to the NCANDS; generally refers to the calendar year.

**RESIDENTIAL FACILITY STAFF:** An employee of a public or private group residential facility, including emergency shelters, group homes, and institutions.

**RESPIRE CARE SERVICES:** Beneficial activities involving temporary care of the child(ren) to provide relief to the caretaker. May involve care of the children outside of the caretaker's own home for a brief period of time, such as overnight or for a weekend. Not considered by the State to be foster care or other placement.

**RESPONSE TIME WITH RESPECT TO THE INITIAL INVESTIGATION:** The time from the log-in of a call to the agency from a reporter alleging child maltreatment to the face-to-face contact with the alleged victim, where this is appropriate, or to contact with another person who can provide information.

**RESPONSE TIME WITH RESPECT TO THE PROVISION OF SERVICES:** The time from the log-in of a call to the agency from a reporter alleging child maltreatment to the opening of a case for ongoing services.

**SERVICE DATE:** Date of the report disposition or a date decided by the State to be more appropriate. The service date for cases for which services were continued (or changed) as a result of the investigation disposition is the date of the most recent case opening prior to the receipt of the report.

**SERVICES:** Noninvestigative public or private beneficial activities provided or continued as a result of an investigation or assessment. In general, such activities occur within 90 days of the report.

**SEX:** The gender of a person at the time of the report.

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** A type of maltreatment that refers to the involvement of the child in sexual activity to provide sexual gratification or financial benefit to the perpetrator, including contacts for sexual purposes, molestation, statutory rape, prostitution, pornography, exposure, incest, or other sexually exploitative activities.

**SOCIAL SERVICES PERSONNEL:** An employee of a public or private social services or social welfare agency, or other social worker or counselor who provides similar services.

**SOURCE OF REPORT:** Person who makes a report to the CPS agency alleging child maltreatment.

**SPECIAL SERVICES-DISABLED:** Beneficial activities for persons with developmental or physical disabilities, or visual or auditory impairments, to maximize their potential, help alleviate the effects of physical, mental or emotional disabilities, and enable them to live in the least restrictive environment possible.

**SPECIAL SERVICES-JUVENILE DELINQUENT:** Beneficial activities for youth (and their families) who are, or who may become, involved with the juvenile justice system.

**STATE/TERRITORY:** The U.S. Postal Service two-character abbreviation used to indicate the State/Territory.

**STEPPARENT:** The husband or wife, by a subsequent marriage, of the child victim's mother or father.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES:** Beneficial activities designed to deter, reduce, or eliminate substance abuse or chemical dependency.

**SUBSTANTIATED:** A type of investigation disposition that concludes that the allegation of maltreatment or risk of maltreatment was supported or founded by State law or State policy. This is the highest level of finding by a State agency.

**SUBSTITUTE CARE PROVIDER:** A person providing out-of-home care to children, such as a foster parent or residential facility staff.

**TRANSPORTATION SERVICES:** Beneficial provision of or arrangement for travel, including travel costs of individuals, in order to access social services, or obtain medical care or employment.

**UNKNOWN:** The State collects data for this field, but the data for this particular report (or child) were not captured or are missing.

**VISUALLY OR HEARING IMPAIRED:** A clinically diagnosed handicapping condition related to a visual impairment or permanent or fluctuating hearing or speech impairment that may significantly affect functioning or development.

**WHITE:** A person of European, North African, or Middle Eastern origin.