

# **GLOSSARY**

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### **AGE-APPROPRIATE CHILD**

A child age 10 and older (except a child with severe intellectual disabilities) or a child under age 10 who is intellectually capable of understanding and communicating ideas and opinions concerning the subject matter being discussed or considered.

### **CHILD SAFETY/SAFE**

The absence of a safety threat or the family is willing and able to manage safety threats.

### **DHR RESPONSE TIME**

The timeframe within which child welfare staff shall make in-person initial contact with both (1) the children allegedly experiencing abuse/neglect and safety threats, and (2) all other children in the home.

### **FAMILY CENTERED APPROACH**

A child welfare practice approach that is strengths-based and solution-oriented and that mobilizes family change through a family-worker partnership.

### **IMMINENT RISK OF PLACEMENT** (into DHR custody and/or foster care)

Family conditions and circumstances that threaten child safety are present and interacting in such a way that it leads a reasonable person to conclude that there is a very high likelihood that a child will need to be placed.

### **INITIAL ASSESSMENT**

A family centered evaluation conducted for the purpose of identifying the presence of child abuse/neglect and safety threats. This evaluation is used as a basis to determine whether there is a risk of serious harm to the children, and hence, a need for on-going service delivery.

### **INTAKE**

The process by which the community makes its concerns regarding alleged child abuse/neglect known to DHR.

## **GLOSSARY (Cont'd)**

### **MALTREATMENT** (synonymous with child abuse/neglect)

Child abuse or neglect as described in Child Abuse/Neglect (CA/N) Allegations And Definitions.

### **MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL**

Professional (e.g., psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, psychiatric nurse, non-DHR social worker, mental health worker, etc.) trained and experienced in a human service field that provides a wide range of services for the expressed purpose of improving an individual's mental health or to treat mental illness.

### **PARENT**

A child's birth mother/father, adoptive mother/father, or stepmother/stepfather.

### **PERSON ALLEGEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ABUSE/NEGLECT**

Any person, age fourteen (14) years or older when the alleged abuse/neglect occurs, who is identified as being responsible for the abuse/neglect.

### **PRIMARY CAREGIVER**

The adult who assumes the parental role and has the major responsibility for a child's care. This may include, but is not limited to, a parent, stepparent, adoptive parent, another relative or a non-relative rearing a child for an absent or incapacitated parent. Primary caregiver also includes any person who has assumed or been delegated responsibility for the care, supervision, transportation, and/or control of children through their employment, unpaid service as a volunteer, or connection with (e.g., students completing an educational practicum, board members) an out-of-home care setting.

### **SECONDARY CAREGIVER**

A non-licensed person (e.g., relatives, neighbors, babysitter, nanny, etc.) age fourteen (14) years or older alleged to have abused/neglected the child(ren). This may include adults or children whom the parent/primary caregiver makes formal or informal arrangements, to provide care or supervision for the child(ren) in the parent/primary caregiver absence.

### **NON-CAREGIVER**

A person (e.g., boyfriend, girlfriend, paramour, etc.) age fourteen (14) years or older alleged to have abused/neglected the child(ren). This may include adults or children (age fourteen years or older) who never had control over or supervisory responsibility for the care and supervision of the child(ren) but participated directly or indirectly in activities/behavior that resulted in alleged abuse/neglect of the child.

## **GLOSSARY (Cont'd)**

### **PRIVATE INTERVIEW**

An interview shall be considered private only when it is restricted to or intended for an individual person (e.g., PARAN, PIR, etc.) and a DHR representative(s). Refer to *CA/N Assessment, III. Information Collection Protocol, F. Required Interviews and Information*, for those individuals for whom a private interview is required.

Examples of interviews not considered private include situations where the PARAN (Person Allegedly Responsible for Abuse/Neglect) is represented by an attorney or the PIR (Person Identified at Risk) requests the presence of a teacher, counselor or other school personnel.

**Note:** A DHR attorney must be present when a PARAN has legal representation. School personnel, if requested by a child, can be present at the Social Worker's discretion if it is determined that it is in the best interest of the child. School personnel must be made aware that they are subject to subpoena to court for any disclosure statements the child may make.

### **PROTECTIVE CAPACITIES**

Parent/primary caregiver resources that can or do provide for child safety. These capacities include, but are not limited to, parenting/caregiving knowledge and skills; attachment to the children; awareness of and ability to interpret and meet children's needs; and a willingness and ability to act protectively when the children experience safety threats.

### **SAFETY THREAT**

A condition or circumstance that presents a risk of serious harm to the children.

### **SCHOOL EMPLOYEE**

As defined by Code of Alabama, 1975, Section 13A-6-80, a teacher, school administrator, student teacher, safety or resource officer, coach, and other school employee.

### **SERIOUS HARM**

Significant physical injury; sexual abuse; severe impairment in a child's functioning; permanent disability or disfigurement; or death.

"Severe impairment in a child's functioning" is a serious deficit in a child's behavior or cognition.

## **VULNERABILITY**

Refers to (a) a child's capacity for self-protection; (b) the type and extent of access a child has to individuals who are able and willing to provide protection; and (c) the child's susceptibility to experience severe consequences based on age, health, size, mobility, or social/emotional state.