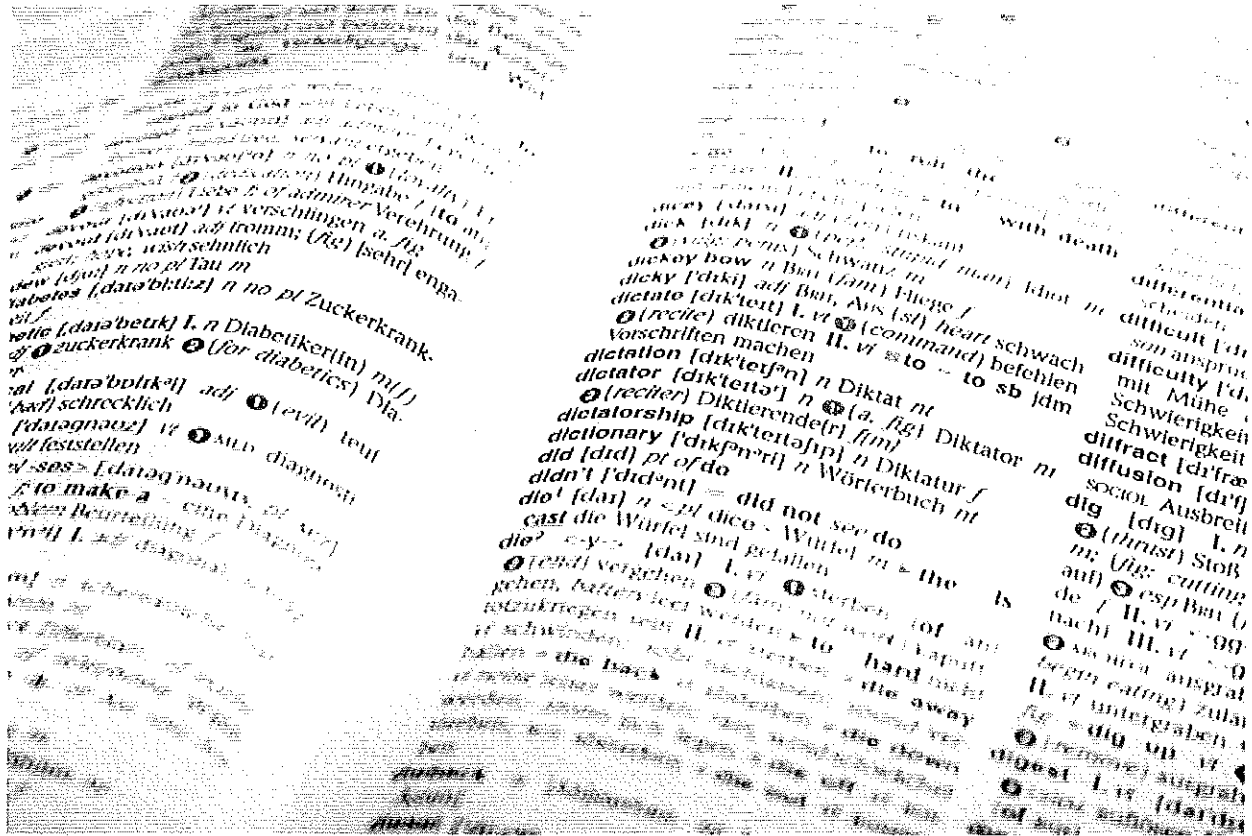


Definitions



Hand-outs from:

Pre-Service Module 2 – Team Building

Minnesota Child Welfare Training System

Hand-Out # 1

GLOSSARY

ACTIVE EFFORTS: "Active efforts" is an action that is required of the state in caring for an *Indian child*, mandated under the *Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)*. While active efforts is undefined in ICWA, it refers to an effort more intense than the legal term "reasonable efforts." Active efforts applies to providing *remedial and rehabilitative services* to the family prior to the removal of an Indian child from his or her parent or *Indian custodian*, and/or an intensive effort to reunify an Indian child with his or her parent or *Indian custodian*.

ADJUDICATION: Determination by the court that the child is a child in need of protection or services (CHIPS). It is usually made after admissions by the appropriate parties or a trial with sufficient proof provided. The court can withhold adjudication for one 90-day period and dismiss without adjudication at the end of 90 days if both parent and child have complied with the terms of the 90-day continuance.

ADOPTION: The creation of parental rights and responsibilities by juvenile court after the termination of parental rights and responsibilities of the birth parents or any other person holding legal rights to the child. Children become available for adoption in Minnesota through one of two routes: (1). Parental rights are terminated by the court due to abuse, neglect, or CHIPS adjudication without resolving the reasons for the adjudication or (2). Parental rights are terminated by the parents consent. In either case, guardianship and legal custody are given to the Minnesota Commissioner of Human Services who is then responsible to find a permanent family for the child. In these cases, the county social service agency is delegated the responsibility to find an adoptive home for the child.

ADOPTION ASSISTANCE: Federal (title IV-E of the Social Security Act) or State benefits granted to adoptive families to offset the short- and long-term costs of adopting eligible children who have special needs (defined differently in each State). Benefits vary by State but commonly include monthly cash payments, medical assistance, social services, and nonrecurring adoption expenses.

ADOPTION STUDY: While many individuals within the child welfare system still refer to the process of assessing a family for the purposes of adoption or foster care a homestudy, the more appropriate term is family assessment. The process generally involves several contacts between the family and the social worker, an on-site visit to the family home, and interviews with all family members, including the children. In addition, the state of Minnesota requires an assessment of physical health, a criminal background check, submission of fingerprints and clearance from the Background Studies Unit from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing. The family assessment must be completed by a representative of a licensed child placing agency or county social service agency. The finished product is a written document that is presented to the court or other parties as the basis for approval or denial as a prospective adoptive parent. In Minnesota, the adoption study must be completed in accordance to the Commissioner's designated format for completion of an Adoption and Child Foster Care Study. An approved adoption study does not mean the prospective parents have the ability to meet the needs of a specific child.

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ADOPTION & SAFE FAMILIES ACT: (ASFA): The Adoption & Safe Families Act (ASFA) is a federal law enacted in 1997 that sets timelines and requirements for finding a permanent home for a *child* in temporary *custody*. It is important to note, however, that ASFA does not supercede the *Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)* and that ICWA requirements must still be met.

ADOPTIVE SEARCH: A process by which adoptees, adoptive parents, or birth parents secure information about each other and the circumstances surrounding the adoptive process. In Minnesota, this information must be non-identifying unless the party or parties have legally consented to the release of private information.

APPEAL: The legal process by which a party who has lost his/her case at trial level (district court) petitions a higher court for review of the case, claiming that a lower court erred in its judgment. Following a decision by the court to terminate parental rights, the parent has thirty (30) days to file an appeal with the Minnesota Court of Appeals, requesting a reversal of the lower court's decision. Children placed with an adoptive family during the appeal process are said to be in a legal-risk. This implies that the child could be returned to the birth family based on the court's decision. A case appealed from the trial court must be reviewed by the Minnesota Court of Appeals but the Minnesota Supreme Court exercises discretion whether to hear a requested appeal.

ASSESSMENT: Authority to interview the child, the person or persons responsible for the child's care, the alleged perpetrator, and any other person with knowledge of the abuse or neglect for the purpose of gathering the facts, assessing the risk to the child, and formulating a plan.

ATTACHMENT: Attachment refers to a special emotional connection infants develop with their caregivers, initiated during the first year of life. An infant's first attachment is usually formed with its mother. In some circumstances, someone other than the infant's mother can become the primary attachment figure for the infant. This may be a father, a grandparent, or an unrelated adult. The first three years of the child's life is a critical time for attachment to develop.

BACKGROUND CHECK: A background investigation of prospective foster and adoptive parents and all adults residing in prospective foster and adoptive households. The background investigation includes a check of Federal and State criminal records and child abuse and neglect registries. States may deny approval of an adoption application or foster care license if any adult in the household has been convicted of certain crimes, such as sexual abuse of a minor.

CASE PLAN (Child's Out-of-Home Placement Plan or Child Protective Services Plan): A written document developed by social services and the child (if age appropriate), the child's parents, guardian or custodian in consultation with foster or kinship parents and the guardian ad litem and tribal representative, if the child is an American Indian. The case plan is filed with the court which may order the plan as is or modify it. The following items must be addressed in the plan: assessments, services, timeframes, visitation arrangements, contact with the caseworker and the foster or kinship care provider, actions to be taken by the parents, including financial support (as applicable), child, if appropriate, and agency, and date for return home or permanency.

CHILD IN NEED OF PROTECTION OR SERVICES (CHIPS): A child-focused legal proceeding for children who are alleged to be abused, neglected, without proper parental care, abandoned, a runaway or truant, engaged in prostitution, delinquent or petty offender either under age 10 or mentally incompetent, or diagnosed as failure-to-thrive. Other CHIPS provisions include behavior, condition, or environment that is injurious or dangerous to child or others, or the parent, for good cause, requests to be relieved of the child's care and custody.

CONCURRENT PERMANENCY PLANNING: A planning process that includes attempting to reunify children with their parents at the same time creating an alternative permanent placement plan with the goals of achieving early permanency for children, decreasing lengthy stays in foster care, reducing the number of moves children experience in foster care, and developing a group of families who will work toward reunification and also serve as a permanent family, if necessary.

CONCURRENT PERMANENCY PLANNING RESOURCE FAMILY: A family who takes a child in for foster care, works with the agency and primary family to reunite the child with his/her family, and, if this fails, is willing to provide a permanent home for the child, preferably through adoption or transfer of permanent and legal custody, if no relative/kin are available.

CULTURE: A system of values, beliefs, attitudes, traditions, standards of behavior that governs the organization of people into groups and assures the survival and well-being of members.

CUSTOMARY ADOPTION: A customary adoption is a practice, ceremony, or process conducted in a manner that is long-established, continued, reasonable, and certain; considered by the people of a tribe to be binding or found by the tribal court to be authentic, which gives a child a legally recognized permanent parent-child relationship with a person other than the child's biological parent without a requirement for termination of parental rights (TPR).

DISPOSITION: It is the phase of the court process, which follows the adjudication and focuses on the issue of custody, the best interest of the child and contents of a case plan.

DETENTION HEARING: May be the first court hearing held in a CHIPS case. Usually the county attorney files a petition with juvenile court asking for emergency custody of a child who is already detained or could be detained. The reasons for detention (emergency protective care) are either the child is one whose health or welfare would otherwise be immediately endangered or, would not remain in the care and control of the person to whose lawful custody the child would be released, or would endanger self or others, or not return for a court hearing.

DOMESTIC CHILD ABUSE: Any non-accidental physical injury or sexual abuse to a minor family or household member by an adult family or household member.

EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT (MN Statutes 2003 Chap 260C, Subd. 15): The consistent, deliberate infliction of mental harm on a child by a person responsible for the child's care that has an observable, sustained, and adverse effect on the child's physical, mental, or emotional development. Emotional maltreatment does not include reasonable training or discipline administered by the person responsible for the child's care or the reasonable exercise of authority by that person.

ENROLLMENT IN A TRIBE: Enrollment in a tribe is registration with a tribe that verifies membership with that tribe.

FAILURE TO THRIVE SYNDROME: A serious medical condition usually seen in children under one year of age. The child's height, weight, and motor development fall significantly short of the average growth rates of normally developing children or even though within average have very significantly and quickly decreased. In the majority of cases, no medical cause can be found in children with this syndrome. The syndrome appears to be caused by a disturbed parent/child relationship which results in the parent being unable to meet his/her child's emotional needs, including, most often, failure to feed the infant.

FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING: Family group conferencing is a family-centered, strengths-based, and culturally relevant technique used by social workers to gather a family and other significant people for the purpose of establishing a care plan for a *child*. The meeting is often structured into three phases: information sharing, family alone time, and presentation of the plan. Follow-up conferences may occur if needed.

FAMILY GROUP DECISION MAKING: A generic term that includes a number of approaches in which family members are brought together to make decisions about how to care for their children and develop a plan for services. Families are engaged and empowered by child welfare agencies to make decisions and develop plans that protect their children from experiencing further abuse and neglect. Different terms used for this type of intervention include "family group conferencing," "family team conferencing," "family team decision-making," "family team meetings," "family unity meetings," and "team decision-making." Approaches differ in various aspects, but most consist of several phases and employ a trained facilitator or coordinator.

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS: FASD stands for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications. The "umbrella" of FASD can include diagnosis such as:

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)
- Alcohol Related Neuro-developmental Disorders (ARND)
- Alcohol Related Birth Defects (ARBD)
- Partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (pFAS)

FINALIZATION/LEGALIZATION: Court hearing at which the juvenile court terminates custody by the agency or Department of Human Services and awards full custody, including all rights and responsibilities, to the adoptive family. Under Minnesota law, finalization can take place after the child has resided with the prospective adoptive family for 90 days.

FOSTER HOME STUDY: The foster home study is more accurately known as the foster home licensing study. This study includes a background study for all household members age 13 and above; an on-site inspection of the residence; in-person interviews with all family members and other adults living in the home; and social history information for all household members. Social history information includes learning about the education; employment; financial condition; military service; marital history; child development awareness; disciplinary beliefs; involuntary termination of parental rights; strengths and weaknesses of household relationships; and any disabilities or dependencies and related services, which may include hospitalizations. In 2007, the Adam Walsh Law required that all household members eighteen and older must be fingerprinted and be cleared by the Background Studies Unit through the State of Minnesota-Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing Unit.

FOSTER/KINSHIP CARE: Children thrive best in their families. Family preservation efforts are provided to prevent out-of-home placement whenever possible. Most often foster care is temporary and children are reunited with their parents within a short time. In Minnesota, when children must enter foster care, relatives and kin are sought to care for their children. Preserving relationships with family members is crucial to a child's sense of safety and well being. When relatives and kin are not available, county social service and private foster care agencies recruit community members to become foster families.

GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL): A special guardian appointed by the court to advocate the best interest of the child. A GAL is appointed in all CHIPS cases except truancy and runaway where appointment is discretionary. A GAL may also be appointed in other cases as deemed appropriate by the court

GUARDIANSHIP AND LEGAL CUSTODY: A legal status created by the court, granted to the Minnesota Commissioner of Human Services, a relative, or other individual following the termination of parental rights. This gives the commissioner, relative or other individual full authority and responsibility to provide a permanent, safe, and nurturing family for the child.

HOME STUDY: Process of mutually assessing and preparing prospective foster, adoptive, or kinship families to determine their suitability to foster or adopt and determine the type of child whose needs would best be met by them. A home study may include a range of evaluative activities, visits to the family's residence, and educational activities.

INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT / ICWA: The Indian Child Welfare Act (*ICWA*) is a federal law passed in 1978 that guides states in their process for *placement* of an *Indian child* that is in their *custody*. This act was passed in response to the alarmingly high rate of Indian children being removed from their homes unnecessarily. It requires that states seek placement for the *child* with that child's family, tribe, and other American *Indian* homes before looking elsewhere. It generally does not apply to divorce *proceedings*, intrafamily disputes, and *juvenile delinquency* cases, or cases under tribal court jurisdiction.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN (IEP): If an evaluation shows that your child needs special education, the next step is to plan an Individualized Education Program (IEP). To do this, the school district will set up a meeting with you. The meeting is called an IEP team meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to review the evaluation results and develop a special education

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program to help your child learn. School staff will schedule the meeting, and they will let you know when and where it will be held. The meeting time may be changed if you cannot attend at the time it is scheduled. This is an important meeting for you and for your child. It is a time to share what you know about your child's strengths and needs. You know your child in different ways than anyone else.

INTERSTATE COMPACT ON THE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN (ICPC): An agreement regulating the placement of children across State lines. All 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have adopted the ICPC as statutory law in their respective jurisdictions.

KINSHIP CARE: A type of out-of-home care in which the full-time care of the child is provided by relatives, godparents, stepparents, or other adults who have a close relationship with the child. This could include a close friend, a neighbor, or a member of a child's Tribe. This is also called "relative care." Children may be placed formally in homes of relatives by the courts (kinship foster care) or they may be placed informally on a voluntary basis by the parent or guardian.

LEGAL CUSTODY: Legal custody to the local social services agency means the right to care, custody and control of the child.

LEGAL RISK PLACEMENT: An adoptive placement in which the child is not yet legally free for adoption, but is placed in an adoptive placement pending an appeal to a higher court of a termination of parental rights order; or, a situation where the parental rights are very likely to be terminated, but a final determination has not yet been made. Prospective adoptive parents have the right to be informed of this circumstance prior to placement of the child in their home.

LIFE BOOK: A book that includes pictures or descriptions of a child's birth parents, other relatives, birthplace, and birthdate that is often used as a therapeutic tool for working with a child in foster care to help the child understand his or her unique background and history, and resolve feelings about these experiences. The life book is usually developed in the form of a scrapbook, with pictures, drawings, and children's own narratives of their experiences and their feelings and can be developed by social workers, foster parents, and/or adoptive parents working with the child. Although the use of life books originated within adoption, they are recommended for all children in out-of-home care.

MALTREATMENT: A general term that includes physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and mental injury.

MENTAL INJURY: An injury to the child's psychological capacity or emotional stability resulting in an observable or substantial impairment in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior with due regard for the child's culture.

MINIMUM COMMUNITY STANDARDS: Community standards are developed by juvenile court and the county agency with input from other community sources. These state the minimum level of acceptable child care practices in that particular community. The standards should take into account cultural norms and practices, as well as accurate information about child development. The standards are used to make decisions about what constitutes sufficient risk to warrant Child

Protective Services agency involvement. Standards may also affect placement decisions. This is not the same standard as "best interest of the child."

THE MULTI-ETHNIC PLACEMENT ACT (MEPA): The Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) was enacted in 1994 amid spirited and sometimes contentious debate about transracial adoption and same-race placement policies. At the heart of this debate is a desire to promote the best interests of children by ensuring that they have permanent, safe, stable, and loving homes that will meet their individual needs. This desire is thwarted by the persistent increases in the number of children within the child protective system waiting for, but often not being placed in, adoptive families. Of particular concern are the African American and other minority children who are dramatically over-represented at all stages of this system, wait far longer than Caucasian children for adoption, and are at far greater risk of never experiencing a permanent home. Among the many factors that contribute to placement delays and denials, Congress found that the most salient are racial and ethnic matching policies and the practices of public agencies which have historically discouraged individuals from minority communities from becoming foster or adoptive parents. MEPA addressed these concerns by prohibiting the use of a child's or a prospective parent's race, color, or national origin to delay or deny the child's placement and by requiring diligent efforts to expand the number of racially and ethnically diverse foster and adoptive parents.

NEGLECT: A legal term defined in Minnesota Statutes 626.556 which refers to a child whose parents fail to provide necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or supervision, or to protect him/her from dangerous conditions when reasonably able to do so; prenatal exposure of the child to a controlled substance; subjects the child to domestic violence in the home or behavior which results in emotional harm; or engages in chronic and severe use of alcohol or a controlled substance that affects the child's basic needs and safety.

OPEN ADOPTION: The practice of providing information to a child's birth parents, adoptive parents, and/or the child as the child matures. Most adoptions in the United States have some degree of openness, from very little written information to full disclosure and face to face contact before, during and after the adoption. A communication or contact agreement between the parties is not enforceable unless it is written into an adoption decree. Minnesota law allows adoptive parents to enter into contact agreements with the child's birth relative (parent, stepparent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, or aunt through blood, marriage, adoption) or former foster parent of the minor adoptee.

PARTIES: A party is a person with a legal right to participate in the legal action. A party has the right to notice of any hearing and may present evidence, cross-examine witnesses, make motions and arguments and appeal the court's final order. In a CHIPS case, the parties include children over 12, legal parents or guardians, guardian ad litem, and any other individual who appears to the court to be proper or necessary to the court proceedings. Social Services is almost always a party because they are usually the petitioner. Indigent children and parents can have a court-appointed attorney.

PERMANENCY: A legally permanent, nurturing family for every child and youth. As defined in the Child and Family Services Reviews, a child in foster care is determined to have achieved permanency when any of the following occurs: (1) The child is discharged from foster care to reunification with his or her family, either a parent or other relative; (2) the child is discharged from

foster care to a legally finalized adoption; or (3) the child is discharged from foster care to the care of a legal guardian.

PERMANENT LEGAL AND PHYSICAL CUSTODY: The right to determine the child's physical residence and includes responsibility for the protection, education, care and control of the child and decision making on behalf of the child. Decision making includes the right to determine the child's religious training and medical care. It also includes financial responsibility for the care of the child. This is one of the permanency options and is usually used with relatives.

PERMANENT PLACEMENT: A legal status created by the court after a permanency hearing when the court determines it is in the best interest of the child to be in a permanent placement. Dispositions available to the court after a permanency hearing are: (1). Permanent legal and physical custody to a relative, (2). Continuation of the case for termination of parental rights and adoption, and (3). When 1 and 2 are not appropriate, long term foster care (usually just for those children 12 and over) gives the agency or relative full authority and responsibility to provide a permanent, safe, and nurturing family for the child.

PHYSICAL ABUSE: A legal term defined in Minnesota Statutes 626.556 which refers to any non-accidental physical or mental or threatened injury to a child.

POST ADOPTION SERVICES: Services offered to an adoptive family following legalization of the adoptive placement. Many adoptive families of children with special needs require continued support and services from the agency. Examples of these services are information and referral, education, group counseling, respite care, residential treatment, parental support groups, and advocacy. In Minnesota, families and children may receive post adoption services through the county social services agency, the Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation program.

PRE-PLACEMENT VISITS: In either non-emergency foster care or adoption placements, a series of visits are made by the child to the prospective home, in order to prepare the child for the eventual move and lessen the trauma to the child.

PRE-TRIAL CONFERENCE: An informal conference scheduled at the discretion of the judge at least 10 days before a trial after an initial hearing on a petition. Its purpose is to reach settlement, if possible, or at least narrow the issues in the court process and establish a process for determining the remaining issues. The court will also decide whether the child will need to testify and, if so, under what protective conditions. In some instances the case is settled at this point and court involvement may end or, at the very least, a trial is avoided.

PRIMARY FAMILY/BIRTH FAMILY: The persons with whom the social services system is working to reunify a child. This may include birth parents, extended family members, or others with whom the child has strong prior attachments. The child's family should help determine who is included in their "family", and the child welfare system should respect this determination.

PUTATIVE FATHER: Legal term for a man who is not married to the child's mother and who is alleged or claims to be the biological father of a child.

REFEREE: The referee assigned by a chief judge of a judicial district to hear cases on the judge's behalf. A party or the county attorney may object to a case being assigned to a referee. A decision by a referee is finalized when the judge signs the referee's recommended order. In Minnesota, usually only larger counties (Hennepin and Ramsey) have referees.

REFEREE'S WRITTEN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDED ORDER: The decision of a referee following a court hearing. The recommended order is effective upon signing by the referee, unless stayed, reversed, or modified by the judge upon review. No hearing is held when the court reviews a referee's written findings and recommended order, except upon order by the court for good cause shown.

RESPITE FOSTER CARE: Foster care offered for designated periods of time to allow a caregiver to tend to other family members; alleviate a work, job, health, or housing crisis; or take a break from the stress of caring for a seriously ill child. Respite for foster and adoptive parents is a preventive measure that enhances quality of care for the child, gives the caregiver a deserved and necessary break, and ensures healthy and stable placements for children.

SERVICE OF PROCESS: Service of process is the delivery of legal documents (usually summons, notice or subpoena) to a person who is a party to a legal action, have a right to be heard, or are otherwise ordered by the court to receive process. Service must furnish reasonable notice to the person of the pending legal action so they have the opportunity to prepare for the action. Every party to a CHIPS case must receive either a summons or notice and also a copy of the petition.

SEXUAL ABUSE: The subjection of a child by a person responsible for the child's care, by a person who has a significant relationship to the child or by a person in a position of authority, to any act which constitutes a violation of criminal sexual conduct in the first degree, criminal sexual conduct in the second degree, criminal sexual conduct in the third degree, criminal sexual conduct in the fourth degree or criminal sexual conduct in the fifth degree. Sexual abuse also includes any act which involves a minor which constitutes a violation of prostitution offenses under sections Sexual abuse includes threatened sexual abuse.

TEMPORARY CUSTODY: A legal status created by court order in a CHIPS case, which grants a the county social service agency the right and responsibility to provide physical care and control of a child; to determine where a child shall live; to protect, train, and discipline the child; to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, and medical care. This status may be terminated any time by the court.

TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS: A legal proceeding whereby all rights, powers, privileges, immunities, duties, and obligations, including any rights to custody, control, visitation, or support are terminated between the child and parent.

VISITATION: Planned face-to-face contact between a child in out-of-home care and his or her family members. The purpose of visitation is to maintain family attachments, reduce the sense of abandonment that children may experience during placement, and prepare for permanency.

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VOLUNTARY PLACEMENT AGREEMENT (VPA): A voluntary agreement between the county social services agency and the parents, under which the county accepts legal responsibility for a child without court involvement, for a relatively brief and specified period of time.

Types of Cases

Origination in Juvenile Court

Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) (M.S., section 260.015, subd 2a)

- * Civil in nature with own Juvenile Court Rules
- * Laws are to provide protection of or services to the child
- * Includes runaways and truants
- * Filed through Juvenile Court
- * Filed by county child welfare agency, private citizens, relatives, schools, anyone
- * May or may not be accompanied by a criminal charge against an adult in adult court or or delinquency charge against another juvenile in juvenile court
- * A criminal charge may be a misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, or felony

Note: When parent(s) “admit” to a CHIPS “finding”, it is not equal to “pleading guilty”. However, a parent(s) may be reluctant to make such an “admission” if they or their attorney think a criminal filing may be forthcoming. Such a “finding” could be used against them in adult criminal court.

Delinquency (M.S., section 260.015, subd. 5)

- * Crimes that would be crimes for an adult
- * Misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors, and felonies
- * Filed through Juvenile Court
- * Filed by police agencies after county attorney review

Juvenile Traffic Offender (M.S., section 260.193)

- * Filed by police agencies or Highway Patrol
- * Civil suit for damages in proper civil court (per dollar amount) by private counsel

Petty Offender (M.S., section 260.015, subd. 21)

- * Offenses for juvenile but not adult (curfew, smoking, etc)
- * Offense for juvenile but either only petty misdemeanor for adult (small amount of marijuana) or offense because of child’s age (possession or consumption of alcohol)
- * Filed through Juvenile Court
- * Filed usually by police agencies

Potential Players in CHIPS Cases

County Attorney

- * Represents social services
- * Presents evidence
- * Responsibility for advancing the public interest in the welfare of the child

Attorney for the parents

- * Represent parent(s), stepparents, significant others, alleged parents
- * Client may be a party to the court action or they may be a participant
- * Court appointed list, public defender, or privately retained

Guardian ad Litem

- * Represents "best interests" of child (as opposed to what child wants)
- * Court appointed list (may be paid or volunteer, depending on jurisdiction)
- * Can also have GAL for mentally impaired adult or minor parent
- * Can have more than one GAL on case

Attorney for the child(ren)

- * Court appointed list or public defender (public defender only represents a child over 10)
- * Represents what the child legally wants (as opposed to the child's best interest)

Grandparent

- * Participant, with the right to become a party if child lived with grandparent within two years of filing petition

Petitioner

- * Party
- * May be Social Services or another person if petition filed by that other person

Indian Tribe

- * Petitioner with the right to become a party if child is an Indian child

Foster Parent

- * Right to be heard in court

Relative

- * Right to be heard in court if child is living with relative or relative requests to be heard
- * Party if social services recommending transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to that relative (usually at permanency determination)

Preadoptive parent

- * Right to be heard in court