



PREVENTION WORKGROUP PROPOSAL

Submitted November 1, 2024

Overview and Purpose of Study:

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between the “screening out” processes with services offered to prevent child welfare involvement.

Research Questions:

1. What are the criteria for a report being screened out?
2. What are the criteria for a report being screened in?
3. Is there a “tipping point” of number of calls that requires “screening in?”
4. What is the process for screened-out reports; what services are being offered to families in that situation and how do these services relate to the Warm Line?

Scope of the Problem:

The current CFSA focus is Keeping DC families together. Although keeping families together is a very positive goal that the workgroup supports, In some cases, children who are being screened out from investigation may remain vulnerable to abuse and/or neglect that may or may not be addressed by services offered when cases are not opened.

The Topic to be researched and the Issue/Concern

Children who are being screened out/not separated may remain vulnerable to abuse and/or neglect. The study is concerned with identifying how services are being offered at that juncture that could address this vulnerability. Acknowledging that it is not feasible to link outcomes to voluntary services, the study will research the CFSA hotline triage process; the services offered to families when they are screened out; and the perceptions of staff as well as mandated reporters as to the impact of these services on child protection.

Methodology:

The work group seeks to look at calls to the Hotline, including from hospitals and schools, and what happens to those calls. We are interested in learning about the data of where clusters of calls originate from (schools? hospitals? general public?) as well as the times of the year that calls are most prevalent.

Anticipated Data and Other Information Needed from CFSA:

(The Workgroup will research any answers to data that is available on the CFSA dashboard and request other data as needed)

1. Screening policy and procedures
 - a. Official policy and procedure for screening calls in/out
 - b. Certification process for workers' screening calls
 - c. Level of autonomy that workers have to make decisions/supervisory review
2. Incoming call reports with the following details
 - a. type of calls, (*abuse, neglect, child endangerment/domestic violence*)
 - b. where the calls originate from
 - c. Follow up with mandated reporter/stakeholder – is there a feedback process
 - d. reasons/ stated criteria and categorizing if screened out
3. Data on repeat calls and relationships if any, screening determination
 - a. Correlation, if any, between the number/frequency of calls on a specific family and the determination to screen in/out, i.e., a tipping point.
4. Description of resources given to families that are screened out
5. What is the relationship between the Hotline and Warmline
 - a. What does the Warmline referral process look like
6. A list of Warmline services related to child protection and any gaps in such services determined so far
7. Is there a process/follow-up for screened-out calls?
8. The number of deaths of children as reported in 2022 and 2023 Child Fatality reports that correspond to screened-out calls to the Hotline.

Based on this data, the workgroup plans to conduct:

1. Interviews or surveys with staff who determine whether to open an investigation and/or removal to assess the consistency of CFSA's guidelines
2. Interviews or surveys with staff who provide families the resources needed to keep the family out of the system
3. Interviews or surveys with stakeholders from whom the largest cluster of calls originate (based upon CFSA data of referral source); and in that cohort, specifically targeting a sample of professionals who are on CFSA's new Mandatory Reporting portal for gathering data about improved feedback loop on investigations