



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

## Protocol: Predisposition Reports

Supplemental to DCS Policy: 13.27, Predisposition Investigations and Reports

The Juvenile Service Worker (JSW), who receives a court order to write a predisposition report, is responsible for searching out all pertinent facts about the youth and family, verifying information gathered, compiling the data, and presenting the results in an organized and objective document. Information is obtained by personal interviews with all available sources including, but not limited to: the youth, parent/guardian, siblings, relatives, neighbors, teachers, pastors and agency workers. A release of information form is signed to obtain information from a third party using DCS Form, [CS-0559, Authorization for Release of Information and HIPAA PHI To or From DCS and Notification of Release.](#)

A home visit is made to assess the youth's living situation and neighborhood. Information is gathered from juvenile court records, police reports, and school records. Reports from other agencies or departments who have had contact with the youth or family are also good sources of information.

All information must be verified and sources of information noted in the report. Verification of facts, not provided by the youth and parent's statements, is only used when other sources are not available. **Unverified information is labeled as such.** Opinions of persons, who are not qualified to give such opinion, are not included in the report.

The report is divided into sections as indicated below. Information listed in each section must be addressed in the report.

### **Presenting Problem**

This section includes the official version of what happened, including the date it happened, what the youth is charged with and the specific circumstances surrounding the incident. Specifically describe what happened; don't just list the name of the offense. Include information about the adjudication hearing. If the youth and family's version differs from the official reports, describe their version.

### **Prior Record and Service History**

Provide information about prior record and prior service history.

- List in chronological order, from the earliest to the most recent, prior offenses including offense date, location, date adjudicated and the final disposition.
- Include type of prior services received, dates and whether or not the service was successful.
- Note out of home placements and any neglect/dependent referrals or Child Protective Service involvement with the family.

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### **Family History**

#### **A. Parent**

For each parent (father, mother, stepparent, legal guardian, etc.) include the following information in the description for each parent:

- Name, age (DOB), educational level and place of employment.
- Address and telephone number, if not the same as the youth.
- Marital history
- Court record, if applicable.
- History of drug or alcohol abuse or history of mental health issues.
- Note any health or physical problems, including current medications.
- The nature and quality of the relationship between the parent and the youth.
- If writing about the youth's father, has paternity been established?
- Is child support ordered? Is it being paid or not?
- If parent is deceased, include information including age at death, cause and date of death.

#### **B. Siblings**

List the oldest sibling to the youngest and include the following information in the description of each sibling:

- Name, age (DOB), relationship to youth (brother, step-sister, etc.), and current address.
- Include any court record or past history with DCS. Be sure to verify the information.
- If a sibling is deceased, include name, age at death, date of death, and cause.
- If a sibling is over 18, indicate if they are a viable placement option.

#### **C. Family Functioning**

- Describe the strengths and stability of the family, including how they all get along with each other.
- Describe relationships with each parent and sibling.
- Are there male and female role models in the home?
- Include information about past or present family trauma including, but not limited to, poverty, neglect, abuse, death, alcohol/drug abuse, or mental health problems.
- Describe the family's capacity to travel. Do they have a car or access to public transportation?

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- Note information about informal supports in the family's life including relatives, neighbors, church members, community center staff, teachers, etc.
- If youth has a child, include information such as child's name and date of birth, mother or father's name, and indicate relationship between the youth and child's mother or father, as applicable. Note where child is living and who has legal custody.

### **D. Home and Neighborhood**

A home visit is made to gather information about the youth and family's home and neighborhood. Include the following information:

- Date of visit to the home.
- Note how long the family has lived at the current address and if there is adequate space for the size of the family.
- In the last five (5) years, how many times has the family moved?
- Housekeeping standards and furnishing.
- Describe the neighborhood: rural, urban, low or high crime area, etc.
- Include information regarding existing community resources in the area or close by.

### **Youth History**

#### **Early Developmental History**

- Note trauma that may have occurred while the mother was pregnant such as drug/alcohol use, serious illness, or accidents, etc.
- Was there any trauma during birth or early problems such as stuttering, seizures, enuresis, and temperament?
- Was there trauma in the home such as emotional trauma, physical abuse, loss of significant adult, sex abuse, isolation, etc.?
- Did youth attend preschool? Were there any problems or any treatment for early issues?
- Allergies or chronic health issues.

#### **Adolescence to Present**

##### *Health*

- Family doctor, name, address, telephone number.
- Overall health history of youth including limitations and current medical needs.
- When the last visit to the doctor occurred, for what and is there a need for current treatment?
- Does the youth have medical insurance? If so, what is the name of the company, address, and telephone number?
- Is youth currently taking medications? If yes, for what?

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### *Personality/Behavior*

- What is the youth's perception of themselves?
- How do others perceive the youth (parents, siblings, relatives, teachers, etc.)?
- Have there been recent changes in personality such as mood changes, withdrawal, depression, or changes in behavior?
- Note presence or absence of drug or alcohol use and the extent of involvement. Has the youth been drug tested or received previous or current treatment?
- How does the youth spend leisure time?
- Include information about the youth's strengths, special talents such as involvement in sports, art, music, computer skills, an educational goal and plan.
- History or current concerns regarding suicidal behavior?
- Does the youth associate with older or younger peers or are they a loner who has trouble maintaining relationships?
- Are peers a help or hindrance?
- Any issues with sexual development, is youth sexually active or have children?
- Does youth have an awareness of the current problem?
- Include any organizations the youth belongs to such as church groups, scouts, mentoring program, gang activity, etc.

### *Education*

Conduct interviews with teachers, guidance counselors, the principal and administrative professionals who deal with disciplinary problems.

- Is the youth currently enrolled in school? If so, name of school, address, telephone number, and youth's grade level.
- Is youth making passing grades and/or are they on the right grade level for their age?
- Review the youth's school history until the present time.
- Note if there are major problems in school now or in the past such as poor grades, behavior, truancy, suspensions, alternative school, expulsions.
- If youth in accelerated, remedial or special education classes? If yes to special education, when was the last M-Team meeting and the outcome?
- Is the youth enrolled in any vocational training or other areas of interest?
- Is youth motivated to do school work and pursue educational goals?

### *Testing and Mental Health Services*

- List any mental health services and/or testing in the past three (3) years.

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- Include provider name, location, agency contact person, and if services were outpatient or inpatient.
- Note length of service.
- Were services successfully completed and were there any recommendations at the end of the service?

### **Employment**

If youth is currently working or has worked in the past include the following information:

- Name of employer and the job title of the position.
- How long was/is the employment period.
- If no longer employed, reason for leaving?

### **Restitution**

- Address if the youth currently owes court costs or restitution and if it is realistic that the youth will be able to make the payments.
- Note if public service work has been ordered by the court.

### **Financial Assistance**

List any financial assistance the family is receiving such as Social Security, disability benefits, food stamps, child support, etc.

### **Sources of Information**

List the name and agencies contacted as sources of information including youth, parent, and family members. Give specific information as evidenced by example below:

*Ida Jones, Guidance Counselor, Montgomery County High School on June 5, 2017 Martha Johnson, mother of youth on June 7, 2017.*

### **Summary and Recommendations**

Write a brief summary summarizing pertinent strengths, needs and recommendations, and proposed supervision plan for the youth. Two alternatives are given to the court for consideration. Address the need for special conditions such as curfew, educational support programs, mental health testing or counseling, attendance at AA/NA, restitution, and public service work as applicable.

The Team Leader reviews every report to ensure all information is included, verified and approves the report by signing the approval line on DCS form [CS-0153, Predisposition Investigation](#).

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