

# STREAMLINED FAMILY FUNCTIONING ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*The information contained in this document answers questions regarding the streamlined documentation pilot recommended by the Child Protective Investigations (CPI) Efficiencies Workgroup. The information is intended to provide guidance to child protective investigators, dependency case managers and their supervisors as they implement a six-month statewide pilot, beginning March 1, 2017. The information may change as the pilot is implemented and upon completion and evaluation of the pilot. The Regional Family and Community Services Director and/or local Family Safety Program Office should be contacted if there are additional questions.*

## Streamlined Family Functioning Assessment (FFA) Documentation

### **\*\*Frequently Asked Questions\*\***

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#### **1) Why are we making these changes?**

Secretary Mike Carroll in 2016 completed “huddles” with front-line Investigations staff throughout the state and heard directly from them about the concerns and challenges they are facing. As a result, he appointed a workgroup to identify efficiencies to help prioritize the workload of child protective investigators (CPI) and realize the full benefits of the new child welfare practice model, particularly improving outcomes for families.

One of the efficiencies identified relates to the Family Functioning Assessment (FFA), the process by which information is gathered, analyzed, and assessed to determine child safety. This assessment remains a critical part of Florida’s child welfare practice; however, during a six-month pilot that **begins statewide March 1, 2017**, the documentation of the assessment will be streamlined to improve the child protective investigations workload.

*The following criteria has been established to assist in the identification of cases that will require a documented FFA in the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) system:*

- All cases involving victims/children in the home ages 0-5; OR a child with a verifiable significant developmental, medical, or behavioral disability resulting in high vulnerability to maltreatment (Factors to consider when identifying a ‘verifiable’ vulnerability: the CPI’s observations, Child Protection Team [CPT] consultation, medical assessments, trusted collateral contacts, etc.)
- All children determined to be in Present Danger or Impending Danger
- Any aged child where there have been three priors within the last 12 months, regardless of findings (including abuse reports and special conditions on any/all minor children of the family unit)
- Any household member, caregiver or frequent visitor who has any verified abuse history as a caregiver responsible

*For cases that do not meet the above criteria, the CPI and CPI Supervisor (CPIS) will have the option of using the “Other” investigative path, which streamlines the documentation required to reach safe closures. During the six-month pilot, data will be collected to analyze the efficiencies around expediting documentation requirements to allow an enhanced focus on the most complex families needing intervention.*

Additional information about the CPI Efficiencies Workgroup can be found at these links:

- February 8, 2017: Memo from Secretary Carroll regarding “Efficiencies to Support Child Protective Investigations and Case Management Staff”

[https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/FLDCF/2017/02/08/file\\_attachments/767988/Secretary%2BMemo%2B-%2BCPI%2BEfficiencies%2B02.08.17.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/FLDCF/2017/02/08/file_attachments/767988/Secretary%2BMemo%2B-%2BCPI%2BEfficiencies%2B02.08.17.pdf)

- February 7, 2017: Final Report of Workgroup to Streamline Child Protective Investigations

[https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/FLDCF/2017/02/08/file\\_attachments/767974/CPI%2BEfficiencies%2BSummary%2BReport%2B-%2B02.08.17.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/FLDCF/2017/02/08/file_attachments/767974/CPI%2BEfficiencies%2BSummary%2BReport%2B-%2B02.08.17.pdf)

**2) Who determines which cases are allowed to go down the “Other” investigation track?**

Through the consultation process, the Supervisor and CPI determine which investigative track is appropriate. To ensure appropriate determinations are made, during the first 60 days of the pilot, there will be a required Second Level Review (not 2nd Tier) from a qualified individual who is in a position above the Supervisor. These qualified individuals will be identified by the region.

**3) What if I accidentally launch an FFA that needs to be an “Other”? How do I complete?**

When an FFA has been launched, it will need to be completed even if it would have qualified for streamlined documentation. To prevent this from occurring, the FFA should not be launched until a decision has been made about the appropriate track the case should follow.

**4) What if I accidentally choose the sub-type “Other” and then I determine I need an FFA?**

If you initiate an investigation as an “Other” sub-type, you will be able to change it to an “In-Home” sub-type at any point during the investigation. You will only be able to launch the FFA when you have an investigation sub-type of “In-Home.”

**5) Can the case be changed back to an “In-Home” sub-type if impending danger is later identified?**

At any point prior to closing the investigation, Investigators are able to change the Investigation sub-type from “Other” to “In-Home,” which will then allow the Investigator to document the assessment in the FFA tool in FSFN prior to closure.

**6) Do I still need to complete a risk assessment on an “Other” investigation?**

For investigations that have a sub-type of “Other” because they qualify for streamlined documentation, a risk assessment will not be completed. Additionally, risk assessments will not be completed when children are determined to be unsafe.

FSFN will still require that the risk assessment tool be launched and saved. However, for unsafe children who do not meet the requirements for a risk assessment, the Investigator will select the “Unable to Assess” checkbox and then select “No Jurisdiction – Official Capacity.”

Other = No Risk Assessment

FFA unsafe = Unable to Assess Risk Assessment

FFA safe = Yes Risk Assessment

**7) If I accidentally launch an FFA that should be an “Other,” how do I complete the risk assessment?**

FSFN will still require that the risk assessment tool be launched and saved. The Investigator will select the “Unable to Assess” checkbox and then select “No Jurisdiction – Official Capacity.” To prevent this from occurring, the FFA should not be launched until a decision has been made about the appropriate track the case should follow.

**8) If a household member has a prior within the last 12 months and moves out of the home while the investigation is open, will the investigation qualify for an “Other” sub-type?**

No, such an investigation does not meet the criteria to be designated “Other.” If there is a household member, caregiver or frequent visitor who has any verified abuse history as a caregiver responsible at any point in the investigation, the assessment must be documented using the FFA tool in FSFN.

**9) Is there a specific timeframe to determine whether the case can be an “Other” investigation?**

There is no specific timeframe for designating an “Other” investigation. It is best to have completed ALL information collection and a full assessment so that you can be certain the case qualifies for streamlined documentation as an “Other” investigation sub-type.

**10) If services have an open on-going FFA or Progress Update with limited information documented, does the CPI still need to do a full FFA?**

No, an FFA-Investigation (FFA-I) is not needed when the child has already been deemed unsafe and the family is currently receiving ongoing case management services. To ensure collaboration throughout the assessment, the CPI must contact the Case Manager prior to commencement of the new report and attempt to

schedule a joint home visit to conduct face-to-face interviews with the parents and children.

- 11) ***A documented FFA in FSFN is required on all cases involving victims/children in the home ages 0-5. If the child turns 6-years-old while the investigation is still open, can this case be coded as an “Other” investigation? If the child is 5 years and 11 months old, can this case be coded as an “Other” investigation?***

No, the child’s change in age during the investigation does not automatically change a child’s vulnerability. The investigation should continue, and a documented FFA in FSFN will be completed.

- 12) ***A documented FFA in FSFN is required on all cases involving a child with a verifiable significant developmental, medical, or behavioral disability resulting in high vulnerability to maltreatment. Is there a specific definition of a “verifiable behavioral disability”?***

“Verifiable” means that the disability can be checked and is demonstrated to be true and accurate. The verification that the disability is accurate includes what the CPI has observed to be a disability or the observance of a medical diagnosis. This information can also be obtained from a CPT medical exam, medical file review, or from a school collateral that includes the child’s disability noted in school records.

Any physical impairment or medical (emotional, mental, etc.) diagnosis should be considered. This includes, but is not limited to: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnosis, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) diagnosis, and learning disability (typically an “Individualized Education Plan [IEP]” or “Section 504 plan [504 plan]” is on file at the school).

- 13) ***Is a child diagnosed with ADHD considered a vulnerable child?***

Yes, a child with behavioral or medical diagnosis or concerns, including ADHD, would be considered vulnerable.

- 14) ***Won’t it be hard to confirm or verify a child’s vulnerability? One person’s significant condition is another’s insignificant condition.***

A child’s vulnerability should be determined using information collected from the family and collaterals and must include the CPI’s observations and judgment.

- 15) ***A documented FFA is required when any household member, caregiver or frequent visitor has any verified abuse history as a caregiver responsible. What if the caregiver, household member, or frequent visitor has a verified report from 20 years ago? Or it shouldn’t really have been a verified report?***

If anyone has any verified abuse history as a responsible caregiver and is in the role of a household member, caregiver, or frequent visitor, then a documented FFA in FSFN is required.

If the findings are not correct, then the appropriate region protocol should be followed in regards to the review and change of findings, if deemed necessary. A documented FFA in FSFN will still need to be completed.

- 16) **What happens in the instance where an investigation meets the requirements for streamlined FFA documentation because the family is already open to case management, however, the investigation meets one of the other criteria that requires an FFA (e.g., the child is under the age of 5)?**

The assessment would still qualify for streamlined FFA documentation. To ensure collaboration throughout the assessment, the CPI must contact the Case Manager prior to commencement of the new report and attempt to schedule a joint home visit to conduct face-to-face interviews with the parents and children.

If, during the investigation, any child welfare professional determines that the child is in present danger, that professional must complete an updated Present Danger Plan in collaboration with the family, safety service providers and any other child welfare professional involved with the family.

- 17) ***A documented FFA is required for any aged child where there have been three priors within the last 12 months, regardless of findings (including abuse reports and special conditions on any/all minor children of the family unit). Does an Additional on a prior case count toward the three or more priors in 12 months?***

No. An Additional on a prior case does not count toward the three or more priors in 12 months. The investigation number determines the count and not the sequences attached to any investigation number. Companion Cases will be included in the count as separate cases as these investigations have different intake numbers.

- 18) ***A documented FFA is required for any aged child where there have been three priors within the last 12 months, regardless of findings (including abuse reports and special conditions on any/all minor children of the family unit). Does an Institutional, Adult Investigation, or Special Conditions count toward the three or more priors in 12 months (e.g., the person was removed as a child in the past and a foster care referral was called in)?***

Yes, Institutional, Adult Investigation and Special Conditions are included in the count of prior history within the last 12 months. This requirement includes all abuse reports and/or special conditions on any household members that have been received by the Department of Children and Families.

- 19) ***A documented FFA is required for any aged child where there have been three priors within the last 12 months, regardless of findings (including abuse reports and special conditions on any/all minor children of the family unit). Do the three or more priors start on the date of the new intake and 365 days prior to that?***

Yes, any abuse reports and/or special conditions on any minor children in the household received within a year period from the newest intake will be counted. The CPI Supervisor and CPI still need to assess investigative patterns that fall outside of the 365-day window when determining whether the investigation qualifies for streamlined FFA documentation.

- 20) ***A documented FFA is required for any aged child where there have been three priors within the last 12 months, regardless of findings (including abuse reports and special conditions on any/all minor children of the family unit). Is it three priors within the last year where the caregiver or other adult household member was listed as an alleged perpetrator? Or do you include ones where they were not listed as alleged perpetrators? Does the three include the current intake or not?***

The three priors include all roles the investigation participant had (household members, alleged perpetrator, child victim, etc.). The three priors do not include the current intake.

- 21) **Are we required to do an FFA on a new baby open to services?**

No, per anticipated updates to Department operating procedure (CFOP 170-1 Ch. 9): The case manager will include the new child as a participant in the FFA-Ongoing or Progress Update, whichever is due next. If an FFA-Ongoing has already been completed and approved, the case manager will complete a Progress Update within 14 business days of the child's birth or a new child entering the home.

- 22) **Do we start this on all investigations that come in March 1<sup>st</sup> or investigations closed March 1<sup>st</sup> and after?**

The streamlined FFA documentation pilot applies only to investigations received on or after March 1, 2017.

- 23) **Does this FFA protocol affect current "Other" cases? For example, if we have a case with a grandfather as an A/P and it's coded an "Other" by the Hotline, but we determine that he has a history that includes a verified prior, would that "Other" case then switch to an FFA/in-home case?**

No, an investigation will still qualify for an "Other" sub-type when the alleged abuse is committed by a relative, non-relative, paramour, or adult babysitter temporarily entrusted with a child's care who does not reside in the home with the parent and child. Similarly, human trafficking involving a non-parent as the alleged perpetrator still qualifies as an "Other" investigation.

This document and the pilot protocol apply only to cases that are in-home investigations that meet the criteria identified for streamlined FFA documentation.

**24) What is meant by “frequent visitor”?**

Per CFOP 175-94 (Appendix A)

<http://centerforchildwelfare.org/HorizontalTab/DeptOperatingProcedures.shtml>:

“Frequent visitor” is a term used in Child Protective Services to refer to paramours of any of the adult household members, adult relatives and other individuals who interact with the family in the family’s home on a regular and consistent basis. This does not include babysitters, even if they babysit in the home.

**25) Should death cases with no surviving siblings be designated as “Other,” or does an FFA need to be completed?**

This pilot has not changed the Department’s operating procedure for investigations of a child fatality with no surviving siblings. If there are no surviving siblings, a safe or unsafe determination is not needed; an FFA does not need to be completed, and the case subtype “Other” will be used.

**26) If a child fatality case is received and there is a surviving sibling, should the investigator complete an FFA or is the “Other” sub-type an option?**

If a child fatality occurs and there is a surviving sibling, the FFA must be documented using the tool in FSFN, regardless of household factors and cause of death.

**27) With transfers to other counties, can the other county deny the transfer due to a discrepancy over whether the case should be an “Other” or an “In-Home”?**

The receiving CPI and Supervisor in the receiving county should be making the decision on whether the case qualifies for streamlined FFA documentation. Any discrepancies should follow the regional conflict resolution process.

**28) How do we determine no impending danger without doing an FFA?**

This is not a shortcut in gathering information. The amount of information gathered will remain the same, and a full investigation is still required, whether or not the case qualifies for streamlined FFA documentation. The streamlined FFA documentation impacts where information is documented within the investigation.