	<b>GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL</b>			
	<b>Chapter:</b>	(3) Intake	<b>Effective Date:</b>	December 2021
	<b>Policy Title:</b>	Intakes Involving Unaccompanied Homeless Youth		
<b>Policy Number:</b>	3.8	<b>Previous Policy #:</b>	3.10, 4.1, 4.3	

**CODES/REFERENCES**

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2002, Section 106 (b)(2)(F)

**REQUIREMENTS**

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall:

1. Receive intake reports of alleged child maltreatment involving unaccompanied homeless youth.
2. Screen-in and assign to Initial Safety Assessment (ISA) an Intake Assessment that identifies the youth to be an unaccompanied homeless youth.
3. When it is determined that the allegations in the IA involving a homeless youth does not rise to the level of maltreatment, screen-out and refer to the appropriate services including the public school system’s McKinney-Vento liaison in order to ensure the youth’s educational needs are assessed and addressed.

**PROCEDURES**

The CPS Intake Communications Center (CICC) Social Services Case Manager will:

1. Receive the intake report as indicated in section 3.1 Intake: Receiving Intake Reports.
2. In addition to the areas of family functioning, collect the following information when the intake report involves an unaccompanied homeless youth:
  - a. What is the reason for the homelessness?
  - b. Does the youth have access to parental care and supervision?
  - c. Location of caregiver(s) and attempts to engage caregiver(s) in their parental responsibilities.
  - d. Youth’s current access to services including health care and education.
  - e. Who are other persons that may be providing support to the youth?
  - f. How long has the youth been without parental care and supervision?
  - g. Have the caregivers been engaged looking for the child?
  - h. Does the youth have any emotional, psychological/psychiatric, or cognitive limitations?
  - i. Does the youth have a history of trauma that has impacted family relationships?
  - j. Are there any substance abuse issues involving the youth?
3. Screen case participants according to policy 19.9 Case Management: Safety Screenings.
4. Assess all information gathered to make an intake decision according to policy 3.2 Intake: Make an Intake Decision. Screen in and assign to the Initial Safety Assessment when the IA determines:

- a. The youth to be unaccompanied homeless; or
  - b. A youth has been identified as homeless and is determined not to be unaccompanied (has appropriate care and supervision) and allegations meet DFCS policy requirements concerning child abuse and/or neglect and no present danger situation or Impending Danger safety threats are indicated.
5. Recommend the Intake Assessment for screen-out and refer when it is determined the youth has appropriate parental care and supervision and the allegations does not rise to the level of maltreatment. Refer to the appropriate services including the public school system's McKinney-Vento liaison in order to ensure the youth's educational needs are assessed and addressed (see policy 19.17 Case Management: Service Provision).

The Social Services Supervisor (SSS) will:

1. Evaluate and make an approval decision on the Intake Assessment as outlined in policy 3.2 Intake: Make an Intake Decision.
2. Stage progress the Intake Assessment to the ISA stage in Georgia SHINES.
3. Assign to the County Department.

### PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Unaccompanied homeless youth Includes youth not living in the physical custody of his/her parent or guardian and who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes youth awaiting foster care placement who meets the requirements of McKinney-Vento. Unaccompanied homeless youth often face unique barriers to enrolling and succeeding in school. Without a caregiver to advocate for them and exercise parental rights, they are sometimes denied enrollment and remain out of school for extended periods of time. Unaccompanied youth may not understand their educational rights or know how to acquire this information.

According to McKinney-Vento the term homeless children and youths means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes:

1. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement.
2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in (1) through (3) above.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act<sup>1</sup> section 106 (b)(2)(F) ensures educational

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<sup>1</sup> The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is the primary piece of federal legislation dealing with the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. It was reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act, which went into effect in January 2002.


rights and protections for homeless children that includes school stability and transportation. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) require that the needs of homeless children be addressed. Unaccompanied youth have the same rights as other students experiencing homelessness. They specifically have the right to:

1. Remain in their school of origin to the extent feasible.
2. Transportation to and from the school of origin.
3. Immediately enroll in a new school serving the area in which they are currently living even if they don't have typically required documents.
4. Equal access to programs and services such as gifted and talented education, special education, vocational education.

When a child is eligible for school stability and transportation under the McKinney- Vento Homeless Act of 2002, County Department staff will contact the DFCS Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation Unit (EPAC) at [EPAC@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:EPAC@dhs.ga.gov) (see policy 3.2 Intake: Making an Intake Decision).

<b>FORMS AND TOOLS</b>
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N/A

	<b>GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL</b>			
	<b>Chapter:</b>	(3) Intakes	<b>Effective Date:</b>	December 2021
	<b>Policy Title:</b>	Intakes Involving DFCS or Child Placement Agency Foster or Adoptive Homes	<b>Previous Policy #:</b>	3.3, 3.13
	<b>Policy Number:</b>	3.9		

**CODES/REFERENCES**

N/A

**REQUIREMENTS**

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall:

1. Receive Special Investigations involving:
  - a. Children in DFCS custody
  - b. DFCS Foster or Adoptive Homes
  - c. Child Placing Agency (CPA) Foster or Adoptive Homes
2. Complete the Intake Assessment information gathering process with the reporter.
3. Screen in Special Investigations Intake Assessments that meet the Georgia statute and DFCS policy requirements for child abuse to ensure child safety and wellbeing, and accept and assign for response within the following timeframes:
  - a. **Immediate:** A present danger situation is indicated.
  - b. **24 hours:** An impending danger safety threat or child abuse (maltreatment) is indicated.

**NOTE:** These reports shall not be assigned to the Initial Safety Assessment track.

4. Screen-out Special Investigations Intake Assessments involving a DFCS or CPA foster or adoptive home that do not meet Georgia statute and DFCS policy requirements for child abuse.
5. Notify the legal and boarding (if applicable) County Director(s) and the CPS Intake Communication Center (CICC) Point of Contact(s) (POC) within two hours of the Intake Assessment screen-out disposition, when it involves a child in DFCS custody.
 

**NOTE:** The County Department shall conduct a face-to-face purposeful contact with the child and their caregiver(s) to confirm child safety within 24 hours of being notified of the screen-out intake assessment involving a child in DFCS custody in accordance with policy 10.18 Foster Care: Purposeful Contacts in Foster Care.
6. Receive Intake Reports only alleging a policy violation(s) by the following placement resources:
  - a. DFCS foster or adoptive homes
  - b. CPA foster or adoptive homes
7. Notify the Office of Provider Management (OPM) of Intake Reports involving CPA foster or adoptive homes, regardless of the Intake Assessment disposition.
 

**NOTE:** The County Department CICC POC will notify the Resource Development (RD) Social Services Case Manager (SSCM) and Social Services Supervisor (SSS) when the Policy Violation Assessment involves a DFCS foster or adoptive home. All involved parties will also receive an alert in Georgia SHINES.

8. When the Intake Report involves a Child Death/Near Fatality/Serious Injury (CDNFSI),

also adhere to policy 3.13 Intake: Intakes Involving Child Death, Near Fatality, or Serious Injury.

## PROCEDURES

The CICC SSCM will:

1. Complete the Intake Assessment information gathering process with the reporter in accordance with policy 3.1 Intake: Receiving Intake Reports.
2. Thoroughly evaluate all information gathered to make an intake decision in accordance with policy 3.2 Intake: Making an Intake Decision.
3. Input the Intake Assessment in Georgia SHINES using the guidelines outlined in Maltreatment in Care Georgia SHINES Job Aid:
  - a. Classify the intake report as a Special Investigation: Maltreatment in Care (MIC) when the intake report involves a child in the custody of DFCS. See Practice Guidance: Special Investigations – Maltreatment in Care (MIC).
  - b. Classify the intake report as a Special Investigation: Maltreatment Not in Care, when the intake report does not include a child in DFCS custody.
4. Screen-in all Special Investigations Intake Assessments that meet the Georgia statute and DFCS policy requirements for child abuse and accept and assign for response within the following timeframes:
  - a. **Immediate:** When a present danger situation is indicated.
  - b. **24 hours:** When an impending danger safety threat or child abuse (maltreatment) is indicated.
5. Screen-out Special Investigations Intake Assessments that do not meet Georgia statute and DFCS policy requirements for child abuse.
6. Notify the legal and boarding (if applicable) County Director(s) and CICC Point of Contact(s) (POC) via email within two hours of the Intake Assessment screen-out disposition, when the Screen-out Intake Assessments involve a child in DFCS custody. Document in the Intake Assessment the notification to the County Director(s) and CICC POC(s).
7. Send the Special Investigations Intake Report (the Notification to Law Enforcement Agency of Abuse Neglect Report) involving a CPA foster or adoptive home to OPM, regardless of the Intake Assessment disposition and document the notification in the Intake Assessment (see Practice Guidance: Oversight Authorities).

The CICC SSS will:

1. Thoroughly evaluate all information gathered to make an intake decision in accordance with policy 3.2 Intake: Make an Intake Decision.
2. Staff the Intake Assessment with the CICC SSCM in accordance with policy 19.6 Case Management: Supervisor Staffing.
3. Review and approve the Special Investigation Intake Assessment in Georgia SHINES using the guidelines outlined in Maltreatment in Care Georgia SHINES Job Aid:
  - a. Verify maltreatment in care exist; and
  - b. Verify the Intake Assessment is classified as a Special Investigation.
4. When the screen-out Intake Assessment involves a child in the custody of DFCS ensure email notification is provided to legal and boarding (if applicable) County Director(s) and CICC POC(s) within two hours of the screen-out Intake Assessment disposition and the notification is documented in the Intake Assessment.

5. Ensure the oversight authority (if applicable) is notified of the Intake Report using the Notification to Law Enforcement Agency of Abuse Neglect Report and the notification is documented in the Intake Assessment (see Practice Guidance: Oversight Authorities).

### **Policy Violations**

The CICC SSCM will:

1. Complete the Intake Assessment information gathering process with the reporter in accordance with policy 3.1 Intake: Receiving Intake Reports.
2. Assess all information gathered to make an intake decision in accordance with policy 3.2 Intake: Making an Intake Decision.
3. Accept as a Policy Violation Assessment, when the allegations do not meet Georgia statute and DFCS policy requirements for child abuse, but there is an indication of a policy violation by a DFCS or CPA foster or adoptive parent.
4. Notify the following via email of the Policy Violation Assessment:
  - a. The legal and boarding (if applicable) County Director(s);
  - b. The legal and boarding (if applicable) CICC POC(s); and
  - c. OPM (oversight authority) when it involves a CPA foster or adoptive home.  
**NOTE:** Notify OPM using the Notification to Law Enforcement Agency of Abuse Neglect Report.
5. Document in the Intake Assessment the notification of the Policy Violation Assessment to the County Department and the oversight authority (if applicable).
6. Submit the Policy Violation Assessment to the CICC SSS in Georgia SHINES for approval.

The CICC SSS will:

1. Assess all information gathered to make an intake decision in accordance to policy 3.2 Intake: Making an Intake Decision.
2. Confirm there is an indication of a policy violation and the allegations do not meet Georgia statute and DFCS policy requirements for child abuse.
3. Review and make an approval decision on the Intake Assessment as a Policy Violation Assessment in Georgia SHINES.
4. Ensure the following notifications occur upon acceptance of a Policy Violation Assessment and it is documented in the Intake Assessment:
  - a. The legal and boarding (if applicable) County Director(s) and CICC POC(s) via email; and
  - b. OPM (oversight authority) using the Notification to Law Enforcement Agency of Abuse Neglect Report, when the Intake Assessment involves a CPA foster or adoptive home.

## **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

### **Children in DFCS Custody**

Children in the legal temporary or permanent custody of DFCS.

### **DFCS Foster or Adoptive Homes**

DFCS foster homes provides temporary care for children in foster care. Similarly, DFCS adoptive homes provide care for children in foster care, however, the adoptive parents have formally committed to adopting the child(ren) in their home. In addition, DFCS kinship foster

homes or kinship adoptive homes, share the same corresponding responsibilities and requirements though the caregivers are kin to the children placed in their home. DFCS County Departments through Regional Resource Development are responsible for evaluating, approving and monitoring DFCS foster or adoptive homes.

**Child Placing Agency (CPA) Foster or Adoptive Homes**

CPA foster homes provides temporary care for children in foster care. Similarly, CPA adoptive homes provide care for children in foster care, however, the adoptive parents have formally committed to adopting the children in their home. CPA foster and adoptive homes are evaluated, approved and administered by a CPA. A CPA is any institution, society, agency, or facility which places children in foster homes for temporary care or in prospective adoptive homes for adoption. Office of Provider Management (OPM) and Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) are the oversight authorities for CPA foster or adoptive homes.

**Special Investigations – Maltreatment in Care (MIC)**

When intake reports are received alleging a child in DFCS custody has been abused, regardless of who has been alleged as the maltreater the intake report must be classified as MIC in Georgia SHINES. Alternatively, when intake reports are received alleging a child in DFCS custody was abused prior to the child entering DFCS custody, the intake report is coded as a Special Investigation-Not Maltreatment in Care.

The relationship of the alleged maltreater may be different from the relationship selected on the Georgia SHINES Allegation Detail page and what is identified on the Person Detail page of the alleged maltreater. For example, the child may be in the foster care kinship placement of his aunt. On the aunt’s Person Detail page, the relationship is primary caregiver; however, if the aunt is the alleged maltreater, the aunt will be identified on the Allegation Detail page as the kin caregiver, not the aunt.

**Special Investigation – Case Name**

For the protection of individual rights and ensuring confidentiality, case names are based on the placement type or setting and not the alleged maltreater or role of the alleged maltreater to the child.

<b>SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS – CASE NAME DESCRIPTORS</b>	
<b>DFCS Foster or Adoptive Home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When the alleged victim child is in DFCS custody: Place in the name of the DFCS foster or adoptive parent.</li> <li>▪ When the alleged victim child is in the custody of the DFCS foster or adoptive parent: Place in the name of the DFCS foster or adoptive parent.</li> </ul>
<b>CPA Foster or Adoptive Home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When the alleged victim child is in DFCS custody: Place in the name of the CPA foster or adoptive parent.</li> <li>▪ When the alleged victim child is in the custody of the CPA foster or adoptive parent: Place in the name of the CPA foster or adoptive parent.</li> </ul>
<b>NOTES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Trial Home Visit</u>: Place in the name of the parent/guardian/legal custodian from whom the child was removed.</li> </ul>	

**Special Investigations Across County Lines**

When an intake report involves a DFCS or CPA foster or adoptive home the case will be assigned to the county where the home is located. The assigned county will coordinate case

management activities with the legal county.

### **Policy Violations**

Policy Violations are actions performed by a DFCS agent that may breach any DFCS policy and/or RBWO Minimum Standards, but do not constitute child abuse. For additional information on policy violations see policy 14.22 Resource Development: Policy Violations.

### **Oversight Authority**

#### Office of Provider Management (OPM)

The OPM contracts with and monitors Child Caring Institutions (CCI) and CPA provision of RBWO services. OPM employs various data, on-site, records review and collateral report mechanisms to monitor provider's adherence to RBWO Minimum Standards and contractual obligations which direct performance expectations regarding the safety, permanency and well-being of children. The foundational objective of OPM is to ensure that children placed in RBWO care are safe from abuse. OPM also provides training and technical assistance to providers to support their ability to meet quality of care and performance expectations. Send notifications of the Intake Report to OPM at [opmreports@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:opmreports@dhs.ga.gov).

#### Oversight Authority-Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL)

The RCCL unit inspects, monitors, licenses, and registers a variety of childcare facilities. The purpose of our work is to ensure that facilities and programs operate at acceptable levels, as mandated by State Statutes and by rules and regulations adopted by the Department of Human Services (DHS) Board of Human Services. Facilities requiring a license from RCCL include Child Caring Institutions, Child Placing Agencies, Outdoor Child Caring Programs, Children's Transition Care Centers and Maternity Homes. Send notifications of the intake report to RCCL at [RCCREPORTS@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:RCCREPORTS@dhs.ga.gov) or 404-657-9651.

## **FORMS AND TOOLS**

Maltreatment in Care - Georgia SHINES Job Aid