



Department of
Children's Services



Contract Provider Manual

Section Eight (8) - Primary Assessment Centers

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PRIMARY ASSESSMENT CENTER

1. General Characteristics

Assessment centers provide observation and assessment. Children referred to Primary Assessment Centers (PAC) may be children in their initial state custody status, children already in state custody, and children who have been released from state custody and have been recommitted. These children display a wide range of behaviors and are in need of assessment in order to most effectively determine appropriate services and placement.

2. Admission/Clinical Criteria

Children referred to a PAC may have varied assessment needs. Presenting problems may include substance abuse, delinquent behavior or charges, and chronic runaway behavior. Children may have mood or anxiety problems, interpersonal difficulties, emotional dysregulation, difficulty in securing and maintaining close relationships with others, truancy, or difficulty in accepting authority. Youth appropriately referred to a PAC may pose a moderate risk to the community.

3. Personnel

- a) The provider has trained personnel who can meet the developmental, therapeutic, and supervision needs of all children/youth accepted for care and services.
- b) Psychological evaluations are completed by a qualified licensed mental health professional or an individual appropriately supervised by a licensed mental health professional.
- c) Educational staff meets the employment standards outlined in the state Board of Education Rules, Regulations and Minimum Standards.
- d) RTC staff to child/youth ratio: 1:8 (one direct-care, awake staff for every eight on-site youth) during the day and 1:8 (one direct-care, awake staff for every eight on-site youth) overnight staff. Staff persons counted in the staff-to-service recipient ratio may only be persons who are assigned to provide direct program services as described by written job description. The required staff-to-client ratio must be maintained on-site in each building, or physically separated unit of a building in which service recipients are housed. Support staff such as clerical, housekeeping, van and bus driver staff or students involved in an onsite practicum for academic credit may not be counted in the staff-to-service recipient ratio. While these are the minimum standards, it is strongly recommended that two staff be present at any time when children/youth are being supervised.

4. Service Overview

The agency provides a program of group living experiences and a program of specialized services for each child/youth accepted into care. Services provided by the agency include but are not limited to:

- a) Individual and family assessment upon admission, engaging family as data resources and throughout the child's stay in the PAC.
- b) Length of assessment limited to no more than fifteen (15) days, by which time a meeting takes place to discuss results and for provider to make service recommendations. The written Psychological Evaluation and other reports should be received by DCS in written form prior to the meeting.
- c) Coordinate with families and DCS staff
- d) Structured group activities, team building exercises, life skills groups, skills building activities, and/or educational groups at least two (2) times per week.
- e) Alcohol and drug awareness education at least two (2) times per month;
- f) Educational liaison to interact with the child/youth's educational needs and individualized educational plan. Contact with the youth's school will occur at least two (2) times month and be documented in the youth's record.
- g) Provision of recreational activities, social skills training, daily living skills and interdependent living skills. These activities must be appropriate to, and adapted to the needs, interests and ages of the service recipients. More information about independent living may be found in the Independent Living portion of this manual.
- h) Coordinate medication management appointments.

5. Assessment and Evaluation included within the per diem

- a) A psychological evaluation is administered to all youth entering the PAC, including:
 - ◆ A clinical interview (conducted by a licensed clinical psychologist or licensed psychological examiner, with HSP status on license);
 - ◆ A review and evaluation (conducted by a licensed clinical psychologist or licensed psychological examiner, with HSP status on license) of available family functional assessment, behavioral information, and other background information made available to the PAC;
 - ◆ Testing which is tailored to the youth's history of symptoms, previous testing, and to any referral questions provided by DCS. Tests may include: individually administered full (not abbreviated) test of intelligence, an objective personality measure, a projective personality measure, an individually administered measure of academic achievement which assesses basic reading, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics reasoning, and written expression (IDEA categories), a full substance abuse history, and if the youth's history indicates need, a drug screen and formal substance abuse assessment measure;
 - ◆ A complete DSM-5 diagnostic picture, with both DSM-5 and ICD-10 number codes given;
 - ◆ Recommendations to address specific referral questions and therapeutic and educational needs identified.
- b) Specialized psychological evaluations are conducted when requested by Regional Psychologist. This evaluation may include, but is not limited to:

- ◆ Administration of one or more specialized instruments to assess the following:
 - Substance-Related disorder assessment measures
 - Psychosexual functioning
 - Vocational interest or ability
 - Adaptive functioning

6. Education of the Child/Youth

- a) Youth typically attend an in-house, non-public school that is approved by the Tennessee State Department of Education and recognized to educate students in custody by the DCS Education Division. Youth may attend public school if all other programming requirements of the PAC are met.
- b) Please refer to the [**Section Thirteen \(13\)-Educational Standards**](#) section of this document for specific information related to the education of students in state custody.

7. Records Management

The individual record for each service recipient must contain the following information:

- a) Progress notes must be recorded daily and must include written documentation of service recipient progress. These progress notes must be dated and include the signature, title or degree of the person providing the service;
- b) Documentation of all drugs administered and/or prescribed by the facility which indicates date prescribed, type, dosage, frequency, amount and reason for prescription;
- c) Documentation of significant behavior and actions taken by staff;
- d) A list of each article of the service recipient's personal property valued at one hundred dollars (\$100.00) or more and its disposition if no longer in use;
- e) Documentation of abuse, medical problems, accidents, seizures and illnesses. This documentation must include the treatment for such abuse, accidents, seizures, and illnesses and any reports generated as a result. Results of assessments are required by this rule;
- f) Discharge summary which details the service recipient's condition at the time of discharge and the signature of person preparing the summary;
- g) Appropriate consents and authorizations for the release and obtaining of information about the service recipient are maintained and current.

8. Discharge Criteria

Goals/Discharge Criteria for children in Primary Assessment Centers: Children will not remain in a PAC past 30 days.